

Six-Monthly Progress Report

January - June 2022



INOVASI – Innovation for Indonesia’s School Children

Ratu Plaza Office Tower 19th Floor,
Jl. Jend. Sudirman Kav 9, Jakarta Pusat, 10270
Indonesia

Tel : (+6221) 720 6616

Fax : (+6221) 720 6616

<http://www.inovasi.or.id>

Submitted

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The governments of Australia and Indonesia are partnering through the Innovation for Indonesia’s School Children (INOVASI) program.

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info@inovasi.or.id



www.inovasi.or.id



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACER	Australian Council for Educational Research
AIPJ2	Australia – Indonesia Partnership for Justice 2 program
AITSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
AKM	Minimum Competency Assessment (<i>Assessment Kompetensi Minimum</i>),
BAN SM	National Accreditation Board for Schools and <i>Madrasah</i> (<i>Badan Akreditasi Nasional Sekolah dan Madrasah</i>)
Bappeda	Regional Development Planning Agency (<i>Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah</i>)
Bappenas	National Development Planning Agency (<i>Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional</i>)
BAST	Handover note for goods or services in Indonesia (used in accounting) (<i>Berita Acara Serah Terima</i>)
BPMP	Educational Quality Assurance Agency (<i>Balai Penjaminan Mutu Pendidikan</i>)
BSKAP	Board for Standards, Curriculum and Assessment, MoECRT
DFAT	Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
FPMI	<i>Forum Pendidikan Madrasah Inklusi</i> (Inclusive Madrasah Education Forum)
EPP	Education Pilots and Partnerships unit
GEDSI	Gender equality, disability and social inclusion
GTK	Teachers and Education Personnel
MERL	Monitoring, evaluation, research and learning
MoECRT	Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology
MoRA	Ministry of Religious Affairs
OPD	Organisation of People with Disabilities
P3K	Fixed-term contract teachers (<i>Pegawai Pemerintah dengan Perjanjian Kerja</i>)
PBS	Student learning profile (<i>Profil Belajar Siswa</i>)
PDMS	Program data management system
PPKM	Public activity restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic
<i>Pusbuk</i>	Curriculum and Book Centre (MoECRT)
Puslitjak/PSKP	Centre for Education Policy Research (MoECRT)

RELASI	Literacy volunteer program (<i>Relawan Literasi</i>)
RPJMN	National Medium-term Development Plan (<i>Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional</i>)
S&P	Systems and Policy unit, INOVASI
SAKB	Character education project in Kupang (<i>Sekolah Abdi Kasih Bangsa</i>)
TASS	Technical Assistance for Education Systems Strengthening program
UMSIDA	<i>Muhammadiyah</i> University of Sidoarjo
UNRAM	University of Mataram

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Innovation for Indonesia's School Children (INOVASI) program is a collaboration between the governments of Australia and Indonesia. It is an eight-year program, funded by the Australian government, and managed by Palladium on behalf of the Australian government, through the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

INOVASI works with Indonesia's Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (MoECRT), the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA) and the Ministry of National Development Planning (known as the National Development Planning Agency *or Bappenas*), as well as partners at the regional level in the provinces of West Nusa Tenggara, East Nusa Tenggara, North Kalimantan, and East Java.

Phase II commenced on 1 July 2020, bringing together the INOVASI Phase I and the Technical Assistance for Education Systems Strengthening (TASS) programs. It is due to finish on 31 December 2023. This is the fourth six-monthly progress report of INOVASI Phase II, covering the period January–June 2022.

INOVASI aims to accelerate the improvement in learning outcomes for all Indonesian children, particularly in the foundational skills of literacy, numeracy and character education (that includes 21st century skills and religious moderation). INOVASI's main focus in this period was to support progress in the Indonesian government's comprehensive reform agenda for basic education. By supporting these reforms, INOVASI continued to support COVID-19 pandemic learning recovery program.

Program relevance in a changing context

INOVASI is an adaptive program that maintains its relevance in a dynamic and changing context. In 2020 we pivoted to support Indonesia's COVID-19 pandemic response and recovery. Following our comprehensive strategy testing in late 2021, we started this reporting period (January - June 2022) by adopting a revised *Theory of Change*; a new *Guiding Program Strategy*; a new *Foundational Skills Strategy*; and updated strategies for *Sustainability and Scale-out*, *Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning* (MERL), *Communications*, and *Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion* (GEDSI).

Our updated Theory of Change strengthens the link between intermediate outcomes, reformulated to reflect the program's educational strategies, and the end-of-program outcomes.

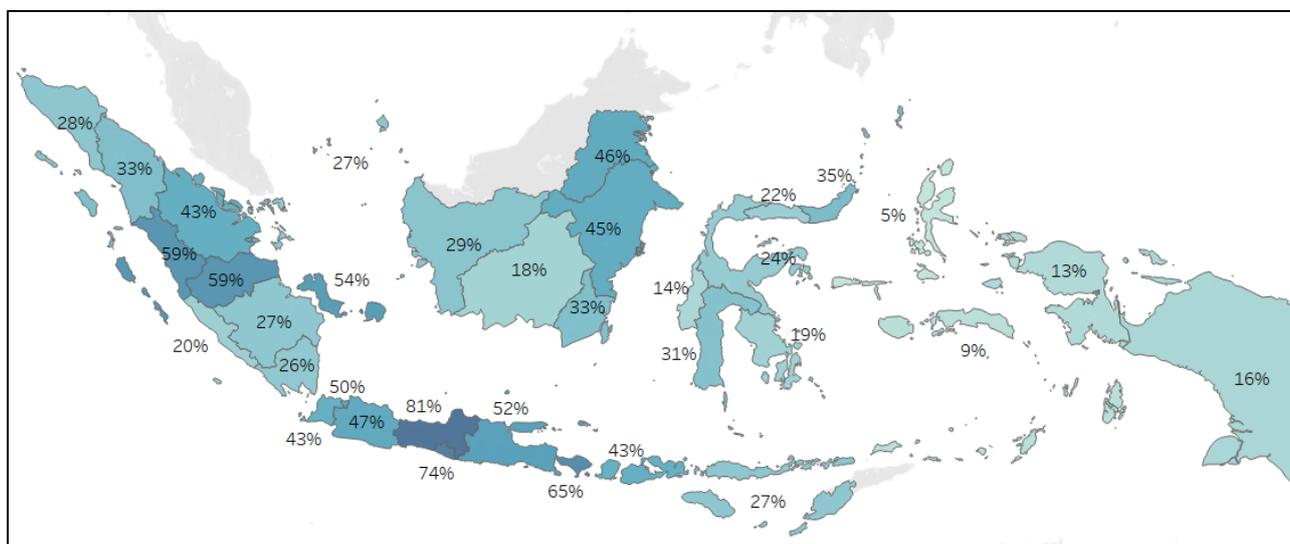
End-of-program outcome 1: National and sub-national actors implement education systems and policies to support inclusive learning recovery and the achievement of foundational skills for all children.

End-of-program outcome 2: Education practitioners (teachers, principals, school supervisors) demonstrate practices that support inclusive learning recovery and the achievement of foundational skills for all children.

