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Policy Implementation and Sustainability:

Qualitative study of the policies for literacy and multigrade approaches in Batu City and Probolinggo with the specific challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Bappeda	Local agency for planning and development (*Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah*)
BOS	Schools' operational funds (*Bantuan Operasional Sekolah*)
BOSDA	Local schools' operational funds (Bantuan Operasional Sekolah Daerah)
COVID-19	Corona virus disease 2019
DPRD	Regional representative council (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah*)
FGD	Focus group discussion
GEDSI	Gender equality, disability and social inclusion
GO-LIB	Probolinggo online library facility
INOVASI	Innovation for Indonesia's School Children Program
IT	Information technology
KKG	Teachers' working group (*Kelompok Kerja Guru)*
KKM	*Madrasah* working group (*Kelompok Kerja Madrasah)*
Madrasah	Islamic school
MERL	Monitoring, evaluation, research and learning
MI	Islamic primary school (*Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*)
MoEC	Ministry of Education and Culture
MoECRT	Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology
MoRA	Ministry of Religious Affairs
OASE	Motorbike transport for school children scheme (*Ojek Anak Sekolah*)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INOVASI has assisted 17 local governments to initiate and implement various educational policies and programs. In this study we focus on the following three policies: (1) Regulation by the Regent of Probolinggo No. 62 of 2018 on the Probolinggo District Literacy Movement[1]; (2) Regulation by the Regent of Probolinggo No. 18 of 2019 on Multigrade Management in Elementary Schools[2]; and (3) Regulation by the Mayor of Batu City No. 93 of 2018 on Batu City as a Literacy City[3]. The research explores the process of developing and implementing the three policies and predicts their sustainability by covering success stories, support, issues and challenges in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. It provides useful information for the studied policies' stakeholders and other policy makers in the field of education to understand the dynamics of policy implementation and sustainability in such a challenging context.

Conducted from March to June 2021, this study used online qualitative interviews with twenty-seven (ten females and seventeen males) informants ranging from supervisors, parents, librarian, education high officials, other government officials, school committee members, and legislative members. It also employed focus group discussions with three different groups of teachers, three groups of principals, two groups of mixed madrasah principals and teachers, one literacy community. The study treated each of the three policies as a case characterised by its own unique system, including the policy concept, context, people, sources of support to provide a comprehensive description of each policy, its implementation, and its sustainability, and enabled constant comparative analyses across the three cases.

The study found:

- Bottom-up approaches, as used in Batu City's literacy policy, are more likely to succeed and have effective policy outcomes while heavier top-down approaches, as used in Probolinggo's literacy policy, are less likely to succeed since the stakeholders are not fully engaged. This low level of participation means fewer opportunities to share ideas and collaborate on delivering policy and less chance of achieving effective outcomes.

- The policies resulted in significant changes at both institutional and individual levels such as an increased commitment in the government institutions and schools, and better shaped mindset of individuals involved in policy implementation. There are issues that arose in the policy implementation processes include limited and ineffective program scale out and lack of coordination among government offices.

- Significant factors that influenced policy outcomes include: whether facilitators and teachers had sufficient and effective training; and whether policy activities were hindered or even halted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

[1] https://pendidikan.probolinggokab.go.id/new/peraturan-bupati-probolinggo-nomor-62-tahun-2018-tentang-gerakan-literasi-kabupaten-probolinggo/

[2] https://jdih.probolinggokab.go.id/download/Peraturan-Bupati/perbup-2019/PERBUP-NO.-18-TAHUN-2019-TENTANG-PENGELOLAAN-PEMBELAJARAN-KELAS-RANGKAP-MULTIGRADE-TEACHING-JENJANG-SEKOLAH-DASAR.pdf

[3] https://jdih.batukota.go.id/peraturan-walikota-batu-nomor-93-tahun-2018.html

- Local governments evaluate the effectiveness of new policies but the process is not systematic; INOVASI initiated reflection sessions on the policies concerned.

- The policies are all potentially sustainable if the local government improves on certain issues and if the COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. If these restrictions remain in place, sustainability will depend on the funding available, the strength of commitment among stakeholders and the information technology skills of the schoolteachers.

- While gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) as a whole concept remains marginal in policies and practice, positive changes are evident in the study sites. For example, schools are more aware of gender equality, and they also make an effort to accommodate students with special needs in their literacy programs. Cultural constraints and stakeholders' understanding of the concept are still issues for advocates to work on.

Based on the findings, we put forward recommendations as follows:

At the national level, we recommend that in policy development and implementation, a monitoring and evaluation system should be established in every policy initiative. INOVASI can help to create the monitoring and evaluation system and structure within each partnering government institution and ensure that this organic body works well. Also, policymakers should not wait for the COVID-19 pandemic to fully cease in order to refine the policies, make them adjustable and find solutions to overcome the impacts of this pandemic. They need to identify best practices in such a challenging circumstance and support them to sustain the policy benefits in spite of the situation.

In terms of GEDSI, its advocacy groups should be engaged in policy development so that these marginalised communities do not merely feature as the objects or beneficiaries of the policies. Advocacy for GEDSI issues should intervene in how GEDSI issues are represented in textbooks both implicitly and explicitly. Implicit representation is the hidden curriculum in textbooks that must not suggest or accept discrimination and injustice with regard to any group in society or any misrepresentation that may go against social inclusion.

At the local level, we recommend the district governments to conduct continuing professional development in a variety of ways, both formal and informal, and assess its effectiveness in terms of delivery and outcome. INOVASI should help to ensure that continuing professional development achieves its objectives and help build a quality assurance mechanism for it. We also suggest that as a long-term solution, they could outsource qualified professionals for an extended period of time, who serve as an *ad hoc* body and help local government institutions in refining, implementing and sustaining policies. Besides, collaboration and coordination among government institutions need to be improved to create a more cohesive approach to policy implementation and sustainability by *inter alia* minimising cross-sectoral tensions and barriers. Policy actors should have a relentless effort in generating awareness and commitment among stakeholders in various forms and ways.

Specific to improve multigrade policy implementation, teachers should be given more effective assistance, not only in terms of continuous training but also in the form of a special multigrade curriculum with integrated basic curriculum competencies and the corresponding modules. Equally important, teachers and their capacity for implementing the multigrade approach need to be mapped out, especially in the scale-out schools to ensure that teacher transfer consider thoroughly the needs for improvement.

At the school level, teachers need to upgrade their IT skills for teaching and engaging students more closely in both literacy and multigrade programs. School leaders and teachers also need to reach out parents and communities more intensively through various community/school-based activities to strengthen partnership between schools and parent/community

1. Introduction

Background

The Innovation for Indonesia's Schoolchildren program (INOVASI) is a partnership between the governments of Australia and Indonesia. Working directly with Indonesia's Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (MoECRT), INOVASI seeks to understand how student learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy can be improved in diverse primary schools and districts across Indonesia. INOVASI is working in a range of locations across Indonesia, including West Nusa Tenggara, Sumba Island, East Nusa Tenggara, North Kalimantan and East Java.

The Ministry of Education and Culture and the East Java government signed the memorandum of understanding to approve INOVASI's partnership in the province in August 2018. This was after a series of stocktaking activities that INOVASI carried out from August 2017 through to March 2018 to explore various best practices in a number of regular schools and religious schools (*madrasah)* in the province. Based on these stocktaking studies (INOVASI, 2019a), INOVASI worked collaboratively with the respective local governments in five districts to improve five key areas in schools, namely: literacy, numeracy, inclusion, leadership, and multigrade teaching and learning (INOVASI, 2019b). INOVASI provided technical assistance to Batu City and Probolinggo in their efforts to improve literacy and in this study we explore the following three related policies that were issued in 2018–2019:

- Regulation by the Regent of Probolinggo No. 62 of 2018 on the Probolinggo District Literacy Movement. This policy declares Probolinggo as a literacy district and focuses on various literacy activities, including the literacy movement in and outside schools, cultivating a culture of literacy, involving communities and families, funding for literacy activities and monitoring the outcomes.

- Regulation by the Regent of Probolinggo No. 18 of 2019 on Multigrades Management in Elementary Schools. This policy regulates the implementation of multigrade learning at elementary school level and includes guidance on the curriculum, lesson planning and teacher management.

- Regulation by the Mayor of Batu City No 93 of 2018 on Batu City as a Literacy City. In declaring Batu City as a literacy city, this policy focuses on various literacy activities, including: the literacy movement in and outside schools; cultivating a culture of literacy; involving communities and families; funding for literacy activities; and monitoring the outcomes.

A key aim of the INOVASI program is to ensure that new policies are successfully translated into practice and that the benefits from these policies last.[4] Based on discussions with the INOVASI teams in Jakarta and East Java, we need to understand how policies are implemented, which approaches are most effective and whether they can be sustained in the future. At the time of this study, the process of implementing the three policies had been underway for about two years but local governments were facing a number of challenges, particularly in the context of the COVID-19

[4] Key actors implement policies, systems and practices that encourage sustainability to support competency in the basic skills – literacy and numeracy – among all children.

pandemic that has affected all aspects of life globally. Therefore, to build our knowledge and understanding of effective policy processes, the main objectives of this study are as follows:

- To examine the processes used in developing the three policies, focusing on the approaches taken and stakeholder involvement;
- To explore the implementation processes for the three policies including success stories, support, issues and challenges;
- To predict the sustainability of the three policies based on the strategies used and other contributing factors.

These three objectives are elaborated through the following research questions:

1. What are the policies? How were they designed? How were potentially marginalised communities involved?
2. How were the policies implemented? What were their results before the COVID-19 pandemic?
3. How has the pandemic influenced policy implementation? What adjustments have governments and schools made?
4. What are the results of the adjustments at both government and school levels?
5. How can the policies be sustained? What factors potentially contribute to the sustainability of the policies?
6. How is the concept of gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) understood and how are GEDSI groups involved in the policy cycle? Have issues of inclusion impacted on the sustainability of any of the three policies?

This research provides timely information for INOVASI to reflect on with regard to policy processes and the issues and problems that arise, particularly in the two areas of literacy and multigrade approaches. Also, implementing and sustaining policies in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic has created challenging circumstances, forcing policy stakeholders to develop new strategies to help children learn and flourish despite the constraints. This research therefore opens up opportunities for policy stakeholders to confront the impacts of the pandemic and find ways to mitigate the effects on education and schooling.

In addition, this research contributes to the academic discourse on policy implementation and sustainability in the context of developing countries amidst the pandemic, an area still under-represented in the literature. More specifically, it contributes to the discourse on developing literacy and multigrade programs and overcoming educational problems in lower middle-income economies like Indonesia.

Literature Review

In this section we review relevant literature on what, how and why policies can be successfully implemented and then sustained. Since we used a qualitative approach in this study to explore policy implementation and predict potential sustainability, this literature will provide a guide for the researches to analyse the findings during the discussions. The literature covers the following topics:

policy cycle; policy sustainability; and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. We also review relevant literature on the issues of gender equality, disability, and social inclusion (GEDSI) that were part of the interventions.

Policy Cycle: Development, Implementation and Evaluation

Policy is a complex concept that can be misunderstood. Ball (1998:124) defines policies as: '… ways of representing, accounting for and legitimating political decisions…' In the context of education, policy is a way of controlling the purposes, structures, practices and priorities in the system; and of maintaining the authority to achieve the state's declared educational objectives.

Considering the wide misunderstandings of what policy looks like, Crammond and Carey (2017: 404) summarise types of policy:

> *'… from their most concrete and far reaching (ie, constitutions), through to the more elusive and discursive forms policy can take (ie, policy as discourse or narrative)…'*

They list the types of policy, such as: constitution, legislation, municipal and local government rules and regulation. Another type of policy that might be overlooked is policy as a discourse and action. Crammond and Carey call this a 'policy cloud' that encompasses:

> *'…all of the informal influences on policy such as the opinions of think tanks, the pronouncements of media outlets and, often, the interests of powerful corporations, as well as public discourse more broadly' (2017:405).'*

They provide useful explanations so that policy researchers can identify the right policies and documents to analyse for a particular study.

In its simplest form, a policy cycle consists of policy development, implementation and evaluation, although Janssen and Helbig (2018: 100) suggest a more detailed cycle of problem definition, policy development, policy implementation, policy enforcement and policy evaluation. Depending on the context, approaches to policy development can be either top-down or bottom-up (Stachowiak, Robles, Habtemariam and Maltry, 2016). Top-down approaches mean that policy action and delivery can be centralised while bottom-up approaches mean that local stakeholders can participate fully in initiating policy and designing its implementation. Authoritarian governments tend to use a top-down approach in developing and implementing policy but choosing this approach does not necessarily indicate a political style (Williamson and Magaloni, 2020; Xiaojun and Ge, 2016). It may simply represent the technical characteristics involved in developing and implementing particular policies. In some cases, therefore, a combination of the two approaches has emerged as an option to minimise the weaknesses in each approach. Combined approaches may vary according to the context and the policy being implemented (Matland, 1995).

Implementing policy can simply mean a process of translating what is written in a policy document into action. The task involves creating a 'policy delivery system' by developing particular programs to achieve the policy outcomes (Grindle, 1980). While the policy does not equate to the program, implementing the program serves as an enacted policy process. Therefore, according to Grindle (1980:6), any research on:

> *'…the process of policy implementation almost necessarily involves investigation and analysis of concrete action programs that have been designed as a means of achieving broader policy goals.'*

Policy implementation can begin only when the relevant organisations have set clear goals and objectives, developed programs to achieve these goals and allocated sufficient resources, as well as equipped agents to take action (Andrews, Pritchett and Woolcock, 2017). While many factors can contribute to effective policy implementation (Cerna, 2013), Andrews, Pritchett and Woolcock (2017) point to the capability of an organisation to implement policy as a key factor. Policy dysfunction occurs when an organisation chooses a wrong approach, for example, a formal one while informal norms '… have more traction on the behaviour of implementing agents than formal rules and processes' (2017: 80). Further, they elaborate that the capability of an organisation rests on its capacity to equip its agents to take the right action at the right time to achieve the organisation's normative objectives. Organisational capability can be classified as ideal, policy-compliant, actual, zero or negative and Andrews, Pritchett and Woolcock (2017:84–85) explain these as follows:

> 'Ideal capability*, in which the agent takes the best possible action available and hence produces the best achievable policy outcome. We assume agents are maximizing the normative objective of the organization. This can produce outcomes better (perhaps much better) than policy compliance.'*
>
> 'Policy-compliant capability *means that agents do exactly and only what the policy formula dictates. Agents give drivers' licenses when, and only when, the fact of the world meets the policy formula conditions for a driver's license. […] In education it is hard to believe that a policy could dictate exactly what teachers should do such that a "policy-compliant" outcome would actually be an ideal educational experience.'*
>
> 'Actual capability *is what happens in practice when agents make their own decisions. […] This is the typical case of "actual capability" in the developing world: agents choose to maximize their own wellbeing, with the objective function that is inclusive of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations and with the incentives presented by their social and organizational context.'*
>
> 'Zero capability *is what would happen if there were no organization at all. Actual capability can be this low — or, as we will see, lower.'*
>
> 'Negative capability *is a possibility because the state, by the very definition of being the state, has the ability to coerce. Organizations of the state can use power to exploit their own citizens and, through the imposition of obligations with no corresponding benefits, make them absolutely worse off.'*

One issue to note in the context of policy implementation is durability. Policy durability refers to the capacity of a policy to maintain stability, coherence and integrity as time passes (Patashnik, 2008). It also means the persistent pursuit of applying a policy concept and associated goals under changing circumstances. So, a policy can be considered durable if it can be adjusted to changing situations with high flexibility but is still firmly on the move to achieve the determined goals. Nixon (2016, citing Andrews, 2008), **sets out the three characteristics of a durable policy: acceptance, authority, and ability**. Acceptance refers to stakeholders accepting the reasons and need for the reform along with financial and other consequences. Authority means the capacity and power people involved have to enact the policy as a result of the legislation, while ability is defined as individual capacity and skills to conceptualise and implement the policy. When these three intersect, they create 'a reform space'. The reform space represents the durability and effectiveness of the policy implementation.

As part of the policy cycle, every policy needs to be monitored and evaluated for its effectiveness in achieving its objectives. In this process:

'…stakeholders follow and assess policies to ensure they are developed, endorsed, enacted and implemented as intended' (Health Policy Project, 2014:1).'

Assessment encompasses the activities of collecting and analysing data and making judgments to determine whether and how: objectives are achieved; problems can be solved; and improvements can be made (Glas, Scheerens and Thomas, 2003). The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) suggests three main functions of policy monitoring and evaluation: (1) supporting strategic planning and policymaking by improving the links between policy interventions and their outcomes and impact; (2) enhancing accountability and providing legitimacy for the use of public funds and resources; and (3) promoting learning and enhancing policies' efficiency and effectiveness (OECD, 2019).

Policy Sustainability

Although policy can never be one hundred per cent success or failure, successful policy can be seen in its sustainable benefits (Berchtold *et al*., 2020). Achieving sustainable benefits is one of the biggest challenges in developing and implementing policy. Studies show that change programs are often effective during implementation but fail to sustain after some time. Reviewing 91 reports of the educational intervention programs funded by foreign countries in Indonesia, Cannon (2017) found that only 12 per cent of the projects demonstrated actual sustainability which means that the program's benefits continued two or more years after project completion.

While the concept of sustainability is still contested and differs from one field to another (Farley and Smith, 2013), in policy studies Shediac-Rizkallah and Bone (1998) identified three indicators that a policy or program is being sustained: beneficiaries continue to achieve outcomes; activities continue to be done in government organisation; and government stakeholders develop the capacity to continue the project. Similarly, Moore, Mascarenhas, Bain and Straus (2017) identified the following five constructs that make up the term sustainability: after a period of time; continued delivery of programs; maintained individual behavioural change; evolution or adaptation; and continued benefits. They explicitly mention 'after a period of time' as one of the indicators which means, as Cannon also argues, that sustainability cannot be measured until after the relevant intervention has been completed for a reasonable period, for example, for a minimum of two years.

To accommodate various meanings of sustainability, several classifications are developed as follows (Cannon, 2020:68):

> *'*Likely sustainability *is an estimate made at or near to a project's completion that benefits will continue after assistance from a donor has been completed.* Actual sustainability *is a conclusion about sustainability reached after assessing the evidence, two or more years after a project's completion, that benefits have continued after assistance has concluded.* Dynamic sustainability *is continued learning and the adaptation of the benefits from interventions to achieve continuing improvements and change.* Complementary (or supportive) sustainability *is the continuation of good practice approaches and resources used from earlier educational development and from the continuity of experienced personnel from that earlier work. Scale out is the expansion of benefits and practices in the spatial dimension. Scale out only has significance if improved practices are sustained in original schools as well as schools included in any scale out.* Dissemination (diseminasi)*, a similar concept to scale out, means that benefits are distributed, available widely and implemented using local resources beyond the original development sites.'*

A comprehensive review on sustainability studies done by Stirman *et al.* (2012) concludes that partial sustainability is common in most projects, indicating that sustainability is not a simple task. They

identify several influences on successful sustainability, including: the context; the innovation (policy) itself; the process; and the capacity to sustain. In addition, Cannon, Arlianti and Riu (2014) emphasise grassroots support and ownership in the context of Indonesian education reform and categorise sustainability factors into: local ownership of reform; bottom-up commitment; change in the mindset and attitudes of education stakeholders; school conditions; transitional [viral] change among teachers; and district governments' commitment to support the reform sustainability. In this regard, Cannon, Arlianti and Riu (2014) are concerned with both individual and organisational capacity to sustain any policy or reform. In the field of educational management, this is termed as 'learning' that occurs at the level of individuals and organisations that eventually develop the 'capacity' to make and sustain reform (Sergiovanni, 2001).

COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on teaching and learning processes globally. In the United States, a survey in autumn 2020 showed that 56 per cent of teachers had covered only half the normal teaching materials while students had lost up to 37 per cent of a typical school year in reading and up to 63 per cent in mathematics (Hirsh-Pasek, Blinkoff, Hadani and Golinkoff, 2021). Similarly, in Indonesia, the pandemic has forced schools to run online teaching and learning and the research suggests that children have suffered learning loss from school closures although the risk was higher among children whose parents are less educated (Arsendy, Gunawan, Larasati and Suryadarma, 2020; Arsendy, Sukoco and Purba, 2020). Furthermore, parents have been under pressure to become learning assistants for their children at home. Another problem is the digital divide between the haves and the have-nots (Arsendy, Sukoco, *et al.*, 2020) since not all areas in Indonesia have good technology facilities, including electricity, computers and the Internet (Azzahra, 2020; Gupta and Khairina, 2020). Research evidence also shows that parents (usually mothers) have become the real teachers for their children, replacing the actual teachers who now usually give students abundant assignments to accomplish at home (Rakhmah and Azizah, 2020). Students have undoubtedly suffered most from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

While the priority areas of schooling have suffered greatly from the pandemic and had to be adjusted to remain active during this challenging time, the supporting programs are likely to be either pending or cancelled altogether. Governments around the world have adjusted and adapted their budgets, priorities and programs to emerge from the crisis without people suffering too great a loss in their basic needs (Berghout, 2020; Jones and Comfort, 2020). However, the pandemic provides an opportunity for governments to develop policies relevant to such situations in the future and even to develop the education system. In the Indonesian context, as the education minister reported, the forced adaptations for the COVID-19 pandemic also provided some opportunities, for example: an introduction of emergency curriculum with focus on essential competencies as well as a larger space for parents to participate in school processes and motivation for teachers, parents and students to learn how to use technology (Nurbaiti, 2020). Government also has an opportunity to develop policy on a more sustained online teaching approach for future challenges. However, policies will be complicated by the increasing inequalities in Indonesia that lead to a digital divide between students from families with certain privileges and those from particular geographical locations (Gupta and Khairina, 2020; World Bank, 2016, 2020).

Contextualising Inclusive Education – Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion

Inclusive education emphasises that every child has the right to participate in and receive equal assistance as their peers in the educational process and that the school system must embrace all pupils, regardless of their backgrounds (Hasugian, Gaurifa, Warella, Kelelufna and Waas, 2019). In INOVASI, inclusive education is defined as a broad concept incorporating gender equality, disabilities and social inclusion, similar as outlined in the UNESCO (2005:15) guidelines for inclusion adapted in Myers and Bagree (2011: 2).

Table 1: What is inclusion?