Building on our six-year partnership, that was also built on many years of previous engagement between the Australian and Indonesian education sectors, INOVASI is in ‘the right place at the right time’ to achieve these outcomes. While assisting in Indonesia’s COVID-19 response and learning recovery, INOVASI has played a key role throughout Phase II supporting MoECRT and MoRA to develop and trial a range of reforms. These include a new curriculum, new assessment and teacher development systems, and new approaches to religious moderation and character education.

The new curriculum, *Kurikulum Merdeka*, was launched in February 2022, and the reaction has been overwhelmingly positive with more than 44 per cent¹ of schools across the nation opting into an expanded trial in the 2022-2023 school year.

Figure 1: Percentage of Schools opting for Independent Kurikulum Merdeka (excluding Sekolah Penggerak schools)



Source: Graphic produced by INOVASI from GTK MoECRT data, as of 2 June 2022.

¹ Equivalent to 142,816 schools: ECED 24,159; Primary 84,034; Lower Secondary 18,938; Senior Secondary 6,447; Senior Vocational 6,864; Special needs schools 709; Non formal 1,665. Islamic ECED 223 institutions (0.7%), Primary 1010 madrasah (3.9%), Lower Secondary 740 madrasah (3.9%), Upper Secondary 498 madrasah (5.2%).

Table 1: INOVASI Districts opting for independent implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka* (IKM)

Province/District	SD Opt IKM	Total SD	% of total
East Java			
Kab. Probolinggo	347	623	56%
Kab. Sidoarjo	553	575	96%
Kab. Sumenep	141	650	22%
North Kalimantan			
Kab. Bulungan	122	140	87%
Kab. Malinau	67	108	62%
Kab. Tana Tidung	28	29	97%
West Nusa Tenggara			
Kab. Bima	215	418	51%
Kab. Lombok Tengah	544	613	89%
Kab. Lombok Timur	420	755	56%
Kab. Sumbawa	319	372	86%
East Nusa Tenggara			
Kab. Sumba Barat	9	90	10%
Kab. Sumba Barat Daya	2	258	1%
Kab. Sumba Tengah	15	84	18%
Kab. Sumba Timur	106	255	42%
Kab. Nagakeo	172	177	97%
TOTAL	3,060	5,147	59%

A higher level of interest (59 per cent) was expressed by primary schools in INOVASI partner districts². 2471 MoRA schools have opted into the trial, amounting to 2.9 percent of the total schools in the system.³ INOVASI has been asked to help MoECRT disseminate the curriculum and associated policies; to help design and conduct monitoring; and feedback the results, to continuously improve outcomes in an iterative process. MoRA adopted the new curriculum in April and INOVASI helped to develop supporting plans and regulations. Also with INOVASI support, MoRA finalised its religious moderation program, *Moderasi Beragama*, and began rolling it out in Islamic schools (approximately 20 percent of Indonesian children⁴ are educated in these schools, known as '*madrasah*'). MoRA is also coordinating with MoERCT to implement the program in regular schools.

² At a provincial level, our partner provinces are not in the highest level of schools opting in (with Central Java at 81%, DKI Yogyakarta 74%), nor in the lowest (Maluku 9% and North Maluku 5%)

³ Source EMIS (MoRA) accessed 23-August-2022

⁴ A total of 10,314,105 Indonesian children are in the madrasah system (1,268,360 in kindergarten or RA; 4,147,379 in primary or MI; 3,335,625 in lower secondary MTs; 1,562,741 in upper secondary or MA/MAK). Source: MoRA EMIS data for 2nd semester of the 2021/2022 school year, accessed 08-August-2022.

In such a vast education system, comprising over 57 million students and four million teachers, the success of these reforms is highly consequential. Improving learning outcomes by focusing on the foundational skills of literacy, numeracy, and character education, as advocated by INOVASI and incorporated into the new curriculum, will ultimately help Indonesia to improve its economy, stability, and welfare of its 280-million-plus citizens. The challenge for the Indonesian government is to implement its reforms ahead of the 2024 national elections that will result in a new administration and potentially a new policy agenda.

INOVASI is a valued partner to the Indonesian government in achieving its reform goal and we continue to be relevant due to our adaptive approach and updated end-of-program outcomes.

Gender equality, disability and social inclusion and program priorities

Across INOVASI, the breadth and depth of work towards improving gender equality, disability and social inclusion (GEDSI) policies, systems and practices in this period demonstrates the momentum we have built up during the program. The GEDSI aspirations of the Indonesian government, DFAT and INOVASI are reflected throughout the work described in this report. Following the updated GEDSI Strategy, we have focused on four domains: (1) teachers' capacity for gender-sensitive and inclusive teaching; (2) teachers' capacity to conduct diagnostic assessments for children with disabilities and returning to school after the COVID-19 pandemic; (3) scaling out the use of GEDSI-sensitive resources; and (4) demand-driven research and technical support. This includes two 'flagship' activities: gender sensitive teaching in *madrasah*; and support systems for disability identification. INOVASI is also responding to MoECRT's request for us to review draft text books for the new curriculum from a GEDSI perspective. Section 2.1 of this report details GEDSI achievements in the four domains towards IO3.

In this period, INOVASI continued to support the government in improving policies, systems, teaching and learning outcomes in the foundational skills of literacy, numeracy and character education. Character education includes the 'soft skills' of communication, conflict resolution, problem solving and collaboration, along with religious tolerance, and reducing the risk of bullying and sexual harassment in schools. INOVASI's national steering committee endorsed our decision to prioritise these skills that are also embedded in the new *Kurikulum Merdeka*. Our emphasis has therefore been on supporting government to address COVID-19 pandemic-related learning loss – particularly in relation to literacy and numeracy – and supporting preparations to implement *Kurikulum Merdeka*, and associated student learning systems, teaching at the right level (TaRL) approaches, and pre-service and in-service professional development for teachers. The implementation process is iterative, constantly building on lessons learned in an evolving process.

Key achievements

Notable achievements in this period are as follows:

- We published two substantial reports arising from the influential 'learning gap' study conducted with ACER in 2020. As reported in the last SMPR, the Minister for Education, Culture, Research and Technology (MoECRT) referred to this study to advocate for the new *Kurikulum Merdeka* in the national parliament. To add value to the evidence base from INOVASI's 'Learning Gap' study, we jointly published [Beyond letters and numbers: The COVID-19 pandemic and foundational literacy and numeracy in Indonesia](#) (INOVASI and

ACER, April 2022) and [Reforming Indonesia's curriculum: How *Kurikulum Merdeka* aims to address learning loss and improve learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy](#) (INOVASI and MoECRT, June 2022).

- We collaborated with MoECRT and local governments to run a series of *Kurikulum Merdeka* socialisation activities at the sub-national level in all partner provinces in April and May. The activities involved over 500 stakeholders from MoECRT and local partner agencies, including district heads, district education offices, educational quality assurance councils, teacher training institutions, and civil society organisation partners. The focus was on assisting MoECRT to refine and improve its dissemination approach and materials, and helping local government partners to design a strategy to adjust *Kurikulum Merdeka* for the local context. We provided training for local facilitators on socialising the curriculum and professional development for teachers through teachers' working groups- using literacy and numeracy modules, diagnostic tools and assessments developed by INOVASI.
- We organized visits for our national counterparts to INOVASI districts to demonstrate how national government can effectively partner with local government to implement reforms. MoECRT's Director General for Teachers and Education Personnel made the following comments after taking part in a joint monitoring visit to INOVASI's program in West Nusa Tenggara ahead of the national steering committee meeting in May.