Inclusion is	Inclusion involves
• Recognising the right to education and providing it in non-discriminatory ways • A common vision covering everyone • A belief that schools and other places of learning have a responsibility to educate all children (and adults) in line with human rights principles • A continuous process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners – regardless of factors such as disability, gender, age, ethnicity, language, HIV status, geographical locations and sexuality – recognising that all people can learn	• Providing appropriate responses to the broad spectrum of learning needs in formal and other educational settings • Emphasising those groups of learners who may be at risk of being marginalised or excluded or of underachieving • Identifying and removing attitudinal, environmental and institutional barriers to participation and learning • Modifying strategies and plans as well as content and approach to learning when necessary • Enabling teachers and learners to see diversity as an asset rather than a problem

The UNESCO guidelines affirm that inclusive and quality education for all is necessary to achieve sustainable development goal 4: *Ensure that all students receive a high-quality education and have opportunities for lifelong learning* (INOVASI, 2020). In line with this, a number of policies that ratify inclusive education have also been issued in Indonesia, for example: Law No 19 of 2011 and Law No 8 of 2016 on people with disabilities; Government Regulation No 13 of 2020 on reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities; Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No 82 of 2015 and Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Regulation No 8 of 2014 against discrimination and children's rights abuse; Presidential Decree No 9 of 2000 on gender mainstreaming; and Ministry of Education Regulation No 84 of 2008 on implementation guidelines for gender mainstreaming in education (INOVASI, 2020).

However, the challenges persist in translating these policies into practice (INOVASI, 2020). Although the idea of inclusive education is generally accepted by the public, the concept has been interpreted in different ways. The inclusive education policy resulted in various perspectives on the notion of inclusion that sometimes narrows down the focus. Discussions on inclusive education still mostly focus on students with special needs, overlooking other dimensions such as gender and social factors (Mulyadi, 2017). Also, developing inclusive education closely relates to other policies at different levels in the education system and this may limit schools, teachers, and principals in implementing inclusive education (Ball, Maguire and Braun, 2012 in Magnusson, Goransson and

Lindqvist, 2019). Conditions that can affect the policy and its implementation include: changes in the education paradigm, for example, a shift from a centralised to a decentralised system; and changes in perspectives on education both in society and in government, for example, when education is no longer seen as a public good but as a traded commodity (Magnússon, Göransson and Lindqvist, 2019). This means that the various actors may have different ways of practising and implementing inclusive education.

While the Indonesian government has issued several policies around inclusive education, it is the role of local or district governments to implement them. The local government role in advocating inclusive education in their communities and monitoring outcomes is an important element in implementing inclusive education (Ainscow ainnd Miles, 2009). This is also the approach INOVASI has taken since phase 1 to promote inclusive education in our partner districts. We collaborate with the district office to promote inclusiveness, especially at the primary level, by addressing issues such as gender equality, social inclusion, and children with disabilities. The outcome, however, is determined by the capacity and awareness of local stakeholders. The following chapter discusses how stakeholders in the study location understand inclusive education and what efforts have been made to promote inclusiveness in schools.

2. Methodology

Research Approach

This study used a qualitative approach to answer the research questions and achieve the research objectives. This approach provides a thick description (Maxwell, 1996; Merriam, 1998) of how policy has been implemented, the success stories, supporting and impeding factors, and the potential for sustainability in the future. We uncover the characteristics of policy implementation before and during the COVID-19 pandemic and speculate on strategies to sustain the policies in question in the future. Furthermore, the qualitative approach meant that our researchers could gather various perspectives from different informants and policy stakeholders to gain a complete picture. Having a full account of policy implementation and potential sustainability means that relevant stakeholders, including the INOVASI teams, can learn from the process and make the necessary adjustments to make continuing reforms more effective.

The study treated each of the three policies as a case characterised by its own unique system, including the policy concept, context, people, sources of support, and so forth. This way of seeing the research object provided a comprehensive description of each policy, its implementation, and its sustainability, and enabled constant comparative analyses across the three cases. Consequently, research processes and procedures were more complicated which implies more time, energy, and costs but these were still manageable.

Data Collection and Research Participants

Triangulation is pivotal in qualitative research (Merriam, 1998), allowing us to build up a comprehensive understanding of the data in different ways. In this study, triangulation was enhanced by using multiple methods of collecting data to gain various perspectives from the research participants. We used triangulation to clarify and confirm data collected from one source by one method to build richer, more rigorous data. Data collection methods included in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and document collection. Research participants included the different stakeholders relating to each policy, in which twenty-seven informants were selected for interviews and nine groups of informants were chosen for focus group discussions (see full list in Table A1 in the appendix). Details of how we recruited them is provided in the section on sampling in this chapter. All data collection processes had to be conducted online due to the COVID-19 restrictions and we mainly used the Zoom application. However, WhatsApp voice calls and telephone interviews were used when Zoom was not possible due to a poor internet signal. This was a challenge in the study – having to frequently reschedule interviews due to the weak internet signal or the sudden unavailability of some informants.

In-depth interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted to collect data on: policy development and implementation; any issues arising; the supporting and impeding forces; sustainability; and challenges to sustainability. The research informants were invited to distinguish between the policy implementation process before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, and describe what adjustments were made to overcome the challenges it caused. In-depth interviews were a primary method of collecting information from the informants who all had distinctive characteristics in terms job authority. These informants

included government officials, supervisors, principals, teachers, parents, community members and INOVASI team members in East Java.

Focus group discussions

Focus group discussions were organised with INOVASI team members in East Java and with principals and teachers in each of the targeted districts. Gathering six to eight people together at a particular time to participate in an online discussion was one of the challenges in this study. In some focus group discussions, only three or four people attended and we then had to interview the rest of the targeted informants individually. Focus group discussions served as a primary method of collecting key information in this study and of clarifying and confirming information already collected in the interviews. Topics of discussion were developed to cover the issues of policy development, implementation, and sustainability.

Document collection

We collected and analysed relevant documents during this study, including: the policies under study, related previous policies, as well as subsequent policies. We also consulted INOVASI materials, such as, reports, briefs and other related documents. This helped support a complete analysis of the data. All documents were received online from the relevant informants. We also conducted a broader review of the literature on policy development, implementation and sustainability to draw on previous experience and expertise, and to put our own research into context.

Sampling participants

We selected study participants using a purposive sampling method by identifying respondents reputed to understand the policy processes and/or those who were involved in these processes. The INOVASI team in East Java provided a list of potential participants to contact and select for interviews or focus group discussions. We managed to contact and interview most of the informants on the list but a few were out of contact. We used a snowballing approach only with a couple of informants. Some potential informants in Probolinggo refused the invitation because they were unavailable or for other unknown reasons. Some of the informants we interviewed also complained that many research activities were being conducted at the same time and they were required to attend. Detailed information on the informants is provided in appendix 2 although we have used pseudonyms to protect their privacy and confidentiality. Overall, in Batu City we interviewed ten informants and had several focus group discussions with around 16 informants. In Probolinggo, we interviewed seven informants and had four focus group discussions on the literacy policy, while we had eleven individual interviews and two focus group discussions for the multigrade policy.

Ethics and Data Analysis

This study was guided by ethical approval processes administered and supervised by Atma Jaya University and the appropriate approval was obtained (reference number: 0360A/III/LPPM-PM.10.05/03/202). We used pseudonyms for the informants so they are hard to identify and they maintain their privacy.

Data analysis in qualitative research starts as soon as the fieldwork starts. This gives the researchers time to ponder on the data collection process, reflect on the answers given by informants and plan

the next iteration of the data collection process, until they consider it complete. In this process of making sense out of text and image, the researchers move deeper and deeper towards understanding the data comprehensively (Creswell, 2002: 183). The data analysis procedures in this study were: going through the transcriptions of all recorded data; coding and categorising the transcribed data; and interpreting the larger meaning of the data. In making codes and categories, the researchers used N-Vivo software since it helps to produce a list of categories and codes underneath along with the strings.

Although the instruments were built on different and evolving literature in the field, the researchers used an inductive coding process (Miles and Huberman, 1994), whereby the data is coded without rigid guidance from theory. This is because this study is an exploratory qualitative study and we wanted more 'grassroots' answers to the questions posed. We began the process in each of the cases singly or using within-case analysis where all the procedures such as transcription, coding and categorisation took place for each case. Batu's literacy policy was first placed in the N-Vivo analysis followed by Probolinggo's literacy policy and then the multigrade policy. After solid emerging themes were developed in each case, a cross-case analysis was used to examine the commonalities and particularities of each case (Merriam, 1998; Miles and Huberman, 1994). The report of this study records the findings from this cross-case analysis.

Research Procedures

In conducting this research, we coordinated with the INOVASI teams in both Jakarta and East Java. This started with the discussions on the objectives and focus of this research and continued as the research progressed. The research procedures were as follows:

1. *Consultation with INOVASI:* This is when the senior researcher was in close consultation with the INOVASI teams to discuss and build a thorough understanding of the organisation's needs and the focus of the intended study. The INOVASI teams constantly consulted with government officials in order to help determine potential informants.

2. *Objectives of the study:* The consultation process led to a conclusion about what the study aimed to achieve and these objectives are listed in the first part of this report.

3. *Research proposal design:* The senior researcher reviewed the literature and wrote a research proposal to respond to the needs and focus of the study.

4. *Data collection process:* The researchers conducted online fieldwork, collecting information from the informants as described under methodology. This took place during the month of April 2021.

5. *Data analysis:* In this phase the researchers analysed the data to generate solid findings on the focused areas of the study. N-Vivo software was used at this stage to help the process of coding and categorising.

6. *Member checking or validation:* As we wanted to include some kind of participatory action research during the fieldwork, we conducted further focus group discussions with various stakeholders in each district to develop an awareness of findings among them and to ask them to verify the analysed data.

7. *Report writing:* After the data was validated by various stakeholders we finalised the research report.

Research Limitations

While this research informs new findings on policy development, implementation, evaluation, and sustainability, and the great disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic during policy implementation, it has several limitations:

- First, this study was qualitative research that aimed for a deep understanding of the cycle in each of the policies. By its nature, qualitative research cannot capture trends in the data as it is provided by just a small number of informants and can only portray the in depth data bound by its specific context. This handicaps the possibility of generalising the findings into different contexts although generalisation would remain open if other cases shared the characteristics of the research contexts.

- Second, this research relies on online interviews with several informants from each policy context. The interviews were useful in gathering data about the experiences, activities, perspectives, beliefs and values of the informants. However, the data is perspectival and therefore not a first-hand experience of the researchers. This limits the researchers' understanding of the data to what has been conveyed by the informants. This would not be the case if first-hand observation of events could have been done in this research.

- Third, online interviews and focus group discussions had to be used due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In our experience, online interviews were harder to conduct because of their dependence on technology; not all informants had reliable internet connections. Also, virtual communication cannot fully expose the researchers to non-verbal data, such as gestures that are normally considered important in qualitative research.

Research Timeline

This research was conducted over several phases. We completed the research proposal and design in March 2021, and this was followed by the online data collection in April. We analysed the data through May and in June we produced the first draft of the report. The report was then revised and finalised by the end of October 2021.

3. Findings

This chapter presents the findings from the three cases under study in the two research sites: the policy on Batu City as a literacy city; the policy on multigrade approaches in Probolinggo; and the policy on literacy, also in Probolinggo. We use a comparative approach in presenting the data and look at the three cases together, noting similarities and highlighting aspects that are particular to each case. This multiple case approach to presenting the data adds more depth to our understanding of each case and puts them into context. We used the six main research questions listed in the first chapter to develop corresponding sections and structure the data in this section.

Policy Development

This section delineates the development of the literacy and multigrade policies in the two districts respectively, showing how the broad policies are broken down into several subsequent policies and programs or activities. We also explore the approaches used in the processes of policymaking from initiating the policy to information sharing and examining the stakeholders' responses to the respective policies.

Summary of the three policies

The policy on Batu City as a literacy city was formulated in line with the National Literacy Movement document that formed part of the Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No 23 of 2015. The overarching goal of the policy is to enhance the literacy culture and cultivate character education in both domestic (households) and public (schools and society) contexts. The policy provides direction for the literacy movement in Batu City that includes schools, families and communities, as well as incorporating government's official literacy movement guidelines. The policy document underlines seven key literacy skill areas, namely: basic, numeracy, science, digital, financial, cultural and citizenship. The regulation also seeks to change the mindset of the whole society by promoting a love of reading and developing critical thinking skills in response to science and technology. This extends the literacy policy to include library, visual and media-related literacy skills. While the literacy policy in Probolinggo similarly aims to develop a literacy culture in the community, Batu City's declaration of Batu City as a literacy city implies literacy as a mass movement and this emphasis is lacking in the Probolinggo literacy policy that functions more as a set of guidelines for regular literacy activities.

The third policy we examine in this study, also issued by the regent in Probolinggo, is Regulation No 18 of 2019 on multigrade approaches to teaching and learning. This policy is designed to help the education office overcome geographical and demographic problems, including low student numbers per school; lack of classroom space; shortage of teachers and efficiency in assigning teachers; quality and quantity of student learning; and preparedness for the impact of natural disasters. The multigrade policy regulates the mechanisms, strategies and principles used in implementing multigrade classes in schools in Probolinggo. Table 2 presents a summary of the three policies.

Table 2: Summary of the three policies in this study

Batu	Probolinggo	
Literacy policy (No 23 of 2018)	*Literacy policy (No 93 of 2018)*	*Multigrade policy (No 18 of 2019)*
Objectives		
To implement the national literacy movement[5] but specifically through a mayor's regulation (PERWALI) the policy declares Batu as a literacy city The purpose of this policy is to create a learning culture at the level of education units, government offices and in the society in general	To create a culture of literacy and change mindsets in the community by developing a reading and writing culture, as well as improving critical thinking skills in science and technology The policy serves as a reference document in implementing the district's literacy movement	To overcome geographical and demographic problems in education, including low student numbers per school; lack of classroom space; teacher shortages and efficiency in assigning teachers; quality and quantity of student learning; as well as to mitigate the impact of natural disasters (volcanic eruptions, landslides, floods)
Scope		
Literacy in schools, families, communities and among government officials, targeting 7 literacy skills: early, basic, numeracy, science, digital, financial, culture and citizenship	District literacy movement, covering basic, library, media, technology and visual literacy skills	A system where students from different grades are put in the same class, designed for schools with specific conditions (low student numbers, remote areas, teacher shortages) Teachers' working groups (KKGs) are mandatory and teachers manage the classes by referring to the strategies, principles and procedures given in the policy document
Implementation and monitoring mechanisms		
Government offices and literacy volunteers report the results from the implementation and monitoring processes to a task force set up by the mayor	The regional secretary is responsible for monitoring the output from the three implementing offices: the local education offices, library and archives offices and village government offices	Each school selected implements the policy and uses the usual general reporting and monitoring mechanism, through the principal, supervisor and the education office
Gender equality, disability and social inclusion issues		
Implicit in the policy but not explicit on accommodating GEDSI groups except in a brief mention that the literacy movement should allow for the wider community involvement	Social inclusion-based literacy programs and targets are explicitly included in chapter IV part III, articles 11–13	Accommodating remote schools and all students is explicitly stated as a target

[5] Gerakan Literasi National is a national literacy movement initiated by the Ministry of Education and Cuture to develop literacy skills and character education (https://gln.kemdikbud.go.id).

Subsequent policies and programs

This section presents and elaborates on subsequent policies, programs and activities that stemmed from the literacy and multigrade policies in the three districts. In Batu City, a number of programs and policies were derived from the literacy policy, including technical guidelines and school library accreditation decrees. The education office and schools actively organised competitions as part of the literacy movement. Similarly, in Probolinggo, several programs and activities resulted from the literacy and multigrade policies. In Batu City, the education office and schools seemed to take control in developing programs derived from the policy, such as: reading corner activities in schools; poetry writing and reading competitions; reading Kartini's letters; and so on. However, in Probolinggo, the library and archives office were more active in organising and creating literacy-related programs, such as: community literacy: mobile libraries; library digitalisation; and village libraries.

Although a high-level official from the education office in Probolinggo said that transfers and distribution of teachers had been adjusted to support the policy, the teachers admitted that the process still overlooked the schools' need for well-trained teachers. Furthermore, while the multigrade approach is used mainly in schools with too few students, the approach can also be used to foster literacy and numeracy for all elementary school students.

Table 3: Subsequent policies, programs and activities

Batu	Probolinggo	
Subsequent literacy policy	***Subsequent literacy policy***	***Subsequent multigrade policy***
▪ Technical guidelines for the Mayor's regulation on Batu as a literacy city ▪ Technical guidelines for the regional operational assistance for schools (BOSDA) ▪ School library accreditation decree, issued 8 April 2021	▪ Regional decrees on inclusive schools issued in 2015 and 2019 (these are not subsequent policies but they go together in terms of their implementation)	▪ Multigrade policy and decree on multigrade schools in 2020 and 2021 (drafting process for 17 additional schools)
Subsequent literacy programs and activities	***Subsequent literacy programs and activities***	***Subsequent multigrade programs and activities***
▪ Reading corners; village libraries; mobile libraries; literacy communities; local TV channel for education programs (ATV); collaboration with local non-governmental organisations to organise a media literacy workshop for teachers ▪ 2019 competitions: my teacher's storytelling competition; class makeover competition; poetry writing and reading competition; One Teacher One Book program (SAGU SABU – *Satu Guru Satu Buku)* ▪ 2020 competitions: junior high school poetry competition; junior high school learning 'vlog' competition; poster design competition	▪ Literacy community, library accreditation; school librarians; mobile library; storytelling; reading-writing clinic; digitalising the library; competitions, collaboration with external institutions, such as industry; reading corners and village libraries	▪ INOVASI's multigrade teaching – prosperous community project (*Bela Sang Raja*); parents support to schools project (*Pisang Inovasi*) ▪ Motorbike transport for schoolchildren program (*Ojek anak sekolah*—OASE)

Policymaking approach and process

This section elaborates on the processes of formulating and developing the literacy and multigrade policies in Batu City and Probolinggo by examining the background to the policies, the policy initiators and stakeholder involvement. The literacy policies in Batu City and Probolinggo both reflect the stakeholders' awareness of local education conditions and problems. In Probolinggo, most informants, including the head of the district education office, school principals and supervisors, voiced their concern about low levels of literacy and numeracy among elementary students. A high-level official in the education office also spoke about this issue:

> *'The first [priority] is to improve the quality of education in Probolinggo. Frankly speaking, the quality of education in Probolinggo is ranked the fourth from the bottom in East Java. So we are now pushing the schools to improve the quality of education. Secondly, because [the district has] very different human resources [in terms of] quality and yes, because of barriers in demography and geography, children cannot be given good materials in terms of numeracy and literacy. So, we prioritise this literacy because it is the basis for them to socialise.'*

Although stakeholders in both districts share similar concerns, the process of developing the literacy policy in Batu City appeared to be more bottom-up (INOVASI, 2019b), while in Probolinggo they tended to be more top-down. In Batu City, the literacy movement had started long before the policy was issued. According to Mrs Hartini, a supervisor in Batu City, teachers were highly interested in writing in Batu and the writing activities had been running long before the literacy movement was launched. This is borne out by the number of teachers' writing communities and the work they have published through the teachers' media room. These teacher communities put pressure on the education office to encourage literacy activities in the community.

Meanwhile, in Probolinggo, the literacy policy was influenced by other cities that reverberated with the literacy movement like Batu City. The INOVASI team in Probolinggo agreed that the literacy policy was influenced by these policies in other areas but it is also one of the regent's visions for education, according to a high-level official in the education office. In other words, the policy direction was top-down and INOVASI's monitoring, evaluation, research, and learning (MERL) consultant agreed with this observation:

> *'I reckon this is [more] a top-down policy, as mandated by the regent. It was published without the pilot activities, as in the multigrade policy [where] we had previously identified the existing problems and we had meetings with stakeholders to seek the solution.'*

Because INOVASI was one of the initiators who played a major role in formulating and developing this policy, the data we collected relating to the drafting process up to the publication of the policy mostly comes from our INOVASI team. One INOVASI staff member explained the process as follows:

> *'[…] This is the longest policy [process] we have made. Because it was handled by the education office in collaboration with Bappeda (regional development planning agency) and all supervisors in all fields to compile it. So, the first idea is what needs to be regulated, then [getting] the stakeholders involved. We continued trials and discussions, almost every month. Once every two weeks we had meetings. Then it [the policy document] was delivered to the legal department, and that too took a long, long time. It's complicated, right, it's the longest [process]. I finally browsed on the legal documentation network system and when I clicked on the latest policy, the literacy policy appeared. Then I downloaded it and sent it to the head of the education office. It turns out that the policy has already been issued. Even the head of the education office had not been notified.'*

The development process for the multigrade policy was different from the processes involved in the literacy policies in either Batu City or Probolinggo. The policy was initiated by a school supervisor who had been introduced to multigrade classes through a different intervention program in 2007. Since then, he had been trying to offer the multigrade system to the local government since they had the same issues of limited numbers of students and classes. However, he did not convince them, as he said:

> *'I was faced with a complicated problem because, firstly, the numbers of teachers and the students were very small [but] it is very unlikely to be able to merge these schools as geographically they are remote. I proposed the idea of multigrade to the [education] office hoping that they would respond positively. I also happened to get connected with INOVASI and, with their technical assistance, we could finally begin the project.'*

Supported by INOVASI, an in-depth analysis meeting of the local school conditions recommended that a multigrade approach was needed in Probolinggo as a matter of urgency. This was reported to the local authorities who finally approved running a pilot project on this approach. The results from the pilot were deemed successful and this led to the multigrade policy being formulated. The leadership staff in the Probolinggo district education office, the regional development planning agency (Bappeda), regional representative council (DPRD) representatives, members of the education council and the local civil servants board all attended the meeting to formulate the policy.

Challenges and support

In this section we present our findings on challenges and support in relation to the process of developing the policies. These themes recur later in the report but in the context of implementing the policies.

One librarian that we interviewed in Batu City talked about the challenge of trying to change the mindsets of the community and the government as well as the problem of weak coordination between the different local government offices. She appreciated the value of the literacy policy but regretted that the library and archives office had so little input in the policy development process. She argued that developing and implementing literacy programs is the main task of the library office and their staff could have recommended what content needed to be included in the policy. However, both the education office and INOVASI have made an effort to minimise any friction between the offices. The education office official acknowledged that coordinating personally with the village government and the library office had resulted in positive developments.

The challenge of coordination between local government offices was also evident in developing the literacy regulations in Probolinggo. One librarian, Mr Hamid, revealed that although several agencies were involved, no clear synergy occurred between them. Confirming this, an INOVASI staff member acknowledged the potential conflict between agencies in the ownership of the literacy policies. He saw that the library office was interested in the community literacy movement from the start and was going to suggest a community literacy regulation to them but the library office had already started drafting the policy. Meantime it turned out that the education office had moved more quickly and already compiled the policy document for the district literacy movement. The library policy had to be discontinued since Mr Hamid was enlisted on the drafting team for the district literacy policy. Despite this, the library and archives office fully support the policy through several programs, including improving information services, community involvement and advocacy.

Apart from these challenges, the policies also gained support from the local authorities. In Batu City, the local representative council provided a budget for the literacy policy as one legal representative from the representative council's education commission pointed out. In addition to this support, the representative council also provided rewards for schools that achieved certain targets in literacy. These were in the form of budgets, facilities, and reforestation schemes. In Probolinggo, the education office also secured local budget support for the multigrade and literacy programs although it could not cover the full costs of providing school facilities and teaching aids.

Government stakeholders initially responded negatively to the multigrade policy. The initiating supervisor said that both teachers and the local government doubted that multigrade classes could run well. They assumed that obstacles would arise in relation to learning activities, teachers, students and students' competencies. He said that even school principals were pessimistic and predicted that bullying would occur in merging upper and lower grade students in one class. However, INOVASI's efforts to disseminate appropriate information to parents and organise training for teachers circumvented these problems and proved the stakeholders' reservations were unfounded. It turned out that schools that had experienced the benefits of the multigrade policy also provided positive support. INOVASI's MERL consultant revealed, for example, that schools in Wonomerto subdistrict fully supported the multigrade policy, especially where the collaboration between principals and teachers was well established and communication lines were open with their counterparts and supervisors in Sukapura, one of subdistricts in Probolinggo.

Policy Implementation

This section describes the implementation of the three respective policies. It explores the strategies that local offices developed to build the capacity needed to implement the policy, the actual process and its perceived quality and outcomes. We also identify factors that supported effective implementation and those that created obstacles or challenges in the process. Note that this particular section describes the policy implementation process before the COVID-19 pandemic began.

Preparation stages

In the context of this study, the preparations for implementing policy encompass building awareness and developing capacity among those involved in the process in various ways. This included a range of stakeholders from the immediate policy implementers, such as teachers, to broader beneficiaries, such as parents.

Building awareness and stakeholders' responses

Disseminating information about policy is one way of building awareness about the policy and its content among relevant stakeholders. One dissemination method used in both locations was through festivals. For example, Batu City launched the literacy policy through a Literacy Festival while Probolinggo launched its literacy policy at an Innovation Gathering and Literacy Day where teachers and students displayed their literacy work and INOVASI showcased the pilot project outcomes. According to the INOVASI team, this approach means the information and awareness are not limited to education sector stakeholders only but reach all levels of society.

Other ways of disseminating information include various activities managed by relevant stakeholders, such as the education office, library and archives office, and training programs, for

example, organised by INOVASI. A high-level official from Batu City's library and archives office took the initiative and compiled a circular to disseminate information, as he explained:

> *'We distributed a circular to offices and agencies in order to [encourage them] to make a reading corner or [set up a] small library. We expect that they can provide reading corners in their own offices since that's a form of literacy [promotion] for government officials.'*

Stakeholders at both government and school level responded well to local government offices' collaboration and dissemination activities. At the village level, the development of village libraries has been increasingly encouraged and accompanied by various plans to add community reading parks, as Mr Sulistyo, one village head said. Meanwhile, both the school committee and parents' associations responded positively to the policy, although implementation was hampered during the pandemic, as Mr Suripto, a parent, explained.

In contrast, the process of formulating and issuing the literacy policy in Probolinggo was dominated by the education office and INOVASI, and consequently this policy has not been as well received at the education unit level. Apparently, many teacher informants and school committees did not understand the concept of the literacy policy, as Mr Syamsi, the head of the school committee admitted. He had heard about the literacy policy but he said he did not understand it. The school had never disseminated the information to parents and even in focus group discussions with teachers at the school, they admitted that no formal information sharing about the policy had taken place, other than through school supervisors. Interestingly, however, the teachers concerned responded positively to the literacy policy because they realised that the training INOVASI initiated was useful. They are now passionate about implementing the training sessions from INOVASI. Other teachers in Probolinggo agreed with this, as Mr Ahmad, a *madrasah* principal, said:

> *'The response was unexpected, perhaps it's a new thing for us. INOVASI provides us with current information that we then share with other teacher colleagues through workshops. We also gain information from the real situation, how we learn to write, a literacy class and so on. Even teachers in madrasahs responded well by working independently with the committee and the foundation.*
>
> *'So far, we haven't received support from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, so we worked independently with the school committee and the foundation to adapt the policy. So, when we were selected as facilitators, we also helped to disseminate in other areas, to other institutions. Frankly speaking, these institutions showed great interest, unfortunately in the end it was not completed and there are still institutions that we have not invited to join because we ran out of time due to the pandemic.'*

Dissemination activities for the multigrade policy did not start as an exercise in sharing information but began directly as scale-out activities. One principal explained that principals were invited to a socialisation meeting that was really a training activity attended by three teachers and one principal. Teachers and principals voiced different opinions about the multigrade policy. State schools that had the problem of low numbers in classes and too few teachers saw the benefits of the multigrade approach and therefore welcomed this policy. However, several schools objected to the policy for different reasons, such as competition with private schools and the additional burden on the teachers. One principal, Mr Purwanto, explained that parents tended to choose regular private schools rather than multigrade schools where students from two different grades were taught together. Another issue cited by one principal, Mrs Sukma, was the challenges teachers face in mapping and integrating different basic competencies from two or three different classes. This made life harder for some teachers who were already struggling to manage on their low salaries. We explore this issue later in this implementation section.

Facilitator training and workshops

In Batu, teachers, principals and supervisors were recruited as local facilitators responsible for training school principals and teachers in implementing various literacy programs in schools. Similarly, in Probolinggo, principals and supervisors were trained to implement the literacy or multigrade programs. An advisor from the East Java INOVASI team described in his report that training for local facilitators in Probolinggo took place on 12–13 October 2018 and 28 facilitators learned various skills and techniques including: developing a growth mindset; classroom management; and using active learning (Sutranggono, 2019: 44). These trained facilitators had to practice in a real workplace situation before they could go on to train other principals and teachers. In Batu, after the launch of the literacy policy in 2019, INOVASI conducted training for local facilitators as part of the preparations for implementation (Sutranggono, 2019). Those who participated in the training gained an abundance of knowledge and competencies on how to improve learning and learning outcomes in literacy.

According to one participant, Mrs Indah, from Batu, the training she attended shed light on ways of teaching literacy to children that were different from her usual approach in the classroom. She learned how to teach reading for comprehension and writing for meaning. Similar to Mrs Indah's experience, another participant, Mrs Maya, said:

> *'[The training] has been useful to add to our knowledge so that our classroom practices are not monotonous. We now have various ways of teaching; we can use stories and word games so that students don't feel bored. […] Also, we learned how to respect students. For example, when students cannot read, we used to say: "why can't you read?". But now (after the training), we say: "what did you find difficult?" or "what is making it difficult for you?". So, by changing the way [we respond] we learned to respect our students more.'*

In Probolinggo, after the main training program mentioned earlier, further training was conducted regularly once a semester for teachers of both lower and upper grades, according to a high-level official from the education office. She was referring to the training organised for both literacy and multigrade programs. However, while teachers participating in the literacy program thought the training was significant and useful for their classroom practices, teachers participating in the multigrade program considered the training insufficient. Teachers had a problem with integrating the basic competencies from two different grades and were asking for more training and also coaching.

Besides various training sessions or workshops held in the school context, the literacy program was also strengthened by collaboration between the school sector and library offices. Although some informants criticised the lack of coordination between these sectors, as reported earlier, in Batu particularly, several training programs were conducted to improve the capacity of relevant staff. For example, Mrs Merah Sari, a Batu librarian, mentioned training that included: storytelling for parents with small children; short story writing for students; academic writing for teachers; and library management in schools or in the community.

Implementation process and quality

This subsection covers the following themes: starting the implementation process; stakeholders' commitment; implementation gaps; scale-out activities; and informants' perception of the quality of these processes.

Starting the implementation process

Implementing the three policies started with different processes, reflecting the contextual differences in how the policies were developed. In Batu, the literacy policy started with a joyful celebration at the Literacy Festival on 8 November 2018 where the policy was launched with various competitions and the literacy movement echoed out to reach out to different segments of Batu society. Going back to the situation before this policy was launched, teachers had advocated for a regulation on literacy to provide a 'legal sanctuary' for literacy activities. Therefore, some literacy supra-structures, such as motivation, enthusiasm and uncoordinated activities were in place before the regulation was issued (INOVASI, 2019b). With the extra support from the policy, the literacy programs and activities in Batu have been strengthened, intensified and coordinated, not only in schools but also in communities and government offices.

Similarly, the multigrade policy in Probolinggo can be seen as a continuation of previous efforts to resolve problems regarding the limited number of teachers and students in schools. This is best described in the following excerpt from our interview with Mr Sarjito, a school supervisor in Probolinggo:

> *'Raihani: When did the multigrade program start?*
>
> *Sarjito: In Sukapura, if I am not mistaken it started in the middle of 2007, in July. Sorry sir, I can't open the data now.*
>
> *Raihani: But the year of the policy is 2019, isn't it?*
>
> *Sarjito: Yes, the policy was issued in 2019 after we had shown successful results [that multigrade teaching can work]; and that multigrade teaching can be a solution for our problems here. We have small numbers of students and teachers, and [the solution is] multigrade [teaching?]. So, we proved it first; it wasn't like that the policy was suddenly issued.'*

As explained earlier, Mr Sarjito's initiatives in advocating the multigrade teaching approach were implemented in Sukapura's schools where he served as supervisor. He had been one of the USAID facilitators in Probolinggo and had good connections with INOVASI personnel. He was able to capitalise on this in that INOVASI came to Probolinggo in 2018 to help Mr Sarjito in his ambition to implement the multigrade program (focus group discussion with INOVASI team). Thus, implementing the multigrade approach started long before the actual policy on this approach was issued.

The literacy pilot in Probolinggo started after the issuance of the policy in 2018. Teachers attended several training programs, as mentioned, and tried to transfer the learning acquired to their classrooms. The library and archives office also ran several activities, mainly to open access to books and other materials for various segments of society. In our analysis of the data, implementing this literacy policy in schools did not run as well as expected due to several factors that we explore later in this sub-section. However, interestingly, in the context of the *madrasah*, the policy was effectively translated into action. From the interviews with some *madrasah* principals and teachers in Paiton, the INOVASI-run literacy training equipped them with the motivation, knowledge, and skills to implement the literacy program in their *madrasah* even without support from the local government. One respondent, Mr Ahmad described the process:

> *'So far, we have received no support from the [local] government. We work independently and collaborate with the madrasah committee and yayasan (foundation) to develop policies appropriate to our madrasah. So, when we were appointed to become facilitators in Probolinggo,*

we tried to scale out the programs in other madrasah. We even developed model teachers in the lower grades of one, two and three. We have been successful so far and continue to train teachers based on the previous training programs we participated in.'

The INOVASI team in East Java also acknowledged the commitment and success of the literacy policy in the *madrasah* in Paiton.

Stakeholders' commitment

Stakeholders' commitment is an important component in successful policy implementation. Commitment usually results in authority and/or agency to act and ensure that implementation goes well and achieves the intended outcomes. In Batu, we are convinced that almost all relevant stakeholders were highly committed to the policy implementation process and achieving success. Some informants talked about the enthusiasm of stakeholders who attended the training, participated in competitions, initiated new ways of teaching, and disseminated lessons learned to relevant members of the community. Others praised the local government commitment to helping every school, including the *madrasah* sector, in implementing the policy. The district house of representatives also demonstrated its commitment to safeguarding and passing any budget proposals that support education and literacy programs. In assessing stakeholders' commitment in Batu, an INOVASI staff member observed:

'In general, I believe that they welcome the literacy programs with enthusiasm because [they are aware that] Batu is a literacy city. In villages, they made reading corners under the funding from the dana desa (village budget), which also serve as educative places to visit.'

By contrast, stakeholders' commitment in the context of implementing the literacy policy in Probolinggo was questioned by several informants. While the education office claimed that it was committed to supporting literacy policy implementation through the local budget allocation (APBD), it also acknowledged several challenges in achieving this, including a lack of commitment among certain stakeholders. A high-level official explained that some teachers would not leave their comfort zone and accept new challenges that may disrupt their current practices. Mrs Rinayati similarly explained:

'Those who respond positively to this literacy program are teachers who have been known as active teachers. Those who work as usual (biasa-biasa saja) will continue to work as usual, even after attending the training. So, nothing changes.'

In INOVASI's observation, not only was there a lack of commitment at the level of the policy implementers like teachers, as in the comments, but also at the local government level. One INOVASI advisor argued as follows:

'We used to go to Bappeda and INOVASI staff went to the library and archives office to check their commitment to implementing this policy, and they said "siap" (yes), but there was no follow-up. So, we were just waiting because we did not want to be aggressive [by asking them about progress]. […] So, at that time we were there to help them regarding how to progress with this literacy policy implementation. But I guess the outcomes have not been satisfactory.'

However, the local government's commitment to implementing the multigrade teaching policy seemed to be more serious than for the literacy policy and this is evident in several informants' interviews that we present later. We also sensed a difference in attitude in one of the officials we interviewed that suggested a preference for the multigrade program. This does not necessarily mean that the multigrade policy implementation was, as a whole, more effective as we explore in this

subsection. Nevertheless, the level of commitment towards this policy was clearly higher than for the literacy policy.

Implementation gaps

We found implementation gaps in terms of the concepts of the policies, between the policy concept and its implementation, and between the pilot and scale-out schools. In Batu, the education office highlighted the overly ideal concept of literacy in government offices that until now, as she said, has never been realised. For example, the mandate to provide a reading corner for local government offices was not evenly enacted. In Probolinggo, the policy implementation gaps cover issues of uneven implementation, particularly between urban and rural areas and between pilot and scale-out schools. The literacy policy mandates establishing a library in each school and community but, according to a high-level education office informant, enacting this mandate in schools in rural and isolated areas, such as islands and mountains, is challenging. Even in urban schools, as she continued, libraries or reading corners could not be established easily because of the limited school resources.

More interestingly, there was a significant implementation gap between the multigrade implementation in the eight participating pilot schools and that in the scale-out schools. The multigrade program started in 2017 with eight schools in Sukapura that eventually became models for other schools in Probolinggo and even for other areas of Indonesia with similar problems. INOVASI assisted in developing this pilot project by providing training and close mentoring for school supervisors, principals and teachers. The project was considered successful and all involved parties were proud of their achievements, including the school stakeholders as well as the local government. Much had been done and the local government gained popularity in both local and national political contexts. Not only did stakeholders from scale-out schools visit Sukapura to learn but also other district education offices, school principals and teachers from across Indonesia came to see how a multigrade teaching approach was successfully implemented.

The success of implementing the multigrade policy drove the local government to disseminate this program to other schools through scale-out programs. In 2020, the government issued another policy through the education office that added 91 more schools as beneficiaries of the multigrade program. While the outcomes of policy implementation in these schools were not yet known, local government was already planning to add 17 more schools to the list of multigrade schools. Generally, we found that the implementation process in the scale-out schools could not entirely replicate what had worked so well in the original pilot schools. In some of the scale-out schools, teachers were using the multigrade approach within the limits of their understanding but in many others, it was not yet implemented at all. One teacher, Mr Syarwani, said that the multigrade program implementation did not go well in his school because teachers remained confused about how to integrate curriculum competencies from the different grades. Mrs Yulia, another teacher, confirmed this remark:

> *'We tried to implement it in the classroom but it was not effective because we were still confused (about how to implement it).'*

Mrs Elyati, a teacher at a school in a mountainous area, explained that after completing the training, she did not have a chance to implement the approach except once when the education office instructed her to implement it and took a video for promotion. After the video-making, the implementation stopped. In line with this, Mr Sarjito and the INOVASI team acknowledged the uneven implementation process in scale-out schools that was so different from the process in the pilot schools. Informants outlined some of these differences.

Mrs Elyati told us further:

> *'I used to see the Sukapura's schools. They are very different from us. From what [I can see], they have complete facilities. Their teachers are of high quality, as I observed when they were teaching. In Sukapura, teachers use learning media so that teaching processes become easy and fun. In my school, we have to go into the city just to print out pictures to use in teaching.'*

From her observations, Mrs Elyati believed that the multigrade program in her school would not be as effectively implemented as in the Sukapura schools because of the differences in facilities and teacher capacity in the schools. The East Java INOVASI team recognised the gaps between the two phases of implementation and attributed them to a lack of mentoring from both the INOVASI team and school supervisors. One INOVASI team member commented as follows during a focus group discussion:

> *'In the pilot project, we closely and intensively mentored the schools. I, myself, was closely involved. Local facilitators had the responsibility to guide teachers in day-to-day implementation. […] But the scale-out process was different; we used a cheaper way, through teachers' working groups to disseminate the lessons and employed simplified materials for learning.'*

In short, one point of the implementation gap is that the scale-out activities for the multigrade program were different from the pilot design. In the scale-out, one-block training was used to equip teachers with an understanding of the multigrade concept and some competencies in integrating curriculum indicators. This training was held only for three days compared to that of the pilot projects in which supervisors, principals, and teachers respectively received several training according to the subject matters or topics followed by intensive continuous coaching. Another difference is regarding the mentoring system. While in the pilot schools, each participating school had a facilitator to help the teachers to implement the multigrade, in the scale-out schools, all depended on the capacity and commitment of the supervisors.

Scale-out activities

Another element emerging from the data and categorised as part of the implementation is the scale-out process. After the implementation of each policy the data shows that the policy stakeholders aspired to share and spread what they believed were the good effects from the policy. Scale-out activities took place for each of the policies. What also seemed to be common across all three cases is that the scale out could not achieve the levels of success that the original or the pilot projects achieved and all the informants attributed the success of the pilot project to INOVASI's intervention.

Regarding the scale-out activities in the context of Batu, Mrs Hartini explained that there were thirteen clusters of schools in the whole of the Batu municipality. Four of them were appointed as partnering clusters with INOVASI's literacy program. This left nine clusters that had not received INOVASI's intervention on literacy. The Batu City education office therefore initiated a program through their own budget to disseminate and scale out what INOVASI had implemented to improve literacy in the remaining schools. The education office ran this training for supervisors, principals, and teachers on implementing literacy programs, similar to the first round of training. Responses from the scale-out school were said to be positive as Mrs Dita, a principal of a Batu school, explained:

> *'We are supported by the education office to disseminate [the program] to other schools. During the scale-out activities, we were accompanied by supervisors. So, we were not on our own. The principals of the scale-out schools welcomed and supported the dissemination initiative, and they were willing to change themselves and their schools.'*

A high-level education office official explained that she had to maximise the roles of the teachers' working groups for the dissemination process since the budget was limited, although 'cloning' INOVASI's whole approach and strategies would be the best option.

Except in Paiton where the *madrasah* achieved promising scale-out initiatives on their own, the scale-out activities for the literacy policy in Probolinggo were limited and not as extensive as those in Batu. Some teachers in schools knew about the scale-out activities through teachers' working groups but they expressed doubts that the process went well. One teacher, Mrs Rinayati, even sounded pessimistic about the dissemination process:

> *'Teachers who have been trained do not even share with other teachers in their schools.'*

She went on to explain that the government (education office) should have forced school principals and teachers to disseminate the policy as, without coercion, she believed that scale out would never happen.

Meanwhile, the scale out of the multigrade policy was supported by subsequent policies to cover more schools, as mentioned. From the INOVASI report, training for supervisors, principals, and teachers in 30 scale-out schools took place from the period of September to November 2019, a few months before the COVID-19 pandemic started to spread. Other scale-out schools had training on multigrade approaches in January 2020, just before government's first response to the pandemic in April 2020. Many teachers considered that the training they attended provided only initial knowledge of the multigrade teaching approach because the training was only held for three days, and they felt an urgent need for further training. One participant, Mr Purwanto, said:

> *'I participated in the training for three days. After that, there was no activity at all because of the COVID-19.'*

Mrs Endah, another principal, added:

> *'We, indeed, have hoped that [trained teachers would share with other teachers]. The training we joined seemed only like an information sharing (sosialisasi), only initial knowledge. So, we need deeper understanding of the approach from others.'*

Professional development through teachers' working groups (KKG)

What emerged from the data in all three cases was that teachers' working groups (KKG) have been used as one of the primary vehicles for the continuing professional development of supervisors, principals, and teachers. As an internal and informal means of delivering continuing professional development, teachers' working groups were cleverly used to impart a variety of knowledge, competencies and skills to these school stakeholders, ranging from regular school issues to INOVASI-driven content such as literacy (Batu and Probolinggo) and multigrade approach (Probolinggo). A consultant from INOVASI confirmed that teachers' working groups were used to train principals and teachers on foundational materials such as: developing a growth mindset; the multigrade concept; analysing basic curriculum competencies; and classroom management for the multigrade approach.

For the multigrade program, one teacher, Mrs Minda, explained that after attending the training for multigrade teaching held by the education office in Probolinggo, teachers regularly participated in teachers' working group meetings conducted jointly by four participating schools in the district. She recalled that, before the COVID-19 pandemic, six teachers' working group meetings were held to

continue learning on how to implement multigrade teaching and learning effectively. When a district had only one participating school in the multigrade program, a mini teachers' working group (mini KKG) was held and attended by teachers from that one school.

We observed that informants were enthusiastic about their involvement in the groups and valued them as a venue for self-improvement. Almost all the respondents pointed to these working groups when asked how knowledge and competencies were shared among the school stakeholders. Mrs Syarifah, a principal in Probolinggo who served as a local facilitator, told us that the education office gathered all the district's teachers' working groups together and the local facilitators delivered what they had learned from the INOVASI-run training to all participating members:

> *'So, we delivered all that we received from the training on literacy to the teachers' working groups with the hope that the groups' chairs, secretaries and others were able to convey the same messages to teachers in their respective districts.'*

A high-level education official in Batu City said:

> *'We also maximise the role of teachers' working groups to foster the professional development of teachers.'*

Teachers' working groups were also used as a primary means of fostering professional development in the context of *madrasah*. Some primary *madrasah* affiliated to the Ministry of Religious Affairs also participated in the literacy programs in Batu and Probolinggo. Both the Batu and Probolinggo governments helped the primary *madrasah* engage with the program although they are considered 'vertical' institutions. After the *madrasah* principals and teachers participated in the INOVASI-run training, they capitalised on the teachers' working groups to disseminate the skills and knowledge within their own institutions and further afield to reach non-participating *madrasah* (scale-out).