"INOVASI's approach to local government assistance is asymmetrical and consultative. The emphasis is on a learning approach. Let them decide their path, even if it is not the most ideal way. Don't dictate. As a result, each local government in NTB has different interventions. Not all the same. Later in the process, the local government will learn, and make corrections as a form of continuous improvement. The result is strong district ownership of the program. And increased confidence of ecosystems that they can support change, because of their own strength."

- INOVASI supported MoRA to adapt and adopt the new *Kurikulum Merdeka*, resulting in a *Ministerial Decree* No. 347/2022T issued on 5 April 2022.⁵ INOVASI assisted in developing supporting regulations and guidelines, to enable this adaption, as well as to support planning for monitoring and evaluation.
- INOVASI collaborated with MoECRT to adapt and integrate materials for national scale out through the ministry's *Merdeka Mengajar* platform. These are teacher development materials that INOVASI and our local partners have already successfully piloted. The platform is designed to disseminate the new *Kurikulum Merdeka* and train teachers to implement new approaches. We also worked with local partners, non-government organisations and MoECRT to develop new materials for the platform.
- INOVASI and MoERCT organised a national dialogue on 9-10 June 2022 to discuss the topic: *Improving the quality and quantity of children's books*. The Minister for Education, Culture, Research and Technology took part and the discussions resulted in recommendations for book supply, school libraries and reading corners. As a result, the minister requested INOVASI's support to arrange a meeting with him and key stakeholders to brainstorm solutions to the challenge of making more children's books available – including in remote

⁵ *Keputusan Menteri Agama* (KMA) No. 347/2022. INOVASI was the only external party at workshops in April 2022 on how MoRA would implement the new curriculum.

areas. MoECRT is discussing with Bappenas on funding for books to schools. This development built on a consultative problem-driven iterative adaptation approach (PDIA) over the last year with MoECRT, practitioners and representatives of non-government organisations and the book industry. We are currently following up on the outcomes.

- In May-June 2022, INOVASI facilitated the participation of Australian writers and illustrators in a series of MoECRT webinars and workshops to give writers an in-depth understanding of the role picture books play in stimulating children's literacy and to offer guidance on creating quality storybooks and picture books for children.
- INOVASI is supporting MoECRT and MoRA in developing various regulations related to disability: on reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities; on special education and services in higher education; and on the disability service units. These regulations are expected to be ratified before the end of 2022. The draft regulations from both ministries also include clauses to allow schools to use a functional approach to identify disability.

Progress towards end-of-program outcomes

There are two main pathways for achieving INOVASI's end-of-program outcomes. Firstly, at the sub-national level, by INOVASI districts adopting better policies and scaling out good practices in their schools. Secondly, at the national level through instituting better systems and policies that are informed by the sub-national experience. The program is on track to achieving its two high-level end-of-program outcomes. INOVASI continues to support and inform the implementation of Indonesia's ambitious reform agenda, using an iterative approach. The reforms, that address the short-term need for learning recovery and the longer-term need to improve learning outcomes, are still a work in progress for government and sub-national implementing agencies and schools.

The newly released *Kurikulum Merdeka* focuses on foundational skills, is adaptable to local context, promotes teaching at the right level (TaRL), and is to be supported by inclusive and accessible teaching and learning resources. During this period, the decision-making process that is shaping Indonesia's big reforms in curriculum, assessment and teacher development has become noticeably more consultative, and evidence-based, providing greater opportunity for INOVASI to play a role as technical partner.

As a result of INOVASI's work on literacy that started early in Phase I, systems and policy are changing substantially. This work included pilots and partnerships across our partner districts that focused on: changing classroom practice; supporting schools, libraries and community reading centres; introducing levelled readers and big books for shared reading; providing advocacy and policy support to improve government funding, partnerships with non-government organisations and the book publishing industry, and assistance with improving book approval processes at the national level. Since Phase 1, INOVASI has promoted the benefits of using mother tongue approaches in early learning and there is a growing awareness of this issue among policymakers. For example, in March 2022, the Head of MoECRT's education standards, curriculum and assessment centre asked INOVASI to produce teaching materials with a language transition component and these have been accepted for use on the *Merdeka Mengajar* platform. For discussion purposes with the ministry, two videos on language transition have also been produced to show how language transition is implemented in classrooms.

In April 2022, MoECRT released the first-round results of the new nationwide assessment. The district education report card, (*Rapor Pendidikan*) reports on results of the students' Minimum Competency Assessment (AKM), the school character survey and a school learning environment survey. Following earlier inputs by INOVASI on the assessment, it now has inclusive elements, whereby a teacher can adjust the time allocated for children with special needs, and it also allows for regional language adjustments in student's responses. The diagnostic assessment video for numeracy that INOVASI is developing with MoECRT is based on the TaRL approach. MoECRT is hopeful that the education report will inform and stimulate districts, so they allocate resources and implement targeted programs to improve learning outcomes for all students.

MoECRT and MoRA are increasingly working together to implement reforms across both school systems, including in approaches to character education and *moderasi beragama*. Both MoECRT and MoRA recognise the value of inclusive education, articulated for example, through the MoRA roadmap for Inclusive Education in madrasah (*Peta Jalan Madrasah Inklusif*).⁶ Significant progress has been made on identifying children with disability, through systems such as the student learning profile, and revised regulations for schools to use a functional approach to disability identification. INOVASI has also worked with MoECRT to produce videos for teachers on teaching children with a disability, digital learning resources and a *Bahasa Indonesia* Bookbot reading application for children with dyslexia and other reading difficulties.

The start of INOVASI Phase II coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic and associated school closures. This meant that district plans to scale out new practices in teaching and school management learned through INOVASI activities in Phase I were disrupted. However, INOVASI's work with partner districts over the past two years means that many districts have issued regulations to address learning loss. They have also incorporated funding in their educational roadmaps, plans and budgets for teacher training and other activities to improve inclusive teaching practices and support learning recovery. In some cases, such as North Kalimantan, the introduction of *Kurikulum Merdeka* has been explicitly and systematically integrated into policy and systems which INOVASI helped to establish, to address learning recovery. These plans are now being realised.

Progress against the Annual Work Plan

During this reporting period, INOVASI's revised program strategies and Theory of Change refocused our activities on the achievement of our redefined intermediate and end-of-program outcomes. The activities of the eight work units now clearly support the eight cross-cutting programs: (1) Curriculum and assessment reform; (2) Literacy, books and language transition; (3) Numeracy; (4) Character education and *Moderasi Beragama*; (5) Teacher quality improvement; (6) Disability inclusion; (7) Gender equity; and (8) Cross-cutting and planning support. During this transition period, reporting of progress against the work plan reflects the implementation schedule developed at the commencement of this financial year (FY21/22) which is still structured under themes (Annex 3). Reporting for the next period will reflect the new program structure as per the Annual Work Plan for FY22/23.

Over January to June 2022, progress has been as expected against the work plan. In the context of COVID-19, changes in levels of restrictions on community activities and transitioning from virtual to in-person meetings had the greatest impact on the ability to run key activities.

⁶ [Kemenag Susun Peta Jalan Madrasah Inklusif](#), 21 May 2021

Of the 98 activities listed for implementation, 23% have been completed and 49% are ongoing. 6% have been postponed, 3% cancelled⁷ and 13% are new activities included in response to requests from national and sub-national partners. Overall, most planned activities have been completed or are on-going. INOVASI work units have continued to respond and adapt to counterpart requests, leading to relevant and positive changes to previously planned activities, as well as new activities not included in the original workplan.

The adjustment of themes into cross-cutting programs has created several new activities which may be attributed to a sharpened focus in some areas, such as Literacy, Books and Language transition. Supporting MoECRT to increase quality book supplies, enhancing the book approval process and piloting, and exploring, working models and partnerships to increase the supply of quality children's books are new activities this reporting period. The request for microlearning materials, inputs on textbook review and writing and inputs to character education, including videos and guidelines, have been requested and addressed during this period.

Risks and sustainability

As a sustainability strategy, INOVASI is strengthening the ecosystem at local and national levels – by building the capacity of non-government organisations and university partners, and building partnerships between local government, teacher training institutions and civil society. This supports the scale-out of successfully piloted practices, and, beyond this, will build a sustainable ecosystem to support continuing improvements in the future.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to pose a risk to INOVASI achieving and sustaining our outcomes. However, this risk is diminishing with the gradual reopening of face-to-face activities and regular schooling. The major risk of learning loss disrupting Indonesia's reform program and the achievement of our own program outcomes is being addressed primarily by supporting implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka*. With its focus on diagnostic testing and differentiated teaching – especially for foundational skills – the reformed curriculum directly addresses learning loss. The key is to implement it successfully and this is where INOVASI is focusing support.

⁷ - Exploring partnerships with Islamic women's organisations (Aisyiah and Fatayat NU) due to unsustainable design.
- Supporting development of monitoring and evaluation for implementation of Kurikulum Merdeka, on MoECRT request.
- Advice on trialing a school-based in-service professional teacher education program (PPG) on university request.

INOVASI IN NUMBERS

INOVASI IN NUMBERS

PHASE II
JULY 2020 - JUNE 2022



Estimated national reach (indirect)

14,533,000

Early grade students



> 800,000

Early grade teachers

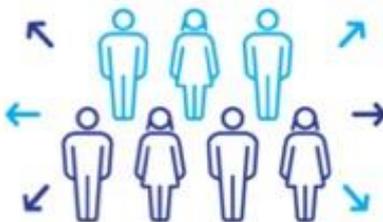


173,837

SDs and MIs

26,550

individuals reached (directly)



2,079

organisations supported



- 1,635 schools
- 117 development partners/CSOs
- 57 local govt institutions/units
- 20 central govt institutions/units
- 160 Teacher Working Groups
- 20 universities
- 70 community libraries



12

 Grant Programs

138

 collaborations
with CSOs, TTIs,
government agencies,
private companies,
research institutes

144

 policies

developed or strengthened
at various levels:

School: **33**

Province: **7**

District: **53**

National: **51**

1. INTRODUCTION

This is the fourth six-monthly progress report for INOVASI Phase II. It covers the period January – June 2022.

1.1. Background

INOVASI is managed through eight work units: Systems and Policy (S&P); Education Pilots and Partnerships – Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (EPP-GEDSI); Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning (MERL); Communications (Comms); and the four provinces of North Kalimantan, West Nusa Tenggara, East Nusa Tenggara and East Java. While these work units exercise a degree of autonomy to encourage innovation and local initiatives, our approach is integrated in a purposive and strategic way.

INOVASI is an adaptive program. During this reporting period, we adopted a revised Theory of Change (see Annex 1); a new Guiding Program Strategy; a new Foundational Skills Strategy; and updated strategies for Sustainability and Scale-out, Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning (MERL), Communications, and Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI). We began to implement these new strategies during this period.

The updated Theory of Change strengthens the link between intermediate and end-of-program outcomes. INOVASI has adopted a matrix model to ensure that activity under the eight work units supports the intermediate and end-of-program outcomes (see Annex 2). Activity under each of the work units is integrated into eight cross-cutting programs: (1) curriculum and assessment reform; (2) literacy, books and language transition; (3) numeracy; (4) character education and *Moderasi Beragama*; (5) teacher quality improvement; (6) disability inclusion; (7) gender equity; and (8) cross-cutting and planning support.⁸ This approach ensures that activity and outputs are coordinated and collectively contribute to the outcomes described in the Theory of Change. For example, work on language transition in East Nusa Tenggara, or literacy in North Kalimantan, informs national policy work on the curriculum, while support to MoECRT for curriculum development informs and influences activity in the provinces, providing the national government with a ‘laboratory’ to explore local solutions to implementing national policy.

An updated Results Framework was developed during the reporting period to reflect the new Theory of Change and the program matrix structure described above. The updated framework was used for monitoring and evaluation. Section 2 of this report describes progress towards intermediate and end-of-program outcomes for each of the eight programs. Meanwhile, in Annex 3, we report on progress implementing the Annual Work Plan (2021-2022) for each work unit, using a slightly different structure from that work plan.

Program activity in this period focused on support for implementation of Indonesia’s new national curriculum, *Kurikulum Merdeka*, and related policies for assessment and teacher development. The

⁸ The eight programs loosely correspond to the ‘themes’ or ‘policy levers’ that INOVASI developed at the beginning of Phase II. As an adaptive program, INOVASI continually updates and refines its approach to meet the changing context and adopt lessons learned. The difference now is that these themes or levers relate directly to the intermediate outcomes in the updated Theory of Change. The Annual Work Plan for 2021–2022 was structured around the following eight integrated themes: (1) COVID-19 response and recovery; (2) Learning for all; (3) Curriculum; (4) Assessment; (5) Teaching practices; (6) Teacher management; (7) School leadership and school improvement; (8) Enabling systems.

government describes the reforms as ‘transformational’: they provide a vehicle for the changes in practice among teachers, local government and local partners in teaching and learning in literacy, numeracy, and character education that INOVASI has been supporting since 2016. Implementing the new curriculum and assessment policies also represent a response to the learning gap related to the COVID-19 pandemic, and identified in the major study conducted by INOVASI and MoECRT with support from Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). During this period, two substantial reports arising from this study were jointly published.⁹

Work in the Islamic sector focused on supporting the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA) religious moderation program for schools, ‘*Moderasi Beragama*’, and partnerships with Indonesia’s two mass Islamic organisations, *NU Ma’arif* and *Muhammadiyah* in East Java to pilot approaches to character education and gender responsive schooling, along with scaling out new approaches to literacy, numeracy and inclusion.

1.2. Context

This section describes the context and risks in the January-June 2022 reporting period. The key aspects are the COVID-19 pandemic and the Indonesian government’s major basic education reforms. As INOVASI is in partnership with government, some policy shifts reported in this section reflect both a change in context and an impact of the program. Where this is the case, it is noted in the text.