One *madrasah* principal, Mrs Wati, in Batu, told us the following story about her engagement with the literacy program and the use of teachers' working groups. Mrs Wati first got involved by participating in the selection process for local facilitators and she attended the literacy training run by INOVASI in Surabaya on 3-5 November 2018. She called this 'literacy one' because the *madrasah* were not invited to participate in 'literacy two'. After the training, she used teachers' working groups to disseminate the lessons to her colleagues and teachers in other *madrasah*. Group meetings were held once a week or once every two weeks depending on the needs, as she explained:

> *'Usually, one day before the teachers' working group is held, we get prepared; we discuss and finalise the materials with an INOVASI district facilitator. On the day, we go into action! During the day, usually we divide into several sessions, say three sessions. So, every local facilitator who is in charge on the day delivers the materials and asks teachers to practise. A district facilitator is always present in group meetings. Even Mr Jufri from the religious affairs office in Batu used to attend.'*

In Probolinggo, *madrasah* working groups (*Kelompok Kerja Madrasah* – KKM) consisting of *madrasah* principals were also found to be active and used as a vehicle for sharing knowledge and improving the quality of teaching. From the explanation by relevant informants, like *madrasah* principals and teachers and INOVASI personnel, *madrasah* working groups and teachers' working groups had similar roles and functions. While criticising the lack of support from both the local government and the religious affairs office, Mr Ahmad, a *madrasah* principal in Paiton, described his active engagement with the literacy program and the use of *madrasah* working groups in scale-out activities to reach out to other *madrasah*. He recalled:

'We already established collaboration with madrasah working groups but unfortunately the collaboration was only within our area and had not reached out into other sub-districts. If the local government or Ministry of Religious Affairs formally ordered us by a surat tugas (assignment letter) to do the dissemination in other madrasah, we would do it.'

The INOVASI East Java team confirmed that the literacy program did not only run in the eight participating *madrasah* in Paiton but was also disseminated to other *madrasah* through other *madrasah* working groups.

Was the training effective? This question will be addressed in the relevant subsection on implementation outcomes where we uncover data about changes. However, it is pertinent to mention that while teachers who participated in the literacy programs in Batu and Probolinggo praised the effectiveness of the training and recognised its significance in changing teaching practices, teachers in the multigrade program in Probolinggo and particularly those from the scale-out schools felt that the training could not satisfactorily enable them to implement multigrade teaching in the expected manner. Mr Zarkasi, a principal of a participating school, explained that the teachers received only a small portion of the training (he valued it by awarding 2 out of 10) and therefore they had difficulties in running multigrade classes, and especially in integrating different basic curriculum competencies from the different grades. As reported before, almost all teachers from these schools complained about lack of training and supervision and this took away their enthusiasm for the multigrade program although they agreed it was important to overcome educational problems in Probolinggo.

Perception of the quality of implementation

Informants had their own opinions about the quality of policy implementation so there were various responses to our question on this issue. As normative answers, many informants believed that the policy implementation should be improved to achieve expected outcomes. In Sukapura, the multigrade policy implementation received wide attention for its successful outcomes. Informants had no dispute about this achievement and considered the schools as models for other schools. The schools received strong support from the local government and close mentoring from the INOVASI team. However, in the scale-out schools, as explored before, the multigrade program did not go well. Some schools did not even implement it. Like other teachers from these schools, Mrs Yulia explained:

'So, even when we put children (from different grades) together in one place, we taught them as if they were two separated grades with their own competencies. This is because we remained confused on how to integrate basic curriculum competencies.'

The literacy policy in Batu and Probolinggo did not seem to be equally well implemented, according to informants. In Batu, most informants considered that the literacy program in schools had been well delivered until the COVID-19 pandemic began. Training programs were in place, parents were involved through parents' associations (Paguyuban Kelas), stakeholders were willing to collaborate, and competitions were held to motivate communities, with the result that students had started to develop good reading habits. Local government offices collaborated and were supportive and some community libraries were being built. Mr Suripto, whose grandchild went to Punten One school, described how the parents' association helped the school with the literacy program:

'At that time, I was appointed by the principal to become the head of the parents' association, covering grades 1 to 6. The association was responsible for ensuring that children easily understand the lessons and to help with learning and teaching activities in the classroom. So, this

association helps to cover what the government does not provide for the school. We cannot rely on the schools' operational funds from government since BOS is not sufficient.'

In Probolinggo, many informants regarded policy implementation as uneven across the different locations of the intervention depending on the capacity and commitment of local facilitators and supervisors. In Paiton, informants were content with the implementation quality but in other locations, some of them expressed dissatisfaction. A high-level official from the education office claimed that implementation had been 'very good' and that the Probolinggo government had already been allocating budgets since 2019 and this continued. Another high-level official from the education office valued (what he believed to be) another aspect of the literacy program more highly and this was Quranic literacy. However, the education office seemed aware that implementation did not go well as one official said:

'As I always say, to achieve successful outcomes, we need time. Building education is different from building a bridge. […] The hardest challenge in this program is to build an awareness in parents and students.'

In another context, Mr Hamid, a librarian, said that the literacy program had been working well as part of the library and archives office's responsibilities. He mentioned one significant activity as sharing information with the community about village-based libraries. However, he felt that coordination between the library and education sectors had not been well established.

Policy implementation outcomes

Despite the absence of systematic monitoring and evaluation that we explore later, informants in this study described policy outcomes that are evident through the changes that occurred after the policies were implemented in both Batu and Probolinggo and at both institutional and individual levels.

Changes in institutions

In Batu and Probolinggo, informants reported that changes occurred in the mindsets and commitment of the relevant government institutions with regard to literacy. The education offices and the library and archives offices shifted significantly to make the literacy policy successful and coordination between these offices improved. In Batu, a high-level official from the education office explained that the library and archive office now willingly supplies schools with books for their libraries. The librarian we interviewed suggested that his office will provide training for teachers to become librarians so that school libraries are properly managed. Meanwhile, in Probolinggo, although the coordination was not as close, the library and archives office supported the implementation of the literacy policy by sending mobile libraries to schools, opening up more spaces in the library for children, mothers and other members of the community, and initiating a digital library, as explained previously. INOVASI was reported to have an impact on such changes through its influence that was strengthened through its good relations with the officials. In the context of the multigrade program, a notable change from the perspective of the education office was the lighter burden in providing guidance for teachers with only three teachers in the whole school involved. However, this quantitative benefit may be balanced out by the extra coaching for teachers on implementing and evaluating the complex multigrade teaching plan.

Various changes also took place at the school level. After participating in the training initiated by INOVASI, school stakeholders in the respective locations built an awareness of the importance of literacy and multigrade approaches. In terms of literacy, teaching methods have become more

focused on developing students' literacy skills, teachers are more nurturing in their teaching approaches and are more accommodating with regard to students' needs and interests. The classrooms have also transformed into more literacy focused spaces. In terms of multigrade, the most important change in stakeholders' minds was the realisation that there was a way to resolve the problems they faced of low numbers of teachers and students. From the interviews, while almost all teachers agreed with the multigrade approach as a solution, there was a big gap between the pilot and scale-out schools in terms of training and mentoring. Overall, the informants believed that schools could transform into fun and happy places for children to learn.

Another significant change at the school level after INOVASI's intervention was the increasingly active role of the parents' associations for each grade. The literacy policy mandated schools to give students easy access to reading materials to improve their literacy habits and skills. Since schools could not allocate enough money to establish classroom libraries or reading corners, schools engaged parents to support the school's literacy programs through the parents' associations. According to Mr Suripto, the parents' associations helped schools build reading corners, procure books and paint classroom walls, and they also helped give students first-hand experiences in the field where they could learn in a more contextual manner. In terms of the multigrade policy, Mrs Maria explained that parents' associations helped to disseminate the multigrade teaching approach to parents but also assisted with fund raising. So, although some parents' associations may not contribute to the same extent to school improvements, the literacy and multigrade policies clearly rekindled parents' engagement with school activities. Although *guyub* (similar to community spirit) is inherent in Indonesian culture, schools need to work on engaging parents in a more meaningful way and many schools that participated in INOVASI programs have demonstrated changes in this area.

Teachers' working groups were first established in Indonesia in the early 1990s for teachers to share their experiences and to create a space for professional growth. The groups were existing entities at the school level designed to help schools improve. The findings of this research suggest that, for the purposes of implementing the literacy and multigrade policies, the role of teachers' working groups was intensified to cover the issues arising from the policies and to provide regular opportunities to share knowledge and skills. Intensifying the role of teachers' working groups was part of INOVASI's plan to improve teachers' professionalism. Therefore, almost every informant immediately pointed to teachers' working groups when we asked how teachers developed competencies. This was despite some schools in the multigrade policy finding the teachers' working group sessions inadequate for them to gain an understanding of multigrade approaches and develop the skills to put them into practice.

Changes in individuals

At the individual level, changes were mostly identified in schools. Teachers changed the way they perceived and interacted with their students, and how they taught in the classroom. As informants acknowledged, teachers built their own capacity and found ways to create effective classroom practices to improve literacy levels. This is inseparable from INOVASI's successful campaign to promote a growth mindset that was part of the training materials. These changes have brought about improvements in students' attitudes too as they appear more relaxed. Mr Sutoyo, a legislative council member who used to be a teacher, observed that teachers have shifted to the level that students now feel happier to learn. Mrs Ester, a teacher in Batu, proudly said that her students now liked reading and writing and enjoyed what they were reading. That is why her students could answer the questions following the reading passages. As Mrs Lastri explained, one of the improvements in the

teaching and learning process was that students can now be proud of the work they produce. Generally, however, younger teachers were apparently more actively adaptable to change.

In Paiton's *madrasah*, teachers could also see changes in their students' learning. One teacher, Mr Ahmad, said:

> *'It used to be that some of our students had a low interest in reading. We then applied some methods we received from INOVASI training. The result is that [our new teaching methods] gave something new to students and they feel comfortable in the classroom. Teachers also enjoyed [the lessons more]. But, this was before the pandemic.'*

In the context of multigrade, Mr Seger, a school committee member explained that students enjoyed classroom activities more because they had more friends than before. The students' motivation for learning has been increasing, according to some teachers' observations. Mrs Maria commented that students had started to feel confident in speaking and expressing their opinions, they interacted more positively with peers and they were gradually improving in their achievements.

In addition, parents have witnessed the schools and teachers' serious endeavours to educate their children, and this has encouraged them to be more involved in school programs and activities to support their children's learning. According to some parents and teachers, parents are now more attentive, and they help their children as much as they can to become better students. According to the informants we interviewed, these changes were clearly a result of INOVASI's interventions, but we had less information on this change in the scale-out schools.

Supporting factors

Our findings suggest that interplaying factors influenced the implementation process for each policy. Some emerged here and there in both explicit and implicit ways but were not fully explored. In this subsection, we present the factors that supported the implementation of the policies.

District services, funding, and facilities

None of the three policies would be implemented without substantial support from the education offices in their respective areas. The education offices designed programs to implement the policies and demonstrated the commitment to push them through. The offices also collaborated with other regional work units such as the local library and archives offices, and local development planning agency (Bappeda). Another institution that supported policy development and implementation is the regional representative council (DPRD) that passes the budget proposal for educational programs. While in Probolinggo, we did not manage to interview any representative council members despite our efforts, in Batu, our representative council member informant, Mr Sutoyo, confidently asserted that Batu's council always approved any educational programs and budget proposals, including for implementing the literacy policy.

Strong collaboration among local government institutions in both Batu and Probolinggo supported the implementation process. Mrs Laila, a principal in Batu, said that schools had established a memorandum of understanding with the Batu City Library that enabled the library to send a mobile unit to schools and offer students a variety of books. The teachers support the process by designing appropriate assignments to reinforce students' reading. Similar collaboration between schools and library did not emerge in the case of Probolinggo's literacy but the library and archives office provided extensive services to various segments of the community in the form of village libraries or reading

corners and books for prison inmates. Meanwhile, in the case of the multigrade policy implementation, the education office worked closely with the INOVASI team in East Java. An INOVASI report on multigrade piloting in Sukapura district, Probolinggo (INOVASI, 2019), outlines the structure of the local government team responsible for implementing this policy that was dominated by personnel from the district education office.

Funding is always a crucial factor for education since it provides facilities and resources to support education processes. In each of the contexts, local governments allocated a budget specifically to implement the policies, although we could not obtain details of exactly how much they allocated. Our informant did not want to explicitly mention figures. An official from the regional development planning agency (Bappeda) in Probolinggo admitted that he did not know how much was allocated for either the multigrade or literacy policy implementation. In each case, the amount allocated and delivered seemed to be a sensitive issue and apparently information about the budget is not accessible to the public. Nevertheless, there was money to support the process in each context, particularly after INOVASI's support was reduced or discontinued.

Teachers' working groups as a support factor

Another factor that supported the implementation of each policy was capacity building through the teachers' working groups (KKGs). In essence, any form of capacity building is crucial in every policy implementation, enabling actors to make a planned policy into an established practice and achieve its objectives. As previously explored, teachers' working groups were a primary vehicle for improving the competencies of school stakeholders, particularly after the initial training conducted by INOVASI. As a means of continuing professional development, school supervisors, principals and teachers in each case used teachers' working groups to gain and share knowledge and experiences, and to practise innovative teaching strategies. Much has already been said about teachers' working group activities in discussing capacity development so it is sufficient to quote a principal in Probolinggo, Mrs Maria, on their crucial role:

> *'In teachers' working groups, we bring out our findings (issues) in classroom teaching. What we cannot solve on our own, we bring them to the teachers' working group meetings. There we discuss together with colleagues and find an effective way to teach children using a multigrade approach. So, in teachers' working groups we exchange ideas on how multigrade teaching should be done.'*

When we asked Mrs Maria about other ways of exchange among teachers, she firmly replied:

> *'No, here we have only teachers' working groups. But we categorise these groups into two, namely: mini-teachers' working groups and larger teachers' working groups. A larger group consists of eight schools with around 35 teachers. Mini-teachers' working groups cover only four schools or fewer.'*

The importance of teachers' working groups in implementing each policy can be seen in how the informants missed the opportunity for self-improvement during the COVID-19 when teachers' working group activities were cancelled or kept minimal. This will be explored when we present data on the COVID-19 pandemic factor.

Teachers' commitment and quality

Teachers' commitment and quality contributed significantly to the policy implementation as shown in each of the cases. As several informants acknowledged, implementing new ways of teaching

requires a lot of effort that moves teachers out of their comfort zone, forcing them to adopt and adapt to more challenging approaches to work. This demands strong commitment and persistence whereas quality usually develops gradually over time as a result of committed and persistent engagement with learning processes. Many informants explained this issue as follows.

> *'Thank God! In our school in Punten, the system has been established because the principals and teachers had a strong commitment, care and willingness [to learn and act], even though they were not experts' (Mrs Raina, a teacher from Batu).*

> *'Before, we had been faced with difficulties and problems in the multigrade teaching. But we sought help from supervisors, principals, and other colleagues. Now, our teachers have implemented the program happily and with no objection' (Mrs Maria from Probolinggo's multigrade program).*

> *'Teachers looked very enthusiastic in trying new methods through games and pictures. So, I felt challenged when there was a new way of teaching. Although the methods were designed for lower grade students, they could be used for upper grade students' (Mrs Karmila, a teacher from Probolinggo's literacy program).*

After the training, an INOVASI advisor observed the quality of teachers in Probolinggo and concluded that committed teachers tended to improve the quality of their teaching more easily. Although one high-level official from the education office openly criticised many teachers for being reluctant to move out of their comfort zone and accept new challenges. Some informants identified younger teachers as having a stronger commitment to improve than their more experienced colleagues. Mr Sutoyo observed that women principals and teachers tended to perform better in school, they were more diligent in participating in workshops and more focused on becoming accomplished in their work. In short, in each case, not all school stakeholders demonstrated strong commitment to implementing the policy and this could detract from its success. This issue will be examined in the subsection on impeding factors.

Other stakeholders' involvement and commitment

The portrayal of the implementation processes indicates the sporadic involvement of various stakeholders through the various stages of developing policy through to implementing it. Stakeholders' involvement in policy delivery suggests not only a decision-making process but also an acceptance of the policy concerned. The more people that are involved, the more likely that a policy will succeed.

The policy processes in each of the cases involved a similar range of stakeholders. The education offices, as a leading sector, strived to engage different institutions and individuals in the policy process. For the literacy policy, the education offices in Batu and Probolinggo involved: the library and archives office; the Ministry of Religious Affairs; the local representative council; INOVASI; school stakeholders, such as supervisors, principals, teachers, parents, school committees, and community leaders and groups. For example, in all contexts, parents' associations were active stakeholders and they supported schools through different forms of involvement, including as fund raisers, classroom helpers and school-parent communicators. INOVASI also fully supported the policy implementation processes. However, the library and archives office involvement could not be optimal due to unresolved sectoral barriers preventing them from intervening directly in schools, for example to develop school libraries. There was still unshared concern between the office and the education office in terms of the provision of librarians in school. Nevertheless, this office's contribution was crucial and helped to implement the policy effectively.

Although the context of the multigrade policy was not as broad as the contexts for the other policies, stakeholders' involvement still constituted a significant factor in its successful implementation, particularly in Sukapura. For example, the involvement of Mr Sarjito as a supervisor helped to shape the multigrade teaching program and served as an important initiator and continued support for the program. The students' parents developed a sense of ownership for the program and voluntarily contributed to its implementation success. From Sukapura, we learned that parents helped overcome the problem of funding as the government operational funds for schools (BOS) were not enough. The parents planted banana trees in their home yards and planned to donate the harvest outcomes to schools in an initiative they named '*Pisang Inovasi*' (literally meaning 'innovation bananas') (Sutranggono, 2019).

In the three policy contexts, school leadership played a pivotal role as an 'orchestrator' of education processes in school and ensuring the program ran as expected. None of the informants denied the crucial role of principals in making a difference in school processes and the respective policy implementation. Mr Seger, a school committee head in Probolinggo, said:

> *'School principal to me is "ujung tombak" (the spearhead) who makes decisions. Everything returns to the principal. When Mr Hadi in Sukapura became a school principal, he provided direction for activities. He did not implement changes [immediately] but gradually. So, the role of a school principal is important. If a principal just keeps silent, what can we do?'*

Mrs Raina observed that the school principal in Punten has successfully established a system where everyone becomes committed to the policy implementation process. Confirming this, Mrs Hartini believed that the success of program implementation depends on the 'motor' – the school principal – who 'touches' teachers' hearts and builds a sense of ownership in them in relation to the policy or program. Mrs Rinayati told us about a principal who successfully mobilised teachers to improve literacy by showing 'firm' leadership. He always invited teachers to observe best practices in other schools and motivated them to apply what they learned.

Pertinent to the principals' leadership, school supervisors also played significant roles in implementing the three policies successfully. They were the reference point for principals and teachers in implementing the policy, serving as a 'bridging' entity between the designers of the policies and the field implementers. They helped to translate the conceptions of policies into strategies and approaches in the field, in collaboration with other stakeholders. The education office used school supervisors to share information, guide schools and oversee the processes. An indication of the role they played was that their absence decreased the chances of successful implementation. For example, the absence of supervisors in the multigrade policy scale-out schools in Probolinggo showed how crucial their role is, although other factors also contributed to the disappointing outcomes.

INOVASI's support

INOVASI was a key factor in all the policy processes in each case and all our informants acknowledged the commitment and the roles our teams played in initiating action, fostering capacity development, helping with implementation processes and other consultative assistance. Their comments were generally positive but also reflected a level of dependency on the INOVASI interventions. Mr Rojikin, a principal in Batu, explained:

> *'Truly, with the assistance of INOVASI, we – the teachers' working groups and clusters – were forced to be active. INOVASI's programs were very clear. So, it was amazing to work with*

INOVASI. Unfortunately, [the collaboration is coming to an end] but we still hope that it will continue so that what has been good can be sustained.'

One education officer recalled how INOVASI helped with initiating and implementing the multigrade approach in Sukapura – struggling to convince school stakeholders about the approach, train principals and teachers, and monitor the implementation process. She complimented INOVASI's innovative strategies and creativity in delivering materials so that the trainees were interested and engaged. A high-level education officer from Batu also testified that INOVASI teams were dedicated and focused in mentoring teachers and finding the appropriate strategies to meet their needs. She felt she had greatly benefitted from INOVASI's efforts and hoped that the collaboration would continue. When we asked respondents whether the INOVASI-run training differed from other training in the scale-out activities conducted by local facilitators only, informants said that the latter never attained the same level of success.

Guyub

One noticeable social factor in each of the policy cases was a cultural characteristic of Javanese society called *guyub*. In the online Bahasa Indonesia dictionary, *guyub* means a group of people with strong social cohesion.[6] Thus it reflects the community spirit of togetherness with people interacting in harmony as one big family. The cases in Batu and Probolinggo suggest that the communities concerned had a strong sense of this culture and this made it easier to foster community support for the program. This spirit of *guyub* was also evident in the active role that the parents' associations and parents themselves played in providing moral and material support as well as their labour to ensure that schools became comfortable and conducive places for their children to learn. The report of *Pisang Inovasi* in Probolinggo and parents painting classrooms and procuring learning facilities in Batu suggest that this culture of *guyub* helped to improve schools and education programs. One school principal in Batu said:

'The role of the community, parents, the school committee and community leaders has been amazing. They helped us a lot in realising this literacy program. In our school, they have been really harmonious.'

Challenges and impeding factors

Our study also revealed challenges and impeding factors that detracted from the success of the policy implementation processes. Some of these were common to all the policies and others were specific to a particular policy. Factors commonly found across all cases encompass: funding constraints; staff transfers; teachers' lack of understanding or skills in certain areas; lack of systematic monitoring and evaluation; and, most notably, the COVID-19 pandemic that we discuss in a separate subsection. Impeding factors and challenges relating to specific policies are presented after these common factors.

Funding constraints

Funding issues arose in implementing the policies in the three different contexts. As an INOVASI advisor reported in the case of the literacy policy in Probolinggo, school stakeholders complained about the lack of funding to procure books for school libraries. The education office encouraged them to collaborate with other stakeholders, such as the library and archives offices and industriy for

[6] https://kbbi.web.id/guyub

support but this was not always a reliable source of funds. In the *madrasah*, the lack of funding seemed to be linked to their status as private institutions. *Madrasah* principals and teachers complained about the lack of attention from the education office and Ministry of Religious Affairs in terms of funding provision for specific literacy programs. In Batu, although not as pronounced as in Probolinggo, funding issues arose in schools trying to conduct new activities that government did not cover. As Mrs Hartini, the school supervisor in Batu, pointed out:

> *'Every activity needs money and not every school can afford it.'*

In the case of the multigrade policy implementation, some principals criticised the low salaries for the teachers who are not civil servants as this had an impact on whether they could afford to buy the teaching materials they required to put the multigrade approach into practice effectively. Mr Purwanto compared non civil servant teachers with their civil servant counterparts and said that the latter would have no problem in buying the teaching materials they needed because they had respectable salaries. This means that the education office was unable to equally provide teaching facilities to every school. This is in line with Mrs Elyati's observation earlier about the big difference in facilities between her school and the Sukapura school she visited. What caused her school to suffer from lack of funding, according to Mrs Elyati, was not only the invisibility of the education office but also the lack of transparency in how the schools' operational funds (BOS) were used. She believed that the principal would be angry if he were asked about those funds. So, the multigrade teaching approach clearly demands more teaching facilities and therefore more funding and this was one of the weaknesses in trying to implement the approach effectively in Probolinggo.

Staff transfers and lack of regulation

Staff transfers were another issue in implementing policies in all three contexts. Although education officials argued that staff transfers would not disrupt the process of implementing policy, principals and teachers strongly criticised this exercise. One principal, Mrs Endah, when asked about this issue, complained as follows:

> *'Yes, with the policy of teacher rotation like that, we felt overwhelmed. If those who have been trained had remained in our school, I think we could compete with Sukapura's schools. But, when our trained teachers were transferred to other schools for the sake of the rotation because of excess numbers of teachers, we became really confused [by this decision].'*

Her concern was voiced by other principals and teachers. Similarly, in the case of the literacy policy in the same district, Mrs Syarifah regretted that teachers who were trained in the literacy policy were moved to other schools but she could do nothing because it was official policy. In Batu's case of the literacy policy, teachers and principals were not transferred but the problem arose with higher-level education officers. Some informants, however, complimented the new officials who were willing to learn even though they did not come from a background in education.

Lack of supporting regulations

Another challenge to policy implementation identified in this research was the absence of supporting regulations on appointing school librarians. As mentioned, school librarians are mostly teachers who have been given an additional responsibility to manage the school library. Improving the school library to a high standard is hard to achieve when no one person with expertise is dedicated to the task. As one Batu librarian said in an interview, the education office and the library office need to collaborate and develop a regulation so that the library office can train school librarians.

Lack of capacity and commitment among teachers

The study found that a lack of capacity among teachers had negative effects on policy implementation in the three contexts. Older teachers who had been in the service for a long time were sometimes slow to respond to the implementation requirements. In Mr Sutoyo's observation, teachers in Batu who were approaching retirement were often not highly committed to changing their teaching approaches. By contrast, one education officer described the younger teachers as having 'big curiosity':

> *'They [young teachers] asked the principals whose schools were INOVASI's partners about the literacy programs. Young teachers filled the teachers' learning community with fresh ideas. So, with only a little stimulus, they will run.'*

In Probolinggo the observations were similar. Older teachers could not keep up with their younger counterparts in terms of learning pace and literacy in information technology (IT). Mrs Rinayati, a supervisor, observed that out of the 19 principals she was overseeing, only three were IT literate. Older teachers, in her view, had lost the will to learn new skills but not just in relation to IT. Meanwhile, in the case of the multigrade policy, informants pointed to the lack of continuous training that contributed to teachers' difficulties in delivering the program.

Challenges and impeding factors in the multigrade policy

A number of challenges affected implementation for the multigrade policy. First, a number of informants reported that many teachers in the scale-out schools found it difficult and confusing to integrate the basic curriculum competencies from two different grades. As mentioned, teachers need strong analytical skills to manage this process. In theory, they identify similar competencies from, for example, grades three and four, and then merge them into one so they can teach the same curriculum to students from the two different grades in one classroom at the same time. While this approach has benefits for students' social skills and for efficiencies in time, energy and costs, teachers need proper training for this challenging task. Otherwise, teachers would need a ready-to-use curriculum and accompanying handbooks for the multigrade approach as some informants suggested. Mrs Yulia, a teacher, said:

> *'We are still confused, sir. I really wish that there was a handbook for multigrade, not that a grade 5 teacher tries to use grades 5 and 6 books together. I want to have a ready-to-use book.'*

Mrs Maria further echoed the need for a special curriculum for the multigrade:

> *'What is worrying is the curriculum. We don't yet have a curriculum designed specifically for multigrade. So, if this program is to be continued, we need to have a multigrade curriculum.'*

Some teachers felt it was an added burden to have to integrate the basic curriculum competencies but they believed that if they had sufficient training, it would not be difficult to implement the multigrade teaching approach. The training they were referring to included supervisory interventions to build their capacity in implementing the approach, but the quality of supervision seemed to be uneven across the locations of the scale-out schools. Mrs Elyati informed us that since her appointment as a teacher some years ago, she has only seen the school supervisor once. While the mountainous location of her school is possibly hard to access, a principal of another school, Mr Syarwani, also criticised the lack of supervision

'I am sorry to say that we are lacking supervisors. One district has only one supervisor; is that enough? Also, as we all know, typically, our supervisors rarely visit schools. Sorry, but I am telling you the truth.'

Challenges to the literacy policy in Batu

Although the literacy policy implementation in Batu generally went well, some challenges and certain factors affected aspects of the outcome. Some informants pointed to people's mindsets regarding the importance of literacy. This is particularly true, according to one librarian we interviewed, in relation to the literacy programs in the community. Some village cadres needed to be more motivated and to change their mindsets to actively engage in building libraries or reading corners to cultivate the reading habit. Mr Sulistyo, a village head in Batu, argued that the internet was a real challenge to the literacy program. On one hand, online media could help generate a reading culture in the community but, on the other hand, the misuse of the media could spread and have a negative effect on the community. Furthermore, such a community could not be expected to contribute to the success of school literacy which is the central point of the policy.

In a private school in Batu, teachers could not freely implement the skills they gained from the INOVASI training and workshops although they acknowledged that it would improve students' literacy skills. This is because the regulatory compliance or 'box-ticking' controls applied to their teaching practices by their superior included the strict use of the curriculum. Mrs Nella, for example, explained that teachers had to follow the government's curriculum entirely to comply with accreditation requirements. In addition, as a private school, accreditation was essential to attract more students who would be willing to pay extra for a good education. Therefore, fulfilling these administrative requirements for the (re)accreditation hindered teachers from improving their practices. This meant that this school could not fully apply INOVASI's literacy programs since they are busy with administrative burdens.

Challenges to the literacy policy in Probolinggo

Many informants were concerned about the lack of awareness among parents and communities about the importance of literacy. Mr Syamsi, a school committee head, said he struggled to get parents involved in school but not many were interested. Literacy programs need parents' help both in school and at home, particularly in supporting children's engagement in learning activities. Mr Syamsi believes that 55 per cent of the responsibility for children's education rests on parents and hence they should be committed to supporting their children in learning. Mrs Rinayati pointed out that limited efforts to disseminate information might be a cause of this lack of awareness. She was also concerned that some supervisors were left out of the literacy training programs and this meant they were not fully informed themselves:

'Only teachers received training. […] The problem was that supervisors were not involved; I am sorry [to say]. Although there are two or three schools under my authority, supervisors did not get involved. So, this is a disconnection. I happened to learn about this literacy program from a teacher who joined the training [otherwise, I wouldn't know about it].'

One unexpected note about challenges in implementing policy is that the process may be hindered by introducing other programs that take a significant portion of students' learning time at school. For example, the education office required students in general schools to recite Quranic verses for one hour every day from 7am to 8am instead of reading story books as they do in Batu. The high-level education official argued that this is part of literacy:

'One of the literacy forms is not only reading lessons but, as we have here, also Quranic literacy. In some schools, we made try-outs of having students read the Quranic verses from 7am to 8am. In this time, there is no other lesson but Quranic, which is learning to read Arabic.'

However, the literacy programs set out in the policy and advocated by INOVASI do not include these recitals as part of the literacy focus. This issue did not emerge from other informants and it may reflect this official's personal aspiration to develop more religious programs in school. If he or his office did not develop a well thought out plan, the current literacy programs could suffer from delays or even fail because teachers would have less time and energy to implement the literacy policy successfully and students would have an extra study load.

COVID-19 and Adjustments

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an undeniable impact on almost all aspects of life worldwide. Since its emergence towards the end of 2019 in Wuhan, the globe has changed and we have been forced to explore alternatives and adjust to the pandemic restrictions. At the time of writing this report, there was no sign that this pandemic was going to end soon despite the efforts made to contain the virus that is constantly mutating. Education is one among other aspects that have suffered most and those most affected are the students. This section explores our findings regarding the general response of the education sector in Batu and Probolinggo, the programs initiated and appropriated with the pandemic situation, and the outcomes of the adjustments made. It is important to note that some policy programs that were not as effective as anticipated may have been affected by the COVID-19 impacts discussed in this section.

COVID-19 pandemic and general responses

The general responses by the local education authorities to the COVID-19 pandemic included: refocusing the funding allocations; using the emergency curriculum; introducing online and offline learning modes; and adjusting the normal teachers' working groups to mini-teachers' working groups.

Funding refocusing

The national policy[7] during the COVID-19 pandemic was to cut both national and local budgets and transfer the funds to handling the effects of the pandemic. This policy began in 2020 and was still in place at the time of this study. The two district governments, Batu and Probolinggo, had to comply with this refocusing policy and this affected many of their planned programs. Mr Sutoyo, a legislative council member we interviewed, explained as follows:

'So, our budget was refocused on social security, health and primary needs with more [going] on these aspects. Last year, 60 per cent of our local budget was cut by the central government, which is about fifteen billion rupiahs. This certainly affected our programs.'

[7] Since 2019, the Indonesian government has issued a series of policies and regulations to manage the COVID-19 pandemic. These policies and regulations are available on the Ministry of Finance website: http://www.djpk.kemenkeu.go.id/?page_id=14759. In July 2021 the Ministry of Finance further reallocated over Rp26 trillion to help in managing the COVID-19 pandemic. See https://nasional.kontan.co.id/news/menkeu-refocusing-anggaran-rp-262-triliun-untuk-penanganan-covid-19

A high-level official from Probolinggo's education office reported that the schools' operational funds (BOS) delivered in 2021 amounted to around 75 million rupiahs which is almost half of the 2020 budget:

> *'The regent is now focused on the procurement of vaccines. So, this year, money is being allocated mostly to the health sector for COVID-19 handling, for medical nurses' salaries and for vaccines.'*

This severe budget cut has had negative consequences for education programs that had already suffered from the restrictions on face-to-face interactions due to the pandemic.

Emergency curriculum

Another response to this pandemic was that the Indonesian government issued a policy on the use of the curriculum devised specifically for the COVID-19 pandemic situation. Through the Ministry of Education and Culture decision No 719/P/2020 on the Implementation Guide for School Curriculum in the Special Context, the government issued an emergency curriculum that allows teachers to reduce and/or simplify the basic competencies required in each subject. During the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers and students are expected to focus on achieving essential competencies and fulfilling minimum requirements for their next education phase. This means that schools and teachers across the country may use the minimised curriculum during the pandemic.

Schools in Batu and Probolinggo were not exempted and, with classroom teaching limited to less effective online learning, teachers had no option but to adopt the emergency curriculum. While informants welcomed this policy initiative as a solution to dealing with the pandemic restrictions, they did not consider it ideal especially because the lack of training of using the curriculum. Mrs Lastri, a supervisor in Batu, said the authorities did not expect students to complete the whole emergency curriculum so teaching and learning focused on literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers from Probolinggo estimated that they only managed to cover 50 per cent of the emergency curriculum.

Online and offline learning mode

The social distance restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic have greatly impacted on the classroom process of school education. Like in other areas of Indonesia, schools in Batu and Probolinggo closed and changed to online delivery modes, although at times some schools used blended learning or opened for face-to-face learning with strict precautions. Also, those in the 'green areas' (low risk – based on the official COVID-19 risk infection rating) were allowed to open as long as they had COVID-19 health protocols in place. However, with the trends of infection at the time of this report, it would be hard to imagine schools fully opening in 2021.

The findings suggest that schools in the two districts approached the situation differently in terms of teaching and learning processes. Mrs Dita, a principal in Batu, informed us that her school applied full online learning:

> *'Initially, we had many constraints, including parents protesting to online learning. But, over time, it has been very smooth. There used to be a problem with the internet package. […] Then, our school provided aid by purchasing the packages for the students who cannot afford them. That fund comes from the parents' associations and on their initiative given to very needy families.'*

Other schools and *madrasah* in Batu used their own conception of blended learning. For example, one *madrasah* used mostly offline learning with the online mode held once a month via Zoom.

Another school imposed online delivery for students who had the facilities, such as cell phones, but this compromised the offline learning for those who did not have the technology.

In Probolinggo, the education office allowed schools to implement any learning mode suited to the conditions, including online, offline and blended learning modes. It is interesting to learn the various ways that schools adjusted their approaches during this pandemic. Mrs Endah described her school's blended learning mode whereby teachers sent assignments online but students had to submit them offline. However, with the supervisor's discretion, they divided students into four groups (named *komunitas*) and the principal sent one teacher out to each group to undertake offline learning in their own space away from the school. The intention was to be able to teach properly but to avoid infringing the COVID-19 restrictions. One teacher, Mrs Yulia, told a different story about how her school applied online learning, but she was doubtful about its effectiveness:

> *'We are not allowed to meet and we are expected to stay online. I suggested that we have online learning, especially after we received the support of 12 cell phones. So, we gave the phones to students along with the sim cards. But students were still reluctant to complete the assignments. They had various excuses like there was no signal or the battery was dead.'*

Implementing online learning was not without issues. Beside its learning effectiveness that Mrs Yulia mentioned, other problems emerged with regard to the affordability and accessibility of the technology for some students. Poor families did not have access to such technology and many rural areas in both research locations had poor internet connections even where parents did not have a financial problem with acquiring the facility. Another issue was related to parenting during this pandemic. Online learning, according to teacher and parent informants, placed additional burdens on parents at home where they had to help their children to learn. Often, it was the parents instead of the students who worked on the assignments the teachers sent. Teacher informants were doubtful that students learned well at home and parents started to feel overwhelmed with the situation. Mr Suripto, a parent, complained:

> *'But, during this pandemic, parents were faced with difficulties and had to be active in giving lessons to children, meanwhile the parents' association went to schools to fetch assignments from the teachers to give to students and then to take them back from students to submit to teachers. So, we are teaching our children like home teachers. […] So, teachers just corrected [the assignlments] and received salaries, and we [parents] were tired.'*

Mini-teachers' working groups (mini KKG)

As described previously, teachers' working groups had become a pivotal factor in facilitating professional development for school personnel. They had regular meetings where they shared knowledge, problems, solutions, information and so forth. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, regular teachers' working groups stopped and teachers primarily used mini-teachers' working groups to foster professional development. These mini-groups were introduced even before the pandemic to facilitate school-based teacher meetings.

Program adjustments

In this subsection, we explore findings about the adjustments made around implementing each policy in the respective research locations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Some adjustments were part of the general responses already described but others were entirely

distinctive. This subsection starts with how the multigrade policy was implemented during the pandemic, followed by the literacy policies in Probolinggo and Batu respectively.

Adjustment in the multigrade approach

A high-level official from the education office in Probolinggo had a different perspective with regard to implementing the multigrade policy during the COVID-19 pandemic. She believed that it was still implemented and even gained some momentum:

> *'Raihani: During the pandemic, what happened to the multigrade policy implementation?*
>
> *High official: [It was] very good! During this time, all schools may be able to implement the multigrade because we have face-to-face teaching. In this learning mode, in one learning group (*komunitas*) grades 1–6 students were gathered in one place. So, this is a multigrade approach. So, [multigrade] should combine grades 1 and 2 but now we have grades 1 to 6. So, the multigrade approach still worked.'*

The official's comment about the multigrade approach reflected a different interpretation from the basic concept where close school grades, like 1 and 2, 3 and 4 or 5 and 6, are integrated so that teachers can easily merge similar basic curriculum competencies. Most teachers would struggle to manage a more complex multigrade situation. However, she was referring to the emergency situation that forced teachers to cope with extreme situations and in this context the Sukapura schools were better equipped to extend and adapt the multigrade concept, as confirmed by Mr Sarjito, the supervisor in this area.

However, these officials' comments contradict the statements from other teachers and principals who said that the multigrade approach was not implemented during the pandemic:

> *'During the pandemic, we have employed a shift model. This means that grade 1 students came first and then grade 2 students. So, the multigrade approach cannot be implemented' (Mrs Sukma, scale-out school principal).*
>
> *'Our supervisor said that it is okay to set aside the multigrade approach if the situation does not permit it. This is because we cannot merge grade 1 with grade 5. So, we are just waiting for the pandemic to end. That is what our supervisor said' (Mrs Endah, school principal).*

The differences between the officials' views and those of the principals and teachers reflect some issues, including a lack of monitoring and evaluation and therefore limited understanding of grassroots problems. Oversimplifying the multigrade concept to refer to any merging of students from different grades shows little concern about how teachers could cope and be effective in this situation. During the pandemic, many teachers taught students of different grades separately even when they were in one classroom. Their priority was to deliver the lessons rather than to use the multigrade approach.

Adjustment in Probolinggo's literacy policy

Some schools in Probolinggo still implemented the literacy programs during the COVID-19 pandemic, however small their efforts had to be, while others decided to stop. According to a *madrasah* principal, Mr Ahmad, during the first year of the pandemic, the *madrasah* in Paiton did not have sharing activities for the literacy program and school activities were limited since only 30 per cent of the students were coming to school. In other schools, teachers tried to continue guiding

students to improve their literacy skills in various ways. For example, Mrs Karmila, a teacher in Probolinggo described her school's approach:

> *'During the pandemic, our school still did something. We developed more what we got from INOVASI. I asked students who cannot read well to send me their voice or video recording when they were reading. The thing is they still did the assignment, even though this [outcome] would not be at its maximum.'*

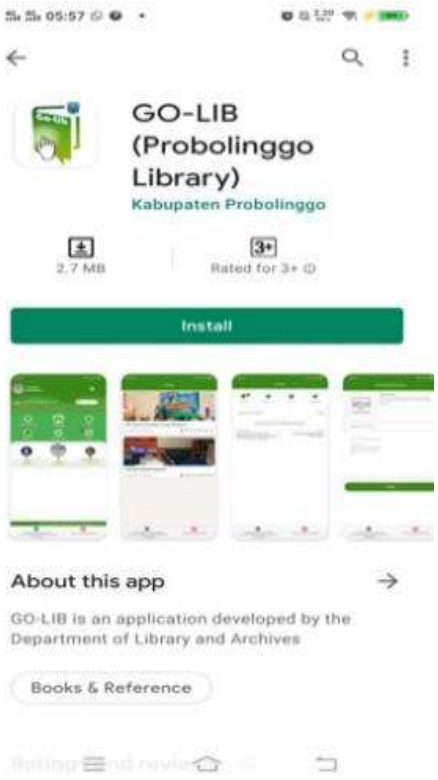
In one state primary school in Sukokerto, students came to school and classroom libraries in shifts once a week from Monday to Saturday. They could borrow books to take home to read. This small effort was significant in keeping students busy with useful activities to improve their literacy skills. Some other teachers also used video recordings to send students lessons and storytelling activities.

In line with these seemingly uncoordinated efforts to remain focused on implementing the literacy policy, the library and archives office initiated 'GO-LIB' (Probolinggo Library). This involved digitalising books and other reading materials to make them easier to access. The head of the library and archives office argued that the real challenge to improving literacy in Batu was to increase people's interest in reading. He believed the technology could help which is why his office created the online application:

> *'Its name is "GO-LIB". We have distributed it to our community but we have not measured how far the community has become interested in using such an application.'*

A high-level education official confirmed this innovative service by the district library and we checked that the application is listed in Google Play.

Figure 1: GO-LIB, Probolinggo's digital library



Adjustment in Batu's literacy policy

In Batu, the COVID-19 pandemic also derailed educational processes and forced stakeholders to seek alternative ways to adjust to the situation. Activities that continued included various competitions among students, such as, a poetry writing competition, speeches and singing contests. The were held offline but another approach was to use local TV programs to support literacy activities. A high-level education official said:

> *'One of the ways [to adjust to the COVID-19 situation] is that we established [a cooperation] with a local TV station in which our teachers can become resource persons or deliver lessons. But, this served as supplementary only.'*

In addition, in Punten's school, students were asked to submit assignments in the form of portfolios, problem-based reports and newspaper clippings. Furthermore, as in Probolinggo, Batu's library and archives office initiated digitalised library collections, although the books were limited to student textbooks. Procuring e-books was unaffordable for the city library, particularly in the context of the budget refocusing to manage the COVID-19 pandemic.

Adjustment outcomes

Our findings suggest that the adjustments made to the processes of implementing policy in response to the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in contextual constraints and limited outcomes. However, it is important to note that there was no systematic evaluation by the education authority of any adjustments made so we had no reliable scientific information about the effectiveness of the adjusted programs. This does not necessarily mean that the teachers' judgements are not valid. Their views are based on both personal and professional experiences and they provide a valid perspective.

Mrs Indah and Mrs Maya in Batu explained that online learning was generally not as efficient as classroom learning since communication and interaction were limited and dependent on the quality of the internet connection. Also, approaches to teaching literacy were limited. During online learning, many students were reluctant to read or to understand the instructions, making it hard for teachers to deliver lessons as expected. As mentioned before, teachers doubted that the students were learning properly at home and suspected that the parents had to sometimes take on their assignments. Mr Harris added that poor internet connections contributed to the ineffectiveness of the adjustments. He cited the online literacy competitions held during the pandemic that were disrupted by bad signals and lost connections:

> *'In my opinion, it is very ineffective, yes, very ineffective because we cannot see, we cannot measure our students' ability and their understanding. So, [this online learning] is only like a way for students to remember that school still exists. The problem is that we cannot meet students at all.'*

While we understand that the multigrade teaching approach in Probolinggo was problematic and not easily implemented during the pandemic, the literacy policy could still make some progress. One teacher, Mrs Suratin, was convinced that her students enthusiastically followed her online lessons. After watching the videos that she sent to her students, the students were able to make interrogative sentences and could demonstrate their new skills. Also, she observed that the data on students attending the school library during the pandemic was promising. Although she admitted the outcome of the adjustments was less than optimal, she believed that any student activity during this pandemic depended largely on the parents' commitment to helping their children:

'If parents are active and caring about their children, it is good. If they are busy, and even if we pay home visits and so forth, the outcomes will not be good…'

Mrs Rinayati believed that many parents completed the assignments that teachers gave their children but she admitted that this was hard to control in the current context.