COVID-19 update

The COVID-19 pandemic started in Indonesia in March 2020. In the two years since then, the economy, social life and education have been seriously disrupted. While most schools partially reopened in the first semester of the 2021-2022 school year, the Omicron variant entered Indonesia in December 2021, resulting in renewed school closures and widespread restrictions on social movement. Most schools were closed again in January 2022, but they began to reopen in February-March. While there was concern that the mass domestic travel associated with the Idul Fitri festival in early May 2022 could lead to fresh outbreaks of COVID-19, this did not occur. Since then, Indonesia has progressively reopened, loosening restrictions on movement and permitting schools to fully reopen for face-to-face classes. June has seen a rise in cases. While authorities have expressed caution, travel and movement restrictions have not been reimposed, as yet. According to data from the Indonesian Ministry of Health, over 96 per cent of Indonesians have received at least one dose of vaccine, with around 71% per cent double vaccinated.¹⁰

INOVASI staff continued working from home in this period, with offices essentially closed until 12 April, when they reopened with restricted numbers. Travel and face-to-face meetings were permitted

⁹ Spink, J., Cloney, D., & Berry, A. (2022). Beyond letters and numbers: The COVID-19 pandemic and foundational literacy and numeracy in Indonesia. INOVASI and ACER. <https://www.inovasi.or.id/id/publikasi/kesenjangan-pembelajaran-seri-satu-melampaui-huruf-dan-angka-pandemi-covid-19-dan-dasar-literasi-dan-numerasi-di-indonesia/>

Randall, R., Sukoco, G. A., Heyward, M., Purba, R. E., Arsendy, S., Zamjani, I., & Zulfa, A. H. (2022). Reforming Indonesia’s curriculum: How *Kurikulum Merdeka* aims to address learning loss and improve learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy. INOVASI and *Pusat Standar dan Kebijakan Pendidikan* (PSKP). <https://www.inovasi.or.id/id/publikasi/seri-kesenjangan-pembelajaran-dua-mereformasi-kurikulum-indonesia-bagaimana-kurikulum-merdeka-bertujuan-untuk-mengatasi-kehilangan-pembelajaran-dan-meningkatkan-hasil-belajar-dalam-literasi-dan-nu/>

¹⁰ <https://www.kemkes.go.id/article/view/22042800003/covid-19-vaccination-reaches-400-5-million-doses.html>

with justification and appropriate precautions and became more common towards the end of the period. Offices fully reopened in June and a series of face-to-face and hybrid events took place in Jakarta and provinces in the April-June period. All staff, including long-term international personnel, have been back at their assigned work locations since May.

Policy update

The most significant development in this period was the launch of Indonesia's new curriculum. The Minister for Education, Culture, Research, and Technology launched *Kurikulum Merdeka* on 11 February 2022. MoECRT requested support from INOVASI with socialising the new curriculum, preparing for implementation, and monitoring and evaluating the process in partner districts. MoRA formally agreed to implement the new curriculum on 5 April 2022.¹¹ INOVASI helped develop supporting regulations and guidelines, to enable this to happen, as well as supporting planning for monitoring and evaluation.

The new national curriculum is still at a 'trial' stage and was not expected to be fully rolled out until 2024. Schools had the choice of opting for the trial, continuing to use the 2013 national curriculum, or using the simplified 'emergency' curriculum, released during COVID-19 pandemic school closures in 2020. The response was far more enthusiastic than envisaged by MoECRT, with some 44 per cent of schools nationwide and 59 per cent of schools in INOVASI partner districts (5,147 primary schools) opting for 'independent implementation' of *Kurikulum Merdeka* in 2022.

MoECRT released the first-round results of the new national assessment conducted in the previous semester on 1 April 2022. The *Rapor Pendidikan*, a new district report card, reported on results of the minimum competency assessment (AKM), the character survey and a school climate survey.

Results of the Minimum Competency Assessment (AKM)

- AKM results were consistent with previous national and international assessments of literacy and numeracy in Indonesia (e.g., 2016 AKSI assessment, PISA, TIMMs), showing close to 2/3 of Indonesian students do not meet minimum competency benchmarks for numeracy and around 1/2 for literacy. Results were consistent across all levels of schooling.
- The national assessment also revealed significant disparities between Java, Sumatra and parts of Kalimantan with other regions, but at a national level there was no significant difference in performance between socioeconomic groups. Data also revealed a positive correlation between a school's results in the character and school climate surveys and literacy and numeracy performance.
- Nationally, the national assessment data shows that student and teacher perceptions of gender equality are encouraging. On average respondents support equal rights between genders, and schools have begun to develop a safe environment in relation to student well-being, bullying, corporal punishment, and sexual violence. Data also showed that schools have begun to develop policies and approaches to support students with disabilities as well as gifted and talented students.

Source: <https://raporpendidikan.kemdikbud.go.id/app>; MoECRT PPT presentation from launch of the Rapor Pendidikan, 1 April 2022.

¹¹ Keputusan Menteri Agama (KMA) No. 347/2022T

MoECRT expects the publicly available report card to create demand, informing and stimulating districts to allocate resources and implement programs to improve learning outcomes.

INOVASI will work with partner districts to support use of the education report card, *Rapor Pendidikan*, in priority setting and planning, as well as in turn how districts support schools to use the national assessment data. Through this support, INOVASI will also collect feedback from districts and schools on the utility of the *Rapor Pendidikan* to inform MoECRT's reporting in 2022. INOVASI continues to be available to work with MoECRT on analysis and reporting of national assessment data in 2022/23.

In April 2022, MoECRT established new education quality assurance bodies and teacher training agencies (BPMP and BGP)¹² in each province. These technical units are expected to play a key role, supporting provinces and districts implementing the national reforms. On 19 April 2022, INOVASI's national steering committee decided that INOVASI should focus on transitioning its current role as facilitator of reform in the districts over to government, by strengthening government institutions, particularly the new BPMP and BGP, as well as MoRA's regional offices.

The foundational 21st century skills associated with character education have become more important in this period, with the release of the new curriculum and the education report card. In 2018, the Minister for Education, Culture, Research and Technology identified three 'big sins' that need to be eradicated in schools – bullying, intolerance and sexual harassment - and these issues are now gaining more attention. On 12 April 2022, Indonesia's national parliament passed a long-awaited bill to tackle sexual violence, aimed at building stronger cases against perpetrators and helping victims to secure justice. Following a request from MoRA's Director General for Islamic Education, the national steering committee decided that INOVASI should help address bullying and sexual violence, through character education and implementing and coordinating the *Pancasila* student profile and the *Moderasi Beragama* programs. Following a high-profile launch on 22 September 2021, MoRA began rolling the *Moderasi Beragama* teacher training program out in schools and *madrasah*. In the first half of 2022 MoRA focused on integrating *Moderasi Beragama* into curriculum materials and textbooks.

High-level risks

Paradoxically, the greatest risk facing both INOVASI and the Indonesian government in this period has arisen from the enthusiastic response from districts and schools to the trial process for *Kurikulum Merdeka*. This positive response has created both opportunity and risk. INOVASI will support the monitoring and evaluation process for the implementation, sharing results with MoECRT and informing the iterative adaptation of the new curriculum ahead of the national rollout.

INOVASI's updated strategy for sustainability and scaling is addressed through the following strategies: (1) thinking and working politically; (2) assisting the government to learn from the INOVASI experience and adopt effective approaches that view districts as partners, giving them

¹² These new provincial-level bodies, established in April 2022, are expected to support implementation of MoECRT's reforms. The *Balai Penjaminan Mutu Pendidikan* or *Balai Besar Penjaminan Mutu Pendidikan* in larger provinces, such as East Java (BPMP or B2PMP) will take over the role of the previous LPMPs. Equally, the *Balai Guru Penggerak* or *Balai Besar Guru Penggerak* in larger provinces (BGP or B2GP) are expected to take over the previous role of the teacher training institutes but they will be in every province. For brevity, the terms BPMP and BGP are used throughout this report (to include BBPMP and BBGP).

greater ownership over the reforms; and (3) helping MoECRT and MoRA to build the capacity of teachers and administrators to implement the new curriculum, assessment, *Moderasi Beragama* and character education programs. The second strategy involved consultations and field trips for senior officials from Jakarta to INOVASI districts. The third strategy involved close engagement with government at all levels to help them create online teacher training resources, and to find ways to use those resources effectively in diverse contexts – including through teacher working groups, and in remote areas with limited internet access.