However, the adjustments made in the literacy policy implementation processes in Batu and Probolinggo to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions could still achieve some outcomes despite the contextual constraints. At least, students were still engaged with learning and avoided a total learning loss. When teachers used appropriate and well-designed online learning, students demonstrated more active engagement with the lessons. Also, some literacy competitions were continued to stimulate interest among students although they were apparently less effective. However, while the education authorities and school stakeholders in each area strived to remain attentive and committed to implementing the policies, the impacts of the pandemic on schooling processes were severe. On the one hand, the social distance policy forced most schools to close and offer online learning to students. On the other hand, the digital divide created another challenge of trying to deliver an equal education service to all students. Home visits and/or face-to-face interactions with students who did not have the necessary technology remained restricted, although in some places in both districts the authorities 'turned a blind eye' to allow some of these activities to go ahead. Nevertheless, the outcomes could not be optimally achieved.

Policy Evaluation

This section informs another cycle in the policy processes, evaluating policy implementation. We present findings of how this process was carried out in each context, as well as information about any existing monitoring and evaluation activities. However, as mentioned earlier, a specific monitoring and evaluation process to check on the effectiveness and achievement of policies introduced is not an established part of the system in either Batu or Probolinggo.

Systemic monitoring and evaluation means any planned and coordinated activities to understand whether and how the policy implementation is achieving the intended objectives and what improvements need to be made (Glas *et al.*, 2003). Informants of this study confirmed that there is no specific systemic activity but they use a regular existing evaluation mechanism, as Mr Sutoyo, a high-level official from the Batu education office, said:

'We have not done monitoring and evaluation. We only used the technical guidance for BOSDA to evaluate [how BOSDA was disbursed and used].'

He reported that they did not have solid information on how the literacy policy was implemented. However, the education office relies on information provided by supervisors who in theory regularly visit schools to observe the policy implementation process. This supervision mechanism is also used in Probolinggo. Mr Sutoyo went on to explain:

'As I just conveyed, school principals report to supervisors, and supervisors do the monitoring and evaluation in the schools under their authority. They report to the education office and we evaluate together how the progress is [going] and what to improve.'

This normative process he described, however, hardly reflects ongoing evaluation activities since in many schools respondents had reported that supervisors tended to be absent.

In many instances, the monitoring and evaluation was done informally and tended to be sporadic. This means that there was no systematic data collection, analysis and reporting to inform the policy authorities. For example, one high-level official in Probolinggo had visited schools, participated in a couple of lessons and concluded that students were happy and enjoyed their learning experience. Her motivation in visiting schools and participating in lessons is applaudable but the exercise was not enough to be able to draw conclusions about students learning. A more rigorous process might tell a different or more complex story. Nevertheless, in schools where supervisors visited regularly, the informal evaluation seemed to have a significant impact and improve teaching practices. One teacher, Mrs Maria, described the process:

> *'He (the supervisor) often comes to this school. He always motivates us, gives us direction and provides examples of good teaching so that we can follow. This is because he initiated this (multigrade approach). So, when we have problems, we discuss them with him.'*

In the absence of a systemic approach to monitoring and evaluation, INOVASI established a reflection process as a tool of evaluation. Mrs Lastri in Batu explained:

> *'Yes, we have done reflections. This was before the pandemic. We reflected on the challenges, for example, in schools that have a lack of teachers, and we found appropriate programs that suit teachers' needs.'*

According to INOVASI reports (Sutranggono, 2019), the reflection activity took place twice in Batu, in June and December 2019, and twice in Probolinggo for the multigrade policy, in May and December 2019. This activity was designed to identify challenges and explore best practices in implementing the literacy policy. However, how this important activity was duplicated after INOVASI's withdrawal in both areas was not clear.

Policy Sustainability

The findings about developing and implementing the policies and the changes that were taking place suggest that some best practices have emerged while other practices need to be improved. While positive change was evident, in some areas only small changes or none at all took place. In this section, we explore how our informants view the potential sustainability of the policies, what factors they consider will contribute to sustainability and what challenges may arise in this process.

Attitudes to sustainability

When we asked informants whether the corresponding policies were sustainable, they responded positively. They believed in the respective policies and the need to sustain them for wider, long-term benefits. At the decision-maker and political level, the officials interviewed all believed in the policies and were determined to continue them. For example, both high-level officials interviewed from Probolinggo had confidence in the district head's commitment to improving education in her area of authority as her policies showed. Therefore, they felt optimistic about the sustainability of the literacy and multigrade policies. In Batu, an education official presented a similar picture of the mayor and believed that the literacy policy would continue, although she raised the need to evaluate the policy itself:

> *'We remain optimistic about this literacy policy [continuing] as this policy was ideally designed. Perhaps, after this pandemic, we will conduct evaluations. If our achievement was low, we would*

need to evaluate the policy concept as well. For instance, after we evaluate what is going on in the field, we may feel the targets were too high and so we would [need to] evaluate the policy.'

Other informants at the school level also felt confident about the sustainability of the policies. Mrs Lastri argued:

'I believe in that [the sustainability of the policy], Sir, if we are all committed to it. The low interest in reading has become a problem all over Indonesia, hasn't it? So, this literacy movement needs serious efforts.'

Teachers and principals in the multigrade schools believed in this approach as a solution to the problems of small schools. Therefore, unless there is a breakthrough in appointing new teachers and an increase in student numbers, as Mr Sarjito commented, the multigrade policy would still be needed. In terms of the literacy policy in Probolinggo, informants expressed similar views. However, they also accepted that success depended on the COVID-19 pandemic being successfully contained. One other provision that INOVASI team members emphasised was that the pilot policy implementation needed to be more closely replicated in any farther scale outs that followed.

What makes programs sustainable?

The informants' belief in the sustainability of the policies is encouraging but we also need to know what they see as the contributing factors to this sustainability. They can offer fresh perspectives that may differ from our own analysis that follows this findings section. According to our informants, the factors contributing to policy sustainability include commitment, support and continuous training. Other themes also emerged from the data but they are subsumed in these main themes.

Commitment was reported a key factor affecting policy implementation but informants also believed that it would affect policy sustainability. The commitment they were referring to was from all the stakeholders involved in the policy processes. Mr Harris pointed to parents' commitment to supporting the literacy policy in Batu, for instance, where parents agreed to keep their children away from the TV from 18:00 to 21:00 every evening. The difficulty he cited was whether all parents were complying with this rule or not. Mr Ahmad complimented the *madrasah* stakeholders' commitment that represented a big capital investment for future policy success if the authorities responded to it appropriately. *Madrasah* stakeholders had welcomed the literacy programs and were committed to implementing it but they needed to have proper training and this required an equal commitment from the authorities concerned. Thus, commitment from all stakeholders – authorities, supervisors, principals, teachers, parents and even students – is necessary for each of the policies to be sustained. Confirming this, members of the East Java INOVASI team also felt that stakeholders at the government offices in Probolinggo needed to offer extra support for the literacy programs to continue.

Commitment results in support for the policy process and many informants believe that the policies can only be sustained if there is sufficient support at every stage in this process. Support can come in various forms, for example, through funding and collaboration, but it ensures that the relevant stakeholders have the means to continue implementing the policy. If the COVID-19 pandemic was under control, informants believe that the funding reallocated to managing the pandemic would be returned to its original purpose so that educational programs, including implementing the three policies, could continue more effectively. Informants stressed that funding needs to be sourced primarily from government and this is key for sustainability. Other sources of funding, such as from

parents through school committees, should only be complementary. Mr Hasan, a *madrasah* principal in Batu, said:

> *'We also received BOSDA (local schools' operational funds) to complement the BOSNAS (national schools' operational funds) to improve literacy. The local fund is intended to cover what the national fund cannot cover. We can use these funds for the literacy program, among other projects.'*

Informants from each policy case also argued that collaboration was another form of support that contributes significantly to policy sustainability. They were referring to not only internal collaboration among stakeholders, as mentioned, but also external collaboration, such as the partnership between the education office and INOVASI that has evidently been a determining factor in policy success. Many informants, including those from education offices, hoped that INOVASI would assist them in future. How much the offices depend on INOVASI will be explored in the following subsection.

The third main factor cited as contributing to policy sustainability is continuous training for those implementing the policies. A lesson from implementing the three policies in this study is that training for supervisors, principals and teachers needs to be conducted continuously to improve and maintain the quality of the intervention. Many informants confirmed that if the respective policies were to be sustained, continuous professional development of the three types of school stakeholders was essential. Mr Zarkasi and Mrs Endah, for instance, suggested that teachers need further training to effectively implement multigrade approaches. In their observation, the initial training established a foundation for the approach but was not sufficient to equip them with the knowledge and competencies they need to put it into practice. Mr Karno, a principal of a non-partner school, strongly felt that trainers must be competent professionals to support policy sustainability. Some of the informants also mentioned teachers' working groups as an important venue for continuing professional development.

Challenges to sustainability

Informants also reported on challenges that would hinder policy sustainability. One of the most common concerns was the absence of assistance from INOVASI. INOVASI has played a significant role in almost all the policy processes, including development, implementation, evaluation and even sustainability. The informants therefore not only felt a sense of loss but also of concern that they may not be able to replicate the example that INOVASI set. This happened in all three policy contexts. Mr Johan, a principal in Batu, informed us that the literacy policy was still being implemented, even without full support from INOVASI, but the spirit and motivation were not at the same level:

> *'As Mrs Rasyidah said before, without INOVASI [people] would be idle. There should be an external control. For example, after supervisors were trained, [there was no follow-up] control – it was finished. Perhaps only a small number of schools would sustain [the policies]. So, after INOVASI withdrew, we have been very lost, indeed.'*

A high-level official from the education office explained further that post-INOVASI the challenges would not only be to sustain motivation and control but also to keep up the level of ability among people in charge of the policy implementation. She also felt that 'it would never be the same'.

In Probolinggo, education officials were optimistic about continuing the programs without INOVASI support although they acknowledged that the major contribution it made to the policy processes would be hard to match. An official said that with the support from the local budget (now reallocated

for the pandemic), the policies of literacy and multigrade would continue. However, other informants remained unsure of how the policies would be sustained without INOVASI, considering what occurred in the multigrade scale-out schools. An INOVASI advisor explained that the scale-out school teacher training on multigrade approaches did not include training in the various teaching methods and so, as shown elsewhere, the outcomes were not satisfactory. In terms of the literacy policy, in focus group discussions it emerged that teachers believed the literacy programs would stop when INOVASI stopped. They had no knowledge of any sustainability plans. One teacher said:

> *'[…] it depends on the respective schools [whether it continues or not] because we haven't seen any follow-ups from the education office. There is no evaluation. That's what I have understood.'*

Other challenges to policy sustainability, according to informants, include staff transfers (Batu and Probolinggo), lack of awareness and the geographical locations of schools (Probolinggo). As discussed, staff transfers detract from effective policy implementation. Some informants believe this issue will continue to challenge policy sustainability in future since transfers are often based on political interests, particularly with regard to high-profile positions, such as education officials or even principals. In Batu, one INOVASI team member commented:

> *'There used to be one official who worked closely with INOVASI from the beginning but now he was transferred to another post.'*

In Probolinggo, Mr Sarjito noted that frequent staff transfers by the education office would disrupt policy implementation and challenge its sustainability:

> *'The replacement staff are those who have received no training in the multigrade.'*

Awareness cannot be implanted instantly into people's mind. It takes time to develop an awareness of the importance of a policy and become committed to it. The INOVASI advisor's account of the difficulties in encouraging government officials to act quickly in implementing the literacy policy in Probolinggo reflects their lack of awareness. Other informants criticised the lack of awareness among some parents, older teachers and supervisors who often dismissed the idea of school visits. A high-level education official described the village community as follows:

> *'Here, the awareness about sending children to school is still low. On average, we have low school retainment and the dropout rate is high. We were asked to investigate to produce valid data on the dropout rate and early marriages. But we don't [yet] have that data.'*

Informants often attributed the lack of awareness to geographical locations where villagers lived in remote areas, and parents were often poor and had not had a proper education. One official also mentioned that frequent religious ceremonies meant that children missed school. The geographical locations of schools, as Mr Sarjito and Mr Sardiman observed, also contributed to supervisors' performance. As Mr Sardiman said:

> *'The locations of scale-out schools are not close to each other. This is different from the eight schools in Sukapura. This would pose a particular challenge to the supervision and mentoring programs [that would need] to be sustained.'*

Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion Issues

INOVASI interventions always advocate for gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) issues to be added or integrated into policy processes. INOVASI's strategy on GEDSI is intended to

achieve sustainable development goal No 4: 'Ensure equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' (INOVASI, 2020:2). This section uncovers how GEDSI was understood and implemented in both Batu and Probolinggo.

Understanding gender equality, disability, and social inclusion

Our first concern in both study sites was how the informants understood GEDSI since this could reflect their beliefs and values and have practical consequences on how the issue was advocated or promoted. From the findings, informants' understanding of GEDSI seemed to be concentrated on gender equality and access to school for students with disabilities. More complex concepts hardly emerged, for example, the issue of gender bias in reading materials or people being marginalised by language, geography, and economic status, and thus largely excluded from participating in literacy and multigrade programs. Gender stereotyping, however, was mentioned here and there in the interviews. Mrs Karmila from Probolinggo was convinced that gender was not an issue in her school because every student respected the ability of other students regardless of sex. A high-level education official expressed her strong view on gender in schools:

> *'If you read [about gender differences] and I have read this in fact, smart children are females. Sorry, sir! If the mother is smart, her children are also smart.*
>
> *'I see with my own eyes that those who are diligent are the female teachers; those who diligently develop lesson plans, standard competencies … they are female teachers. Male teachers often only copy and paste.'*

In line with the above comments, Mr Sutoyo in Batu also believed in differentiating by gender, for example, he observed that schools are much better managed by female leaders and teachers. However, in some schools, teachers had a broader understanding of gender equality than these comments reflect. For instance, Mrs Andri said that in classroom teaching male and female students were not separated and there was no difference in assignments given or in expectations for boys and girls. Mrs Laila added:

> *'In literacy, we don't acknowledge gender difference. In the selection of classroom chair, for example, perhaps before we learned about the literacy policy, the classroom chair had to be a male student. But, after we adopted this literacy [policy], we cannot shut out having a female student as a classroom chair.'*

In terms of disability, informants understood that students with disabilities should have equal access to education. They identified some policies to accommodate these students, such as providing special schools and, where possible, providing inclusive schools and special teachers. While we have no first-hand story to share with regard to special schools since all the informants came from regular schools, information emerged on how students from this group are treated. This reflects our informants' understanding of how people with disabilities access education. According to Mr Toto, an 'inclusive' teacher in Probolinggo, some teachers could not accept students with disability in their schools and argued that managing regular students was already difficult. They recommended sending the students to special schools.

This may be a common view among teachers, but Mr Toto believed that this was because they haven't had training on inclusive education. However, local governments in Batu and Probolinggo have two approaches in providing access to education for students with disability – either special schools or inclusive schools. In Batu, a high-level education official said:

'The Mayor of Batu has been highly concerned with this issue of disability. We have two special schools under the authority of the provincial government, one is private and the other is public. We have intervened in these schools, like providing facilities and transport for students. We also have some schools that we selected as inclusive, from primary to senior secondary schools.'

Informants' understanding of GEDSI was therefore varied but the comments mostly reflect a limited understanding of the broader concept.

GEDSI representatives involvement in the policy processes

Involving GEDSI representatives in policy processes was limited to including them as policy 'objects' or beneficiaries. With the exception of gender representation, there is no single finding to suggest that these segments of the community were involved in the decision-making process on policy design, implementation and evaluation.

How far gender equality is promoted in the policy processes is hard to evaluate. However, the study found gender representativeness in the decision-making process. Male and female officials, supervisors, principals and teachers were involved in all phases of the policies. Many informants argued that there was no differentiation between men and women, and their interests were equally represented in the policy development and implementation phases. While Batu's literacy policy contains a generic policy statement on serving all segments of the community, Probolinggo's literacy policy includes explicit articles to ensure social inclusion. There is also an explicit affirmative message for women to be placed as the policy's beneficiaries although this could be criticised for misrepresenting gender as being only about women. Article 13.6 of Probolinggo's literacy policy says that the targets of the literacy program include students, youths, women, differently abled people and micro-industry players. In the multigrade policy, however, no policy statement mentions any aspects of gender.

Inclusive service delivery

While we understand that the three policies, either explicitly or implicitly, aspire to providing equal services to all community members in the respective locations, the implementation process uses various ways of including GEDSI groups. In the literacy programs in Batu and Probolinggo, for example, schools accepted students with disabilities and provided equal treatment by accommodating their specific needs. Batu established a partnership with Malang University and 15 university graduates were assigned to work as inclusive teachers. Some teachers designed books to use for literacy and used larger fonts to cater for visually impaired students. The library and archives office in Batu also collaborated with specific organisations to cater for blind people in the city library.

In Probolinggo, a teacher told us how her school dealt with five students with disability:

'My school happens to be an inclusive school. We have five students with special needs. Actually we have to provide a specific mentor for these students but unfortunately we don't have one. Therefore, the classroom teacher plays inclusive teacher roles. [This is possible] because the students' disabilities are not severe, one with a speaking problem, one with small motor skill problems, and another with counting problems. Our teachers have the ability to design learning aids for these students.'

This comment suggests that schools are prepared to enrol all students inclusively and teachers should all be trained to become part of this movement. However, as Mr Toto said, while it is mandatory for INOVASI and an aspiration for the Probolinggo district government that all schools should be inclusive, this movement is still in its early stages. Prior to initiating the literacy policy, Probolinggo declared itself as an 'inclusive city' in Regent's decree No 421.2/1015/426.12/2015 assigning 24 schools as inclusive institutions. In 2019 another decree No 421.1/2702/426.32/2019 added 78 primary schools as inclusive institutions. After the arrival of INOVASI, various efforts were made to synchronise the inclusive and literacy policies, for example, by modifying the curriculum for students with special needs and specifying teaching methods to assist students. This involved a number of changes, including developing the school curriculum and the appropriate pedagogy, and building facilities. According to the education office, the local government has identified 72 schools to become inclusive and organised training for special teachers. The library and archives office has also been active in providing inclusive services for people with disabilities, for example, by initiating a program called Literacy for Disability (LIDIA or *Literasi Disabilitas*) that provides reading materials in braille and speaking computers. Besides this, the Batu and Probolinggo libraries tried to reach out to communities through mobile and village libraries and, although not ideal, they provided books for various segments of the community.

The multigrade policy was specifically designed to cater for students in geographically marginalised communities in Probolinggo. This is stated clearly in the policy document. Articles 6a, b and c say that multigrade schools should meet the following criteria: (1) access is difficult, transport is limited, and housing is far away; (2) the small number of students or students live far away from each other; and (3) there is a lack of teachers, in particular in remote areas. These conditions indicate that the Probolinggo government is serious about tackling the problems of lack of teachers and students in relatively isolated areas. However, the findings suggest that geographical factors negatively affected the policy implementation process and problems in providing equal services to such marginalised communities persist. These factors also contributed to the lack of supervision and control on education in general and on the multigrade implementation in the area in particular. These issues will also affect policy sustainability in the future.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter briefly discusses the findings of the study in the light of theories reviewed in chapter 2, draws conclusions from the findings in response to the research questions and finally makes recommendations for the relevant parties involved in the policy processes.

Discussion of the Findings

Several themes invite particular attention in this section: approaches to policy development; implementation issues; the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic; policy sustainability; and GEDSI issues. We present a table on each theme to summarise the corresponding findings **although not every finding listed in the table is discussed** due to their relative level of importance in relation to policy sustainability. The discussions are kept brief to provide a concise account of the findings in the light of the literature.

Approaches to policy development

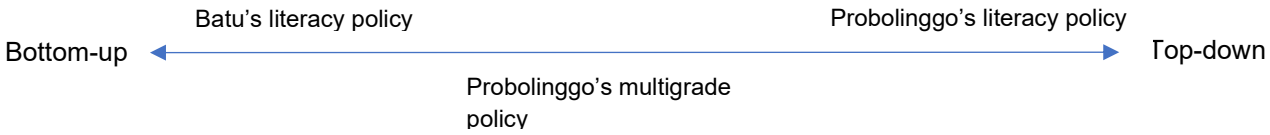
Table 4: Summary of findings in policy development

Themes	Batu literacy policy	Probolinggo literacy policy	Probolinggo multigrade policy
Policy making approach and process	• Stakeholders' attention to local education conditions and problems • More bottom-up approach	• More general issues as happened in other regions in Indonesia: the problem of low literacy and numeracy at the elementary school level • More top-down approach	• Stakeholders' attention to local education conditions and problems • Balanced between bottom-up and top-down approaches
Knowledge sharing	• Shared through literacy festivals (*Gebyar Literasi*) • Sharing activities involve all related stakeholders at local government, school and community levels	• Shared through INOVASI Gathering and Literacy Day • Sharing activities involve education office and INOVASI thus it becomes less popular among stakeholders from other government offices	• Shared through INOVASI Gathering and Literacy Day • Sharing activities by local government, schools and INOVASI
Support and challenges	• Challenges: changing society's mindset and attitudes towards literacy; lack of coordination among local government offices • Support from INOVASI, schools, community and local authorities (education office and the regional representative council)	• Lack of sharing with schools and community • Lack of coordination among local government offices • Support from the education office and INOVASI	• Strong support from INOVASI for a pilot project that led to multigrade policy • Support from schools (teachers, principals and supervisors) that have positive perceptions of multigrade approaches

In its simplest form, the policy cycle consists of three main stages, namely: policy development, policy implementation and policy evaluation (Janssen and Helbig, 2018). Our findings suggest that each of the policies studied in Batu and Probolinggo went through all three stages but similarities and differences in these processes emerged from one policy to another.