Adopting a parallel approach, INOVASI has consistently communicated that the changes in teaching embedded in the new curriculum to improve literacy, numeracy, character education and inclusion can be applied regardless of which curriculum is in place at any time. In addition, we are strengthening the ecosystem at local levels – developing new models of cooperation between local government, teacher training institutions and civil society that will remain in place after INOVASI closes. While addressing risk, this approach builds sustainability and supports the achievement of INOVASI's end-of-program outcomes.

During the reporting period, INOVASI continued to manage the risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, both in terms of the health and safety of the team, and the smooth implementation of the program. We were careful to apply health and safety protocols, we maximised use of online technologies for program delivery, and then progressively reopened for face-to-face activity while monitoring developments in the pandemic.

1.3. Program relevance

INOVASI remains a highly valued, and a highly relevant program, for both the Australian and Indonesian governments. This is witnessed in the high level of participation and engagement in INOVASI's national and sub-national steering committee meetings held in this period, and in the field trips and consultations with senior government partners that led to and followed on from those meetings. It is also evident in the government using INOVASI research and experience from pilots and partnerships to inform policy and planning, and in the frequent requests we receive for advice and support from MoECRT, MoRA and partner districts.

The problem of poor learning outcomes identified in INOVASI's program design document (2014, updated in 2019) is identified as a major issue in the government's current five-year national development plan (RPJMN). This problem was compounded by learning loss resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Improving learning outcomes is critical to Indonesia and Australia's immediate goal of supporting COVID-19 pandemic recovery, and to Indonesia's longer-term plan to strengthen its human resources.

INOVASI's continued focus on foundational skills is particularly relevant – and is reflected in the new curriculum that prioritises literacy, numeracy, and character (see Box 1). Improving learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy is the foundation for improving learning outcomes across the curriculum and throughout the higher grades. Thus, literacy and numeracy skills are the foundation for all education – and for lifelong learning. Improving approaches to character education can have equally broad impacts: the 'soft' skills, known as 21st century skills, include critical thinking, conflict resolution and communication. As Indonesia seeks to strengthen its role as an emerging middle-income country and expand its knowledge-based economy, these skills are pivotal. In this context, religious moderation is also critical for national and regional stability. Australia has a strong interest

in supporting Indonesia's objectives in these areas and INOVASI, as a trusted friend of the Indonesian government, is well placed to support this.

The following reflections from MoECRT's Director General of Teachers and Education Personnel, and a key member of INOVASI's national steering committee, serve to illustrate the continuing relevance of INOVASI's approach and outcomes in the context of Indonesia's reform program (see Box 1). Dr Syahrir published these comments on a MoECRT forum after taking part in a joint-monitoring visit to Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara.

Box 1: Reflections on INOVASI's Joint-Monitoring visit to Lombok, NTB

Iwan Syahrir PhD, Director General, Teachers & Education Personnel (GTK), MoECRT

1. INOVASI interventions that focus on essential things, such as literacy and numeracy practices, have a comprehensive impact on schools. For example, changing the mindset of teachers and their principals, data-based planning for teaching, a culture of learning and sharing within and between schools, courage to experiment, involvement of various stakeholders (local government, schools, campuses, parents, communities) to work together to build understanding and district ownership of the transformation of student learning.
2. There is collaboration between madrasah under MoRA and schools under MoECRT. One of INOVASI's partner schools is a madrasah (MAULANA - Madrasah Unggul Anak Hebat). This madrasah has had an impact on regular schools under MoECRT. This is amazing. The ecosystem has begun to penetrate the bureaucratic barriers.
3. The INOVASI team sees Guru Penggerak (Motivating Teachers) as different! They are proactive in taking the initiative and trying out new ideas, learning, and motivating other teachers.
4. INOVASI's approach to local government assistance is asymmetrical and consultative. The emphasis is on a learning approach. Let them decide their path, even if it is not the most ideal way. Don't dictate. As a result, each local government in NTB has different interventions. Not all the same. Later in the process, the local government will learn, and make corrections as a form of continuous improvement. The result is strong district ownership of the program. And increased confidence of ecosystems that they can support change, because of their own strength.
5. The INOVASI district team can be the profile of our future school supervisor. They act strategically, using a learning approach to develop the schools and bridge stakeholders with a clear goal of service and improving student learning outcomes. Like a catalyst, making things happen.
6. NTB has an association of teacher training institutes (TTIs) throughout the province, and communication forums for regional governments throughout the province [established with INOVASI support]. There is tremendous potential to use these two forums in solving future teacher management issues in NTB. For example, aligning district planning for teacher needs [demand] with the enrolment of student teachers in TTIs [supply].
7. The INOVASI approach to transformation in local governments:
 - a. Start by raising awareness. It should be done by local stakeholders, for example TTI, in order to be heard and get quick buy-in by from the local government.
 - b. Offer options/alternatives, and let the district decide, even if it is not the most ideal choice.
 - c. Use a learning approach, a continuous improvement process. It takes time but will be much more powerful.
 - d. Facilitate the process. But in this facilitation, let the local government run the process.

Iwan Syahrir, PhD; Director General, GTK, MoECRT

March 29, 2022

2. PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

The strategy testing in late 2021 confirmed INOVASI's goal of '*Accelerated progress towards improved learning outcomes for all Indonesian students*' as still relevant, and led to an updated Theory of Change for the program (November 2021), in consultation with DFAT (see Annex 1). In June 2022, the Results Framework (final draft) was updated to provide a simple and relevant framework of outcome and success indicators, including program-level result statements.

This section summarizes progress towards achieving our intermediate (see sub-section 2.1) and end-of-program outcomes (see sub-section 2.2) over January to June 2022, complementing the progress outlined in previous six-monthly reports. As described in this section, INOVASI continues to be well on track to achieving each of our intermediate outcomes that also contribute to our two end of program outcomes¹³.

2.1. Progress towards the intermediate outcomes

To achieve INOVASI's end-of-program outcomes, the program works towards the following five intermediate outcomes:

- Improved policy, systems and practices for curriculum and assessment (IO 1)
- Improved policy, systems and practices for teacher and principal management and capability (IO 2)
- Improved and targeted gender equality, disability, and social inclusion (GEDSI) policies, systems and practices (IO 3)
- Targeted policies, systems and practices to address participation and learning recovery (COVID-19) (IO 4)
- National and sub-national actors scale out implementation of effective education policies, systems and practices (IO 5).