The policy cycle begins with development. The literature classifies the two main approaches commonly used to develop policy as either top-down or bottom-up, depending on the type of government and the context of the policy (Matland, 1995; Stachowiak *et al.*, 2016). More democratic governments tend to be more participative in developing policy and involve various stakeholders, but this is not always the case. The three policies concerned used mixed approaches to developing policy that were not fully top-down or bottom-up, however they can be placed more towards a bottom-up approach, in the middle or more towards a top-down approach. Thus, the two approaches should be understood as a continuum, rather than as one opposing the other (see figure 2).

Figure 2: Policy development approach continuum



The findings strongly indicate that Batu's literacy policy was developed in a more bottom-up manner. It started from teachers' initiatives to improve literacy in school by introducing various activities. The response from the authorities was supportive. With the assistance of INOVASI, the policy was developed by involving as many stakeholders as possible who were closely engaged from the drafting stage through to public consultations before the policy was publicly issued. As the literature suggests, this bottom-up approach is likely to lead to more participative decision-making and this research suggests that many informants felt they were valued by the education authority during the policy development process. However, inviting comments from so many stakeholders resulted in a broad policy covering almost everything about literacy, including school literacy, family literacy, community literacy and government office literacy, making the policy appear more complicated. Nevertheless, participative policy development creates ownership of the policy among the stakeholders involved. Ownership indicates high acceptance of the policy among stakeholders and this influences the success of policy implementation and sustainability (Nixon, 2016).

In contrast, the literacy and multigrade policies in Probolinggo were developed using a more top-down approach, with the multigrade policy being placed towards the middle in between the two on the continuum. Unlike in the same process in Batu, a small number of stakeholders were involved in the drafting stage in Probolinggo so public participation was limited, indicating top-down political aspirations to solve problems in the field of education and schooling. This may have contributed to less enthusiastic responses from some stakeholders at the school level, as the findings suggest. However, stakeholders who attended training organised by INOVASI started to see the policies differently. They developed an awareness of the importance of the policies, were committed to participating and appreciated the training program. This highlights the value of dissemination activities in the policy process since some informants at the school level who had not attended training did not fully understand the aims of the policies. Policy legitimacy is attained by involving the wider stakeholders in consultations during the policy development process (McConnell, 2010).

In terms of the policy concept and design, the three policies fall into the category of local government rules (Crammond and Carey, 2017) that are characterised by local interests in solving local problems. Local governments can exercise their autonomous authority to enact regulations to improve education in their own contexts. The fact that one policy in Probolinggo was developed in a more top-down manner does not suggest that the government system is authoritarian, as shown in implementing the multigrade policy where stakeholder participation was high. Likewise, an authoritarian government does not always use a single-handed process of policy decision-making (Williamson and Magaloni, 2020; Xiaojun and Ge, 2016). This is more about the local government not having the expertise in developing policies to ensure that communication channels were kept open for inputs from the grassroots level. In Batu, communication between the education office, represented by the former head of the primary education section, and teachers went smoothly in that teachers could deliver messages openly because the official often visited schools. Meanwhile, in Probolinggo, we did not hear reports that grassroots teachers initiated the policy to urgently overcome the existing problems. This was either because of the lack of the grassroots initiative or because the authorities had not opened up the communication channels.

Although success or failure in policy implementation cannot be absolute, public policy that responds squarely to common needs is more likely to be successful (Luetjens, Mintrom and Hart, 2019). In this research, common needs to improve education underpin stakeholders' positive responses to the policies. This is seen in stakeholder responses, particularly to the literacy policy in Batu and the multigrade policy in Probolinggo. They understood the underlying problems in literacy and school size respectively and believed there should be a solution. Therefore, many teachers in the multigrade schools, while criticising the insufficient training they received, remained supportive and committed to the multigrade policy. This suggests that helping the public to define their needs is a priority but a challenging task for governments. In this study, problems related to policy borrowing did not emerge, although the literacy policy in Probolinggo was derived from literacy policies elsewhere.

The content of each policy is worth examining and we presented summaries of the content under the chapter on findings. The literacy policy in both Batu and Probolinggo aimed at creating a literacy culture, not only in schools but also in society in general, although the scope of literacy in the two policies differs. Batu's literacy concept is more comprehensive and includes seven types of literacy in schools, families, communities, and government offices, while Probolinggo's literacy concept focuses on basic, library, media, technology and visual literacy skills and is more technology oriented. Both concepts are likely to face challenges in achieving the objectives. For instance, in Batu, literacy in government offices showed little progress, while in Probolinggo, technology-oriented literacy was confronted by the geographical characteristics of this often hilly and remote area. The multigrade policy aimed to overcome problems related to geographical and demographic issues, lack of classroom space and teacher shortages as well as achieve more efficient teacher assignment and quality teaching and learning. The policy mandates combining two different grades in one class with specific modifications in learning competencies to cater for the different grades. The challenge for most teachers was to understand how to integrate the competencies from two different grades. This finding also implied problems in teacher management with regard to the multigrade implementation, including teacher transfers, teachers' professional development and teachers' welfare.

Implementation issues

Table 5: Summary of findings in policy implementation

Themes	Batu literacy policy implementation	Probolinggo literacy policy implementation	Probolinggo multigrade policy implementation
Continuing professional development	• Adequate training for facilitators and teachers • Teachers' working groups (KKGs) as a forum for knowledge sharing and scale out	• Adequate training for facilitators and teachers • KKGs and *madrasah* working groups as a forum for knowledge sharing and scale out regardless of its effectiveness	• Due to limited time, training materials were condensed, resulting in inadequate training for facilitators and teachers in the scale-out schools • KKG as a forum for knowledge sharing and scale out
Implementation process and quality	• High level of stakeholder commitment from both local authorities and schools • Gaps in operationalising the ideal concept of literacy into practice • Education office allocates budget to disseminate or scale out, imitating INOVASI's literacy program • Positive perception of the implementation before COVID-19 pandemic	• High commitment from the education authority but not from other government institutions and the commitment of schools is also questionable • Gaps between rural and urban schools; and uneven implementation processes and outcomes • Budget for scale out from local government • Dissemination (scale-out) is not effective as teachers trained are unlikely to share the knowledge with their school colleagues	• High level of commitment from both the local authorities and schools • Gaps between the pilot schools and the scale-out schools • Scale out was supported by subsequent policies that increased the number of schools involved • Budget for scale out from local government • Positive perceptions mostly come from pilot schools • Implementation is perceived as uneven between the intervention's different locations
Policy implementation outcomes	• Mindset changes towards literacy among local government, schools and local organisations • Changes in individual teachers and students in both pilot and scale-out schools	• Changes in government institutions, especially the education office, library and archives office, and schools • Changes in individual teachers and students mostly found in pilot schools	• Changes in institutions and individuals • Changes in teaching approach in the pilot schools • Higher levels of motivation among students and greater involvement of parents in the schools' program • Hardly any changes in scale-out schools

Themes	Batu literacy policy implementation	Probolinggo literacy policy implementation	Probolinggo multigrade policy implementation
Supporting factors	• Good collaboration between local authorities (education office and other local government offices as well as the local legislative council) • INOVASI support • KKGs as a forum for building teacher capacity • Supervisor quality and commitment • Teacher commitment • Parent support	• Good support from the library and archives office for book provision • INOVASI support • KKGs as a forum for building teacher capacity • Supervisor and teacher commitment • Parent support	• Support from INOVASI as well as from local government • KKGs as a forum for building teacher capacity • Supervisor and teacher commitment
Challenges and impeding factors	• Lack of funding to deliver literacy activities at school level • Society's mindset and attitudes towards literacy • Internet connections and facilities • Staff transfer issues: the case in Batu where an education official who was the key player in the literacy program was transferred • Different levels of motivation and initiative among senior and junior teachers • Lack of monitoring and evaluation	• Lack of money to procure school library books • Lack of awareness and understanding about literacy • Lack of dissemination for teachers and supervisors • Additional program from education office: *Qur'an* literacy which was not part of the focus in the literacy policy • Well-trained teachers are transferred to other schools • Different level of motivation and initiatives among senior and junior teachers • Lack of monitoring and evaluation	• Different teacher incentives for civil servant and non civil servant teachers that affecting teachers' ability to purchase teaching materials • Unequal provision from the education office regarding facilities • Teachers' difficulties in accomplishing curriculum-related tasks: integrating basic curriculum competencies from two different grades • Well-trained teachers are transferred to other schools • Teachers' lack of ability due to lack of training • Lack of monitoring and evaluation

The next policy cycle after development is implementation. This is a crucial part of the whole policy process as it translates what is outlined in the policy document into action to achieve its determined objectives. **While a lot of issues arose in the course of implementing the three policies, this section focuses on how acceptance, ability and authority intersect to form a strong contributor to the success of policy implementation (Nixon, 2016)**. In addition, as influential policy actors exist in their own time and space, we discuss contextual factors in implementing policy, including bureaucratic, cultural and geographical.

Informants perceived the quality of the implementation processes for the three policies differently. They generally considered Batu's policy was well implemented but their perspectives on Probolinggo's policies were uneven. In theory, key to effective policy implementation is the actors' ability to make it happen and to achieve the agreed goals and objectives (Andrews *et al.*, 2017; Nixon, 2016). Policy outcomes largely depend on this factor. The literature suggests 'learning' as a compulsory attribute as policy actors must develop individual and institutional capacities (Cannon, 2020; Fullan, 1995). In this research, professional development efforts in the three policy contexts made a difference to the implementation of the respective policies. Comparing the cases of the literacy policy in Batu and the multigrade policy in Sukapura highlighted the crucial role of proper training carried out by expert professionals from INOVASI. With a thoughtfully structured and designed training process, the policy actors on the ground developed the confidence to assume responsibility and agency in implementing the policy. Using the readily available system inherent to schools of teachers' working groups provided a way to build the knowledge and skills of supervisors, principals and teachers, and supplement other professional training or workshops. The groups are also a less expensive option compared to the professional growth programs held in venues outside schools, like hotels or resorts, although these can be an important tool in reviving tired teachers' spirit and commitment.

The quality of training largely determines how well the actors can enact the policy. Even actors whose level of acceptance is high may not develop the required skills if the training is poorly conceived and implemented. This was an issue for many teachers involved in the multigrade scale out. The INOVASI team participated less in the training process for scale-out activities and teachers in scale-out schools did not build the confidence and skills they needed for the multigrade approach, despite their positive attitudes. The teachers considered the training incomplete and insufficient and they needed more intense coaching. As agents of change, they have not yet been able to transform their schools by implementing the multigrade policy. This situation is termed *premature load bearing* where too much is asked for with too little support, too soon and too often (Andrews *et al.*, 2017). Besides the need for more professional training, another factor was the COVID-19 pandemic that temporarily suspended the training. This suggests another factor in shaping individual capacity in policy processes, namely, continuing professional development. Well-designed professional development builds the capacity of organisations and leads to systemic changes.

Policy actors, such as supervisors, principals and teachers who accepted the respective policy, and developed the confidence and skills they needed, were able to assume authority in implementing the policy. For example, some supervisors play an important role through formal and informal school visits by helping principals and teachers develop the knowledge and skills to solve their own problems. These supervisors can confidently bridge the interests of both policymakers and implementers. Principals use various methods to engage parents in schools' programs, for example, they may delegate authority to the chairpersons of the parents' association who can then lead the way among their peers. Teachers as the authors of the classroom have to enact the policy mandates of improving literacy skills or using multigrade teaching approaches. While this example does not reflect the whole picture in implementing the three policies it shows that the authority to act cannot develop without acceptance and proper training. Institutions where individuals have developed ability and confidently assumed authority, such as in Sukapura's Punten 1 school and the *madrasah* in Paiton, have also developed institutional capacity or organisational capability and made significant changes (Andrews, *et al.,* 2017).

Andrews (2008, cited in Nixon 2016) proposes that acceptance, ability, and authority intersect to create a reform space, where policy can be effectively implemented. The implementation of the three policies under study demonstrates what a reform space is and how it is created. Batu's literacy policy appeared to have a bigger reform space as the acceptance, ability and authority intersected proportionally. In the case of Probolinggo's literacy policy the reform space was affected by acceptance being more evident among high officials, resulting in mixed evidence of the actors developing the ability to assume authority and take over. In the case of the multigrade policy in Probolinggo, stakeholders' acceptance was high and the ability and authority in the pilot project were well developed, creating a bigger reform space. However, in the context of the scale-out schools, stakeholders' high acceptance did not translate into ability and the confidence to assume authority, mainly due to inadequate training and supervisory support. This is in line with the lack of ability within local government to translate the policy into action in an independent way. Thus, the reform spaces created in each policy context are all different and lead to different outcomes.

In the bureaucratic system, changes due to the policies can also be seen in varying degrees in the two research locations. Although collaboration among government offices in the locations still needs to improve, officials are increasingly aware of the importance of the policies and committed to their success. The relevant offices in local government developed and enacted programs to respond to the policy mandates, for example, the mobile library program by the library and archives office and the village library set up by the communication and information office. They tried to actuate the policy in the field to achieve its objectives. However, as previous research delineates, cross-sectoral barriers are common in delivering policies and programs, and overcoming the related problems can be challenging (UNDP, 2017). Actors working within their own organisations may perform well but often face internal or external barriers when they have to work with counterparts in other organisations (Berchtold *et al*., 2020). In this study, cross-sectoral 'discomfort' occurred regarding the claim of policy ownership and which institution it should be under. This is why the literacy programs in Batu and Probolinggo seemed to be working independently within each institution involved.

Context has a number of different connotations but it is always influential in policy processes (Ben-Peretz, 2009; Cannon, 2017). In this study, bureaucratic factors make up part of the policy context. The cultural context can have a positive influence, for example through the innate spirit of *guyub* but it can also create constraints in relation to attitudes to schooling or early marriage. The geographical context of some school locations in Probolinggo has its attendant issues, such as lack of teachers, too few students and limited communication. Meanwhile the economic context of parents and teachers, as well as the schools themselves can also detract from the success of the policies. Finally, the context of the COVID-19 pandemic has created a new set of challenges, not only for the three policies in our study but for the whole system of education. These myriad contextual factors cannot be ignored in implementing policy as they are often determinants of a policy's success or otherwise. Our findings examined how these factors interacted with the three policy processes and coloured their outcomes and potential sustainability.

COVID-19 pandemic adjustments

Table 6: Summary of findings on COVID-19 pandemic impacts and adjustments

Themes	Batu literacy policy	Probolinggo literacy policy	Probolinggo multigrade policy
COVID-19 general responses	• Budget cuts/refocusing funding to respond to COVID-19 pandemic • Adopting emergency curriculum; achieving only around 50 per cent of the curriculum target • Most schools under MoEC adopt full online learning while schools under MoRA adopt blended learning • Mini-KKG meetings held in the absence of KKG district meetings	• Budget cuts/refocusing funding to respond to COVID-19 pandemic • Adopting emergency curriculum, achieving only around 50 per cent of the curriculum target • The education office allows schools to use any suitable modes (blended, online) • Mini-KKG meetings held in the absence of KKG district meetings	• Budget cuts/refocusing funding to respond to COVID-19 pandemic • Adopting emergency curriculum, achieving only around 50 per cent of the curriculum target • Mobile teachers compensate for lack of technology and connectivity (*kelas komunitas)* • Mini-KKG meetings held in the absence of KKG district meetings
Program adjustment	• Learning materials delivered through local TV (ATV) • Library office provides digital library (ebooks) • Literacy competitions	• Some schools initiated video recorded reading activities • The library office sets up GO-LIB (digital library) • Literacy competitions	• In some schools, teachers taught students from different levels separately although they were all in one classroom
Adjustment outcomes	• Teachers perceive online mode as not really effective for the literacy program • Problems with internet connection and signals	• Some students are still enthusiastic to learn through the online mode	• Multigrade was not applied

In this section, we discuss findings on adjustments made to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic impacts on schooling in each of the policy contexts and find out how durable the policies are in these challenging circumstances.

No one can deny the massive impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on almost every aspect of human life, including the education sector (Hirsh-Pasek *et al.*, 2021; Jones and Comfort, 2020). This study shows how education and schooling almost stopped operating because of this pandemic. Schools have been closed, teachers and students have been teaching and learning from home, professional development programs for teachers ceased and so did other activities. The funding has been reallocated to managing the pandemic but what hit the sector most is the restriction on face-to-face interaction. Some adjustments were made, however, to keep education going during the pandemic, for example: implementing the emergency curriculum, made possible through a government' regulation; applying online learning; and having mini-teachers' working groups within schools. Different schools seem to have different strategies in facing the challenges. Teachers with higher

ability and stronger authority were more adaptable and found a variety of ways to deliver lessons. In other schools, teachers felt exhausted by the situation and only gave students assignments through parent couriers.

Some issues arose in relation to these various adjustments. First, since most teaching activities were conducted online or using a blended approach, students from economically disadvantaged families and/or from geographically disadvantaged locations suffered the most because they could not fully access the teachers' lessons. Although some schools provided internet and cell phone facilities, these were limited and therefore did not reach all students. The digital divide has grown wider and so education inequality remains a problem in similar locations across Indonesia (Arsendy, Gunawan, *et al.*, 2020; Gupta and Khairina, 2020; World Bank, 2016). Second, with the online learning approach during the pandemic, the role of parents changed as they replaced the schoolteacher – struggling to learn the lessons before helping their children. Teachers, parents, and the children faced high stress in this situation. In this research, both teachers and parents admitted that children often did not learn at home but parents did act as substitute teachers and sometimes substitute students when they did their children's homework assignments for them.

Third, with regard to the three policies, this research shows that policy durability in this COVID-19 pandemic context depends on the policy actors' acceptance, ability and authority (Nixon, 2016). The findings indicate that teachers with stronger commitment and advanced information technology skills were more flexible and could adapt to this pandemic setting. They found ways to engage students amid the continuous budget refocusing exercise. Sufficient funding would also have made a difference but the innovative mindsets of teachers and school leaders helped to make the policy appear more adaptable.

Policy sustainability

Table 7: Summary of findings on policy sustainability

Themes	Batu literacy policy	Probolinggo literacy policy	Probolinggo multigrade policy
Sustainability attitudes	• Positive attitudes towards policy sustainability	• Positive attitudes towards policy sustainability	• Positive attitudes towards policy sustainability
Challenges to sustainability	• No longer supported by INOVASI but the local authority plans to upgrade teachers and supervisors' competencies through training as well as closely monitor the implementation if pandemic restrictions are lifted • Staff transfers affecting high-level education officials who initiated the program	• No specific plan from the education office to follow up the literacy program without INOVASI's assistance • Lack of awareness among parents and senior (older) teachers • Lack of supervisors' visits • Uncertain support from government institutions • Geographical locations	• Authorities are confident of the sustainability of the multigrade program, but in the scale-out schools stake-holders doubt the sustainability of the program • Teacher transfers and relocation with well-trained teachers being transferred and replaced by untrained teachers • Geographical locations

Can each of the policies be sustained? The answer to this question cannot be simply yes or no since a policy will not be entirely successful or completely fail (McConnell, 2010). Also, the COVID-19 pandemic affected policy implementation, overriding other factors. For example, in several scale-out schools, teachers did not have a chance to fully implement the approach in the classroom because soon after the multigrade training, the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions were put in place. Although they planned to continue training or start implementing the approach, they could not do anything and thus the value of the training evaporated. This also means that the actual implementation period for each policy was not even two years – the minimum period before a policy can be assessed for sustainability (Cannon, 2017).

However, using Cannon's (2020) classification of sustainability, we estimate that all three policies are at **the stage of likely sustainability** with certain conditions or requirements to be met in each of them (see table 8). Likely sustainability is an estimate made at or near a project's completion that the benefits will continue after assistance from a donor has come to an end (Cannon, 2020:68). None of the policies can be said to have achieved actual sustainability because the timeline for assessing the sustainability of benefits was not yet met. INOVASI stopped the interventions on literacy in June 2020 in Batu and in December 2019 in Probolinggo. Assistance in the multigrade scale-out activities in Probolinggo is still in progress.

It is pertinent at this point to discuss how sustainability could be achieved without INOVASI's support. Our findings suggest that most, if not all, stakeholders are reluctant to let INOVASI go although many are beginning to believe in their ability to sustain the policy benefits. However, they fear that the program would not be at the same level as if INOVASI were still actively involved. The informants pointed to the qualities that INOVASI brought to the project that they felt would be hard to replicate, such as: high commitment, outstanding competencies, and well-organised training and workshops. This dependency may partly be influenced by what Bjork (2005) terms as the centralist culture of teachers and local education bureaucrats that remain conspicuous till now. He suggests that they become so accustomed to carrying out top-down instructions that they lose confidence in their own critical thinking skills and potential for innovation.

Another potential issue that may infringe on the timely delivery of the policy is if there are lengthy bureaucratic lines that delay any action. Lastly, funding cannot be overlooked in sustaining the policies and this poses a particular challenge for policy actors since the central government has had to refocus the budget on managing the COVID-19 pandemic.

The conditions of sustainability outlined in table 8 are based on the informants' opinions and our own analysis of the factors that make each policy sustainable. These need to be prioritised in their own context to enhance other sustainability factors that are already working well.

Table 8: Conditions for policy sustainability

Batu's literacy policy	Probolinggo's literacy policy	Probolinggo's multigrade policy
Conditions for sustainability	***Conditions for sustainability***	***Conditions for sustainability***
▪ Stakeholders' commitment ▪ Continuing professional development ▪ Tighter institutional collaborations ▪ Monitoring & evaluation ▪ Rewards & incentives ▪ Funding availability ▪ Expert mentoring support ▪ School leadership improvement ▪ IT skills and facility improvement	▪ Stakeholders' commitment ▪ Stronger political support ▪ Building stronger awareness among wider stakeholders ▪ Continuing professional development ▪ Tighter institutional collaborations ▪ Monitoring & evaluation ▪ Rewards & incentives ▪ Funding availability ▪ Supervisory improvement ▪ Expert mentoring support ▪ School leadership improvement ▪ IT skills and facility improvement	▪ Stakeholders' commitment ▪ Building stronger awareness among wider stakeholders ▪ Clarity of multigrade curriculum & modules ▪ Continuing professional development ▪ Tighter institutional collaborations ▪ Monitoring & evaluation ▪ Rewards & incentives ▪ Expert mentoring support ▪ Funding availability ▪ Supervisory improvement ▪ School leadership improvement ▪ IT skills and facility improvement ▪ DAPODIKDASMEN system acknowledges and accommodates multigrade approach ▪ Specific local context facing constant issues of limited numbers of teachers and students in often remote locations

The conditions in table 8 would be possible in a normal situation but do not account for the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic that have paralysed progress in many areas. However, a few adjustments to strengthen support for students in accessing learning more equally need to be made to sustain the policies. IT skills and better facilities are high priority for teachers, principals, and supervisors. Nevertheless, as the literature worldwide suggests, the schooling process during this pandemic cannot provide students with an education comparable to before the pandemic began (Gupta and Khairina, 2020; Hirsh-Pasek *et al.*, 2021; Jones and Comfort, 2020).