We assessed this progress against the evidence of outcomes for each of the eight INOVASI programs, based on collating and analysing a wide range of GEDSI disaggregated and triangulated evidence. This included: routine monitoring of activity by INOVASI and its partners; feedback from senior stakeholders given during formal national and provincial level meetings; twelve semi-structured interviews with key national and sub-national stakeholders; targeted baseline and evaluative studies; participant feedback from training and other activities; and (from this period) media monitoring of stakeholder use of INOVASI products. Triangulation and reflection on findings by team members enhanced the quality of the data presented and made it more comprehensive. Quotations used that were in Bahasa Indonesia have been translated into English, and some quotations given in English have been lightly edited for readability. It is noted that robust and timely

¹³ These end-of-program outcomes remain aligned with the two original end-of-program outcomes in the INOVASI investment design update (May 2022) and the single end-of-program outcome that was reformulated and included in the revised MERL strategy document (June 2021). The end-of-program outcomes in the updated investment design were that: '*In priority areas of basic education reform, key actors: (1) implement effective processes that bridge the divide between policy and implementation; (2) apply sustainable policies, systems and practices – both to support all students to achieve competence in foundational skills.*' The June 2021 single end-of-program outcome was that: '*in priority areas of basic education, key actors develop and implement sustainable policies, systems and practices to support all students to achieve competence in foundational skills.*

disaggregated data on activities initiated earlier by INOVASI but now being practiced and scaled out by our Gol partners are not always available. INOVASI continues to support our partners with their monitoring, evaluation, research and learning activities (see further in Annex 6 – MERL work-unit report).

This section illustrates key activities conducted by INOVASI or its partners that are contributing to outcomes at national and sub-national levels. In the space available, we highlight examples of effective and also of less effective activities from which we can learn for future interventions. Further detail on activities and their implementation for each of our work units is provided in Annex 6. This includes disaggregated data on relevant inputs and outputs where available.

This SMPR reports for the first time (see Annex 11) on the recently updated Results Framework (final draft June 2022). This report also includes, for the first-time, reporting on progress towards achievement of the program-level Result Statements developed for our activity planning and reflection and also included as success indicators in the Results Framework (see Annex 12). As at end June 2022, of the 64 Result Statements across the eight program areas, 85% are on track or mostly on track and 15 percent are where INOVASI supported initiatives have not substantively commenced or where there are only early trends as to achievement of the statement. We consider this to be satisfactory progress at this stage, particularly as some of the Result Statements reflect new initiatives reflecting changed context or arising from requests from our partners.

Overall, progress with respect towards our intermediate outcomes during the period is as anticipated, given the dynamic context of development in the education sector, and some activities still being limited by the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. We continue to contribute through: ongoing dialogue, quality technical advice (based on knowledge and experience in Indonesia - including from INOVASI Phase I and TASS, Australia and elsewhere); developing and communicating the evidence base; and by providing high-quality training and resources that our partners could not provide within the required timeframes due to lack of budget and/or skill resources. We have also continued to support our partners in the scaling out of teaching and learning activities.

Intermediate outcome 1: Improved policy, systems and practices for curriculum and assessment

The following INOVASI programs contribute most directly to achieving '*improved policy, systems and practices for curriculum and assessment*': curriculum and assessment; literacy and books; numeracy; and character education/religious moderation. These are the major priorities for basic education reform in Indonesia. Our objectives through these programs are that our national and sub-national government partners use planned, multi-stakeholder, GEDSI-sensitive, evidence-based processes to ensure that the revised curriculum in literacy, numeracy and character education/religious moderation is based on learning achievement descriptions, is inclusive, and adaptable to meet local needs and circumstances.

The contributions of these programs to *improved policy, systems and practices for curriculum and assessment* are outlined in this section, while their contributions to the outcomes for GEDSI (IO 3), COVID-19 recovery (IO 4) and scale out (IO 5) are considered under the respective sections.

INOVASI has made a strong contribution to this outcome during the period, particularly with respect to: socialising the *Kurikulum Merdeka* (and supporting local adaptation and contextualisation) in our four partner provinces; providing highly relevant teaching resources, in both written and multimedia

formats (in literacy, numeracy, inclusion and character education) for MoECRT's online platform (*Platform Merdeka Mengajar* or PMM) for use by over 170,000 primary schools and madrasah from July 2022; technical advice in writing and levelling child-friendly reading books; advising on developing an efficient and inclusive mechanism for MoECRT to assess books submitted for inclusion on its book information system that is accessible to all schools; and support for developing and use of an evidence base for policy development, implementation and adaptation.

Curriculum

As reported in previous periods, INOVASI provided input to MoECRT in the process of establishing the new national curriculum. This input included the evidence base on the learning gap related to the COVID-19 pandemic that was identified in the major study conducted by INOVASI and MoECRT with support from ACER (Randall et al., 2022). Our advocacy for *Kurikulum Merdeka* also helped teachers use the differentiated learning or 'teaching at the right level' (TaRL) approach and draw on local contexts and students' interests to make the curriculum relevant and engaging.

Kurikulum Merdeka was launched by MoECRT in February 2022, and also adopted by MoRA in April 2022¹⁴. 44 percent of Indonesia's 235,000 schools have opted into an expanded trial in the 2022-2023 school year. This is a major challenge for MoECRT as the teachers need to be trained and resourced to implement the new curriculum. MoECRT has asked INOVASI to help disseminate the curriculum and associated policies. Responding to a request from MoECRT, we will also help to design and conduct monitoring and, by feeding back results, support the iterative process for continuous improvement, prior to the full roll-out in 2024.

At a national level, our support for *Kurikulum Merdeka* is ongoing and on track. In this reporting period with the curriculum framework finalised and approved for implementation nationally, we focused on strengthening foundational skills within the curriculum, such as by producing literacy and numeracy resources which have been uploaded on to the *Merdeka Mengajar* platform. We also supported preparation for curriculum implementation both nationally and with partner districts and provincial quality assurance agencies (BPMP), facilitating important learning for the curriculum centre on resources and other sources of support districts and schools need to understand and teach the new curriculum. We have partnered with the non-government organisation, Centre for Education and Policy Studies (*Pusat Studi dan Kebijakan Pendidikan*, known as PSPK) that occupies a strategic position in formulating MoECRT's policies and programs. The second INOVASI grant to the centre in June 2022 will support MoECRT in developing resources for the new curriculum and completing key documents to support curriculum implementation, as well as in monitoring and evaluating the new curriculum. This work should enable us to feed our own data from monitoring curriculum implementation in INOVASI districts through to MoECRT.

Our key counterpart in MoECRT's Directorate General for Teachers and Education Personnel recognised INOVASI's contribution, in terms of knowledge and innovation, by commenting as follows:

'The idea to produce the video for teachers to learn the Kurikulum Merdeka was from INOVASI. They have direct experience in the field. I didn't think that kind of video would be needed until INOVASI brought that in!'

¹⁴ Formalised through Ministerial decree No 347 of 2022 on implementing *Kurikulum Merdeka* in madrasah

Brokering with the Ministry of Religious Affairs

INOVASI continued to broker communication between MoECRT and MoRA in this period, to support the implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka* in *madrasah*. We play a facilitator role between the two ministries, for example, in meetings between MoECRT's secretary general or the head of the Board for Standards, Curriculum and Assessment and MoRA's secretary general. We also provide technical advice and assistance on implementing the new curriculum to MoRA's curriculum sub-directorate under the Directorate for Curriculum, Infrastructure, Student and Institutional Affairs.