Gender equality, disability and social inclusion issues

Table 9: Summary of findings in gender equality, disability and social inclusion

Themes	Batu literacy policy	Probolinggo literacy policy	Probolinggo multigrade policy
Understanding GEDSI	• Narrow perspectives about GEDSI; gender stereotyping detected through comments from government officials • Two approaches in accommodating students with	• Narrow perspectives about GEDSI; gender stereotyping detected through comments from government officials • Two approaches in accommodating students with	• Narrow perspectives about GEDSI; gender stereotyping detected through comments from government officials • Two approaches in accommodating students with

Themes	Batu literacy policy	Probolinggo literacy policy	Probolinggo multigrade policy
	disabilities: inclusive schools and special schools	disabilities: inclusive schools and special schools	disabilities: inclusive schools and special schools • Rejection from some teachers due to burnout in taking care of students with special needs.
GEDSI group involvement in policy process	• No involvement of marginalised groups in policy development • GEDSI is not addressed explicitly in the policy • Relatively equal representation of female and male officials, teachers, supervisors	• No involvement of marginalised groups (disable or other vulnerable groups) in policy development • GEDSI issue is addressed explicitly in the policy • Relatively equal representation of female and male officials, teachers, supervisors	• No involvement of marginalised groups (disable or other vulnerable groups) in policy development • GEDSI is partially addressed in the policy • Relatively equal representation of female and male officials, teachers, supervisors
Inclusive service delivery	• Providing accommodation and services for students with disabilities: partnership with Malang University to recruit 15 teachers to assist students, collaboration of the library office with local organisation to provide books for people with visual problems	• Modifying the curriculum for special needs students • Conducting training for teachers assisting the students • The library office runs the Literacy for Disability (LIDIA) program to provide books in braille and read aloud books	• Multigrade itself is designed to cater for students who are geographically marginalised • The motorbike transport for students' program (OASE) is an example of inclusive services

This section discusses findings on GEDSI issues, including how the policy stakeholders understand GEDSI and how the interests of these groups are accommodated in each of the policy processes. Many informants had a limited understanding of GEDSI. Some understand it as limited to gender representativeness while others still have stereotyping views on gender and inclusion. When this limited conception of these issues extends to those in authority, GEDSI issues risk being ignored in the context of the policy processes. For instance, the gender bias revealed in some informants' comments on GEDSI issues suggest that much needs to be done to improve awareness. As is evident in other contexts (Ainscow, Farrel and Tweddle, 2000), social inclusion where all segments of society have equal access to educational services is hindered by several factors, including geographical constraints and a lack of awareness and commitment among policy actors. In terms of policy content, GEDSI groups should benefit from the policies in this study but they were not consciously involved in the policy decision-making process. While both men and women were involved in developing the policy, this was not necessarily for the purpose of gender equality. This may explain why the policies do not fully cover the interests of gender equality, disability and social inclusion and why INOVASI has initiated interventions on social inclusion issues.

According to the report on the program implementation in Probolinggo (Sutranggono, 2019), for example, INOVASI's intervention on GEDSI was implemented in several training activities at school and community levels. The issues were introduced in teacher training by reviewing the learning scenario to ensure GEDSI elements were included in the learning process. These GEDSI sessions were systematically carried out so that participants: (1) understand the basic concepts of social inclusion and gender sensitivity in education; (2) select and use learning materials that encourage inclusive practices in the classroom; (3) develop inclusive classroom management strategies; and (4) promote a teaching and learning environment free from violence. The INOVASI program in Probolinggo also involved the Ministry of Religious Affairs and partnerships with the Islamic organisations*, LP Ma'arif NU* and *Muhammadiyah*. INOVASI provides training of trainers, literacy short courses and child protection, inclusion and gender materials for *Muhammadiyah* facilitators.

Despite these initiatives, our findings confirm previous research on GEDSI issues in Indonesia and the country is still struggling to create a more inclusive environment for people from every segment of society (Kusujiarti, 2019). Some of the challenges include different interpretations of religious teachings; harmful traditions and cultures; and misleading gender stereotypes and norms (INOVASI, 2020). Inequality in economic status and education remains high and has increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some people have been further marginalised and suffer from various forms of discrimination. Meanwhile, stereotyping and prejudice based on ethnicity, gender and religion are a persistent problem.

Conclusions

In this section, we draw conclusions from our findings and offer some recommendations for future researchers, and for the policy stakeholders involved in refining the policy processes and promoting sustainability.

We study three policies in this research: Batu City's literacy policy No 23 of 2018, Probolinggo's literacy policy No 93 of 2018 and Probolinggo's multigrade policy No 18 of 2019. Batu's policy was developed using a more bottom-up approach that led to more effective outcomes, while Probolinggo used a more top-down approach with less involvement from stakeholders. Marginal communities were not engaged in developing any of the policies but they benefitted from them when the implementation ran as expected.

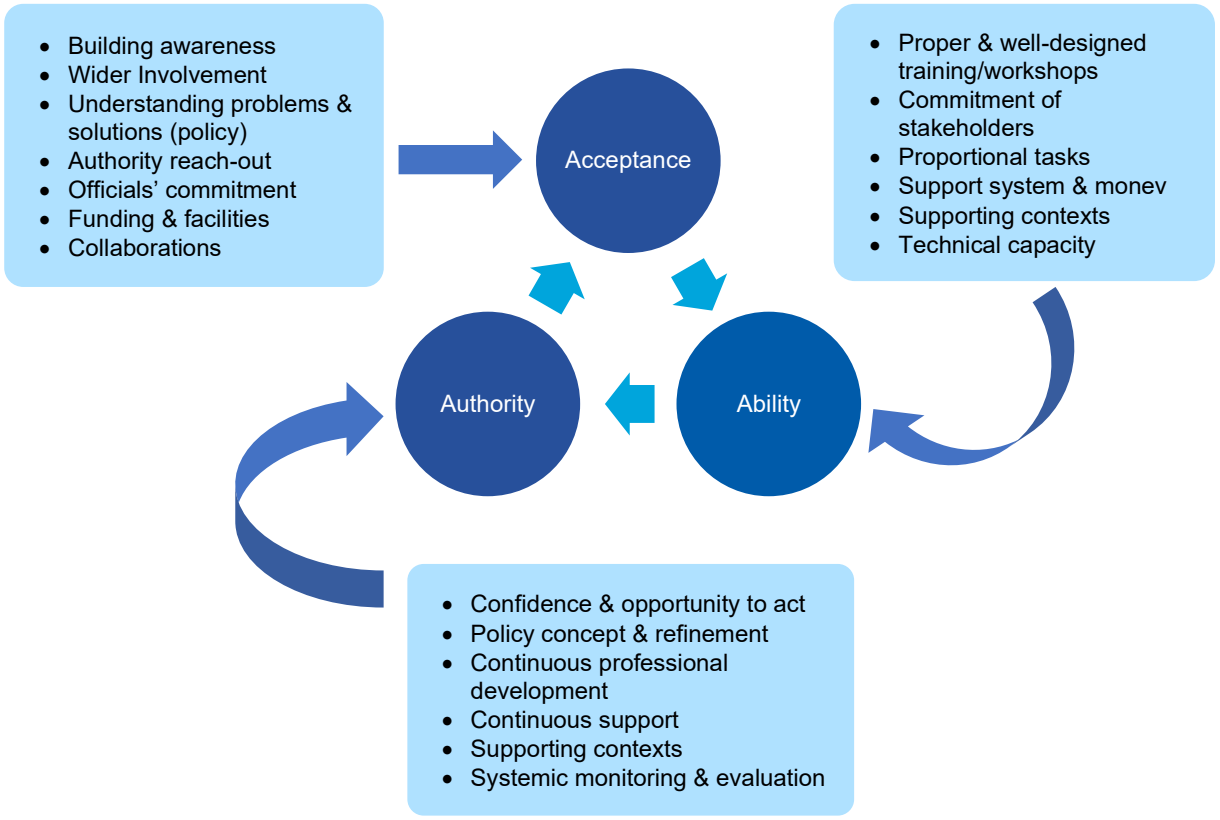
The literacy policy in Batu was generally implemented effectively while the implementation of policies in Probolinggo resulted in uneven outcomes. This was due to the implementation gaps between the Sukapura schools and the scale-out schools in the multigrade policy and between Paiton's schools and other schools for the literacy policy. Several factors influenced successful policy implementation (see figure 3) and a set of different factors contributed to the quality of acceptance, ability and authority (triple As) in each area. This means when the factors in figure 3 are functioning, they improve the quality of acceptance, ability, and authority, making policy implementation more effective. The case of Batu's literacy policy demonstrates a better reform space since wider acceptance of the policy led to more able stakeholders who confidently assumed authority or agency. Most factors listed in each of the triple As worked well but some clearly need to be improved, for example, the monitoring and evaluation processes. In the case of Probolinggo's literacy policy, acceptance levels were low, especially among high officials in government institutions but also among some school supervisors and teachers. This led to mixed evidence with regard to supervisors and teachers effectively developing their ability and assuming authority. In the case of the multigrade

policy in Sukapura, stakeholders' acceptance was high, and their ability and authority were well developed, creating a bigger reform space. However, in the context of the scale-out schools, insufficient training and lack of supervisor support resulted in a small reform space despite the stakeholders' high acceptance of the policy.

Nevertheless, each policy context witnessed notable changes at individual and institutional levels, albeit to varying degrees, but we could not collect solid evidence of these changes being institutionalised due to the limitations of this study, insufficient time and the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. These restrictions have curtailed educational activities and policy implementation processes. While government and schools have made adjustments to continue delivering educational services to children some unintended outcomes include, for example: the widening digital divide; high stress among students and parents; and an overload of work for teachers.

Figure 3 shows the triple-A concept that predicts the effectiveness of policy implementation and its sustainability, with additional systemic support from primary stakeholders. This support includes policy enforcement and refinement for more flexibility in overcoming current challenges; commitment among high-level officials; sufficient funding and facilities; and tighter collaboration among institutions as well as with external agencies. These factors are a manifestation of exercising authority and accepting all the implications of the policies concerned. With the set of triple A factors functioning, the implementation process can move onto the stage of institutionalising change but it will be some time before actual sustainability is evident. As mentioned, it is too early to judge the sustainability of the three policies in this study since implementation began around two years ago and the COVID-19 pandemic created an unexpected disruption. Figure 3 needs to be read in conjunction with table 8 on the sustainability conditions of each policy context.

Figure 3: Triple A process in policy implementation and sustainability



Finally, some GEDSI practices look promising, particularly in relation to gender representativeness and access to literacy for people with special needs. However, stakeholders need to understand that social inclusion and the rights of marginalised groups are also an important part of the GEDSI concept. This will require extra advocacy efforts and INOVASI has already started to mainstream GEDSI issues in all its interventions. GEDSI issues are unlikely to have an impact on the overall sustainability of the policies, considering that partial success is possible, but they constitute an ongoing challenge for policy stakeholders. In other words, aspects of GEDSI in the policy processes might need gradual but concerted efforts to ultimately be put into practice but the policies can be sustained as these changes take place. Nevertheless, to achieve maximum sustainability of the three policies, GEDSI advocacy needs to be relentless.

Recommendations

The following list of recommendations is for future research and for the betterment of both policy implementation and sustainability.

For future research:

1. In terms of methodology, a mixed method approach is desirable in any policy study to understand the opinions of wider populations of stakeholders regarding policy implementation and benefits. A well-designed survey to explore stakeholders' understanding of the policy under study would also measure the effectiveness of policy information dissemination and the extent of public acceptance.

2. A deeper investigation of what adjustments during the COVID-19 pandemic worked well and what did not work would inform policymakers for future actions. This should involve students and parents as key informants for a more holistic view of the initiatives.

3. Local authorities need to address the lack of systemic monitoring and evaluation on policy processes and outcomes. Experimental research preceded by intensive training for relevant stakeholders in using certain models of evaluation would strengthen the institutional capacity for monitoring and evaluation. By doing so, the desired research can produce an outcome whereby models of monitoring and evaluation are devised to fit certain contexts.

4. A further small study on the characteristics of workshops and training organised by INOVASI and by local facilitators or local authorities would show why one workshop or training program is more effective than another. The current assumption is that INOVASI training is better designed and run by competent experts. But why didn't local facilitators in the multigrade scale-out schools produce the same or close outcomes? Specific investigation into culture and beliefs or more intangible aspects of training and workshops would provide a broader overview of continuing professional development issues.

For the betterment of policy implementation and sustainability, the following recommendations are classified according to their targets – national, local, and school levels:

At national level

1. Establishing a monitoring and evaluation system should be a priority in policy development and implementation. A common problem in many programs in Indonesia is that evaluation is not given adequate attention. INOVASI can help to create the monitoring and evaluation system and structure within each partnering government institution and ensure that this organic body works well. Government institutions need to systematically apply the monitoring and evaluation process, learn from the process and decide on improvements.

2. While we all hope that the COVID-19 pandemic ends soon, its impacts are likely to continue for several years forward. Policymakers should not wait for the situation to normalise but should take the necessary action to refine the policies, make them adjustable and find solutions to overcome the impacts of this pandemic. Evidence from this study shows some effective initiatives by teachers, for example, in using the information and communication technoilogy (ICT) media in teaching and in engaging students in learning. Policymakers need to identify and support such practices to sustain the policy benefits in spite of the situation.

3. In future, GEDSI advocacy groups should be engaged in policy development so that these marginalised communities do not merely feature as the objects or beneficiaries of the policies. They should be able to express their needs and interests when the policy is being developed and have the opportunity to examine policy content and understand what to expect from the policies and from government.

4. Advocacy for GEDSI issues should intervene in how GEDSI issues are represented in textbooks both implicitly and explicitly. Implicit representation is the hidden curriculum in textbooks that must not suggest or accept discrimination and injustice with regard to any group in society or any misrepresentation that may go against social inclusion.

At local level:

1. Continuing professional development should be conducted in a variety of ways, both formal and informal, and should be assessed on its effectiveness in terms of delivery and outcome. Trainees must be able to maximise their potential to contribute to policy success. Teachers' working groups should be used as a regular venue for effective knowledge sharing and professional development. Local authorities should facilitate more intensive exchange visits for stakeholders to observe, learn and share best practices and resolve problems. INOVASI should help to ensure that continuing professional development achieves its objectives and empowers those involved. INOVASI can also help build a quality assurance mechanism for continuing professional development and conduct refresher courses for local facilitators, as required, until they are independently capable.

2. Considering how the partnering government organisations appreciated INOVASI's assistance and came to depend on it, we suggest that as a long-term solution, they could outsource qualified professionals for an extended period of time. These professionals would form an ad hoc body and help local government institutions in refining, implementing and sustaining policies. There should be a way to provide incentives for this ad hoc structure that

could be attached to their institutions. In this scenario, an INOVASI-like body serves as an internal part of the government and its existence depends on the government's commitment to this body.

3. Collaboration and coordination among government institutions need to be improved to create a more cohesive approach to policy implementation and sustainability. Cross-sectoral tensions and barriers should be minimised to give all parties a sense of ownership of the respective policies. They can then coordinate and collaborate in some actions and also work independently to achieve policy success according to the functions of their own institutions. This includes, for example, the literacy programs in communities under the communication and information office that was hardly mentioned in the data.

4. Generating awareness and commitment should be a relentless effort through continually disseminating information in various forms, including, online mass messages and programs related to the policies that reach out to all stakeholders. Events to promote the policies should be more frequent and well organised, and communicating budget commitment should be conveyed so that schools and communities feel supported during policy implementation.

5. To improve multigrade policy implementation, teachers should be given more effective assistance, not only in terms of continuous training but also in the form of a special multigrade curriculum with integrated basic curriculum competencies. These are an important part of their teaching plans, reflecting the objectives of the classroom process. If teachers cannot formulate these integrated basic curriculum competencies (which may happen) the lesson will fail. Besides the curriculum, modules for multigrade classes should be developed for multigrade teachers. Equally important, teacher transfers should consider the need for capacity building in each school implementing the multigrade approach – rather than derailing what has been running in one school by removing trained personnel. Therefore, teachers and their capacity for implementing the multigrade approach need to be mapped out, especially in the scale-out schools.

At school level:

1. With the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the use of IT in education has massively increased and intensified. This digitalised teaching and learning that schools were forced to adopt helped schools to partly mitigate the impacts of the pandemic. However, teachers particularly need to upgrade their technology skills for teaching and engaging students more closely. In the multigrade programs, how to use the technology in integrating two different grades and delivering lessons based on merged basic curriculum competencies should be high priority in training.

2. School leaders and teachers need to reach out parents and communities more intensively through various community/school based activities to strengthen partnership between schools and parent/community. From the data, there are many potentials that community can offer, but schools are the one to initiate such partnership.

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List of legislation

Batu City Decree 8 April 2021 on School Library Accreditation

Batu City Mayor's Regulation No 93 of 2018 on Batu City as a Literacy City

Government Regulation No 13 of 2020 on Reasonable Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

Law No 19 of 2011 on the Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Law No 8 of 2016 on Persons with Disabilities

Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No 82 of 2015 on Prevention and Overcoming Violence in Education Units.

Ministry of Education Regulation No 84 of 2008 on Implementation Guidelines for Gender Mainstreaming in Education

Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Regulation No 8 of 2014 on Child Friendly Educational Unit Policy

Presidential Decree No 9 of 2000 on Gender Mainstreaming

Probolinggo Regent's Decree No 421.1/2702/426.32/2019 adding 78 Primary Schools as Inclusive Institutions

Probolinggo Regent's Decree No 421.2/1015/426.12/2015 assigning 24 Schools as Inclusive Institutions.

Probolinggo Regent's Decrees in 2020 and 2021 on Adding Multigrade Schools

Probolinggo Regent's Regulation No 18 of 2019 on Multigrades Management in Elementary Schools

Probolinggo Regent's Regulation No 62 of 2018 on the Probolinggo District Literacy Movement

Annexes

Appendix 1: Data, Informants and Methods

Table A1: Data, informants and methods

Data	Informant	Method
Policy design, history, involvement (Ball, 1998; Crammond & Carey,2017; Janssen & Helbig, 2018)	Government officials, INOVASI, principal, teachers, community members	In-depth interview, focus group discussion (FGD), document collection
Policy implementation: success, factors and challenges (Grindle, 1980; Andrews, Pritchett, & Woolcock, 2017; Matland, 1995; Cerna, 2013)	Government officials, INOVASI, principal, teachers, community members	In-depth interview, FGD with principals, teachers
COVID-19 impacts and adjustments (Azzahra, 2020; Gupta & Khairina, 2020, World Bank, 2016)	Government officials, INOVASI, principal, teachers, community members	In-depth interview, FGD with principals, teachers
Policy sustainability: support and challenges (Nixon, 2016; Cannon, 2017; Moore et al. 2017; Cannon, 2020; Sergiovanni, 2001)	Government officials, INOVASI, principal, teachers, community members	In-depth interview, FGD with principals, teachers
GEDSI understanding and involvement (INOVASI, 2020; Mulyadi, 2017; UNESCO, 2005)	Government officials, INOVASI, principals, teachers, community members	In-depth interview, FGD with principals and teachers

Appendix 2: Tables of Data Collection Schedules

The following three tables present the schedules and informants interviewed (the names are pseudonyms) in this research in both Batu and Probolinggo. Each interview lasted from one to two hours. Focus group discussions even sometimes lasted more than two hours.

Table A2:1: Data collection schedule and informants in Batu

Date	Time	Informant / Gender / Role	Method
Thursday, April 1 2021	13.00 16.00	TIM INOVASI East Java Hartini (F) – Supervisor	FGD Interview
Friday, April 2 2021	10.30 16.00	Sutoyo (M) – Legislative Sulistyo (M) – Village head	Interview Interview
Saturday, April 3 2021	09.00 14.00	Suripto (M) - Parents Principals	Interview FGD
Monday, April 5 2021	09.00 16.00	Merah Sari (F) – Librarian Lastri (F) – Supervisor	Interview Interview
Tuesday, April 6 2021	08.00 10.00	High Level official (F) – education office High Level official (M) – education office	Interview Interview
Wednesday, April 7 2021	09.00 15:00	High Level official Lib & Arch Office Literacy Community	Interview Interview
Thursday, April 8 2021	09.00 13.30	Teacher Group 1 Teacher Group 2	FGD FGD
Friday, April 9 2021	14.00 16.00	Principal and Madrasah Teachers Non-Partner School Principals	FGD FGD

Table A2.2: Data collection schedule and informants in Probolinggo (literacy)

Date	Time	Informant / Gender / Role	Method
Monday, April 12 2021	11.00	Hamid (M) – librarian	Interview
Tuesday, April 13 2021	14.00	Syamsi (M) – school committee	Interview
Wednesday, April 14 2021	08.00 11.00	Rinayanti (F) – supervisor Toto (M) – inclusion teacher	Interview Interview
Thursday, April 15 2021	11.00 14.00	High Level official (F) – education office High Level official (M) – lib/archives office	Interview Interview
Friday, April 16 2021	09.00 14.00 16.00	Teachers Principals INOVASI	FGD FGD FGD
Saturday, April 17 2021	09.00 14.00	*Madrasah* principal and teachers High-level official – education office	FGD Interview

Table A2.3: Data collection schedule and informants in Probolinggo (multigrade)

Date	Time	Informant, Gender, Role	Method
Monday, April 19 2021	08.00 10.00 13.30	Maria (F) – principal Principals High-level official (F) – education office	Interview FGD Interview
Tuesday, April 20 2021	09.00 11.00 14.00	Seger (M) – school committee Sardiman (M) – supervisor Yulia (F) & Syarwani (M) – teachers	Interview Interview Interview
Wednesday, April 21 2021	13.00	High-level official (M) – Bappeda	Interview
Thursday, April 22 2021	09.00 13.00 15.00	Suratno (M) – community figure Sarjito (M) – supervisor Wagimin (M) – parent	Interview Interview Interview
Friday, April 23 2021	14.00	Elyati (F) – teacher	Interview
Tuesday, April 26 2021	10.00 13.00	High-level official (M) – education office INOVASI team	Interview FGD

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