We provided advice to MoRA on how to more closely aligning the learning outcomes they developed by MoRA for the implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* in *madrasah* more closely with the spirit of the new curriculum. In June 2022 we facilitated a workshop with MoRA's curriculum team and the head of MoECRT's curriculum centre that was attended by 325 principals and teachers (123 M, 202F) from Central and East Lombok. The workshop examined a sample of the learning outcomes developed for *madrasah* subjects, based on *Kurikulum Merdeka*. Our ongoing support includes trialling the *Kurikulum Merdeka* in *madrasah*, providing technical advice on developing a monitoring and evaluation framework, toolkits, other resources and relevant regulations to support the implementation. Working with both MoRA and MoECRT on the curriculum implementation will support harmonisation of the two activities as well as promote efficiencies.

Socialisation of *Kurikulum Merdeka* at sub-national level

INOVASI is well placed to use its experience of working with and between national and sub-national institutions, and our knowledge of the underpinning rationale for the *Kurikulum Merdeka* to support the socialisation and local implementation of the new curriculum. As recognized recently by MoECRT's Director General of Teachers and Education Personnel, INOVASI's approach to local government assistance is 'asymmetrical and consultative' and this leads to strong district ownership, and increased confidence of in the ecosystems that can support continuous improvement (see Box 1).

In this period, work with our 19 partner districts and schools started with: foundational activities for understanding *Kurikulum Merdeka*; helping schools choose the curriculum that suits their needs and conditions; and encouraging schools to do self-assessments of their readiness for change. The first socialisation event was in February with the head of MoECRT's education standards, curriculum and assessment centre and the Director General of Teachers and Education Personnel addressing the 140 key stakeholders (77M, 63F) that attended from INOVASI districts. In North Kalimantan, we supported our partners (education offices, the educational quality assurance council, teacher training institutes and civil society organisations) to design a strategy to adjust *Kurikulum Merdeka* for the local context and learning recovery program, to train local facilitators to socialise the curriculum and provide professional development for teachers through the teachers' working groups – using our literacy and numeracy modules, and the diagnostic tools and assessments.

A senior MoECRT counterpart commented:

'I really appreciate this Kurikulum Merdeka workshop because it focuses on strengthening the essence of education, the follow-up plan is extraordinary, all stakeholders have united for

strengthening the district coordinators... This activity is expected to increase self-awareness, to change the previous material-based learning process to a student-oriented one. To fully recognise students regardless of their condition. Mindset changes. This curriculum changes the mindset, so that children become the core focus of learning’.

Monitoring and evaluation of *Kurikulum Merdeka* implementation

MoECRT and MoRA are using the monitoring and adaptive approach taken by INOVASI and they have requested our technical assistance in monitoring implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka*. MoRA’s Directorate of Curriculum, Facilities, Institutions and Student Affairs has already instituted monitoring and evaluation guidelines (May 2022) for its implementation. At a sub-national level, for example, INOVASI is supporting local partner districts in West Nusa Tenggara in monitoring and providing feedback to MoECRT on the implementation of the students’ Minimum Competency Assessment. Also, working in partnership with the educational quality assurance agency (BPMP) and teacher training institutions, we are monitoring the piloting of *Kurikulum Merdeka* in schools¹⁵. To support implementation, the district education offices for Bulungan, Malinau and Tana Tidung have established an independent curriculum adaptation team and developed a strategy for their team to use in the districts. Monitoring the implementation of the new curriculum will be carried out in collaboration with the provincial quality assurance agency (BPMP) using their dashboard. This dashboard will give access to the public, including schools, to information about the progress of *Kurikulum Merdeka* implementation. In some regions, such as North Kalimantan, INOVASI plans to facilitate quarterly reflections to discuss progress in implementing the new curriculum in the context of learning recovery. Representatives from the new education quality assurance centres and the University of Borneo Tarakan will also support curriculum implementation. In partnership with the BPMP and teacher training institutions is monitoring the piloting of *Kurikulum Merdeka* in schools.

Assessment

In April 2022 MoECRT released the first-round results of the new nationwide assessment conducted in the previous semester. The education report ([Rapor Pendidikan](#)), a new district report card, reports on results of the Minimum Competency Assessment, school character survey and the school learning environment survey. The launch used data from INOVASI’s learning gap study and the education report indicators. These were based on a matrix of indicators developed by MoECRT’s with our input in 2021. INOVASI also provided technical advice on MoECRT’s approach to interpreting and reporting the initial Minimum Competency Assessment (AKM) results. This included advice on using weighting for aggregated reporting at the national level, the variables in the results that they need to report and advice on how to report them. MoECRT expects the publicly available education report to create demand, informing and stimulating districts to allocate resources and implement programs to improve learning outcomes. However, our observations are that the reports have not yet created sufficient interest in the community or within district administrations. The curriculum and learning centre is also keen for INOVASI to develop diagnostic assessment

¹⁵ Currently 3060 schools in INOVASI districts registered for implementing *Kurikulum Merdeka*: Kab Bulungan, 122; Kab Malinau, 67; Kab Tana Tidung, 28; Kab Probolinggo, 347; Kab Sumenep, 141; Kab Sidoarjo, 553; Nagekeo, 172; Sumba Barat Daya, 2; Sumba Barat, 9; Sumba Tengah, 15; Sumba Timur, 106; NTB, 1498.

Source: Materi PPT Briefing Calon Pihak Ketiga M&E Books & KM, Progress Report NTB Jan-June, Laporan dr NTT

instruments and new and revised videos for literacy and numeracy, and make them available through the *Merdeka Mengajar* platform and other digital forums.

Literacy and numeracy teaching resources

MoECRT intends to make 500 different teaching and learning materials available on their *Merdeka Mengajar* platform in 2022. These materials will form a critical resource for teachers implementing the new curriculum.¹⁶ INOVASI is increasingly supporting this access to resources by providing content developed in Phase I and developing new content, as requested by MoECRT.

MoECRT's information technology company, WarTek, has selected and identified contributors for the *Merdeka Mengajar* platform based on their respective 'strengths' so that they complement each other.

'We really hope that INOVASI can help us to meet the target of the availability of learning materials because we believe that we cannot stand alone in producing it'.

As of June 2022, 48 INOVASI teaching modules and videos have been uploaded to the *Merdeka Mengajar* platform (two of which were uploaded in 2021)¹⁷ The teaching modules include updated INOVASI resources, on developing scope and learning objective sequences (*Alur Tujuan Pembelajaran*, or ATP) for numeracy for Grade 1 primary schools, teaching materials (*Modul Ajar* Phase A) for literacy and numeracy, and two language transition teaching modules. We will work with MoECRT to monitor downloads of these resources by teachers throughout Indonesia.

MoECRT has also requested that INOVASI develop a series of microlearning videos¹⁸ for the *Merdeka Mengajar* platform. We set an initial target to complete 20 literacy microlearning videos by July 2022 and ten numeracy microlearning videos by September 2022. Under development at the moment are nine literacy microlearning videos (on topics such as one-on-one teaching of basic literacy and numeracy; literacy and numeracy assessment strategies; use of online tools for teaching; modelling or simulations; and teaching at the right level). These were developed by INOVASI's partner, the Indonesian Children's Literacy Foundation (*Yayasan Literasi Anak Indonesia*, or YLAI) and are in the process of being revised. We also contributed four edited INOVASI literacy microlearning videos, while seven new literacy microlearning videos are now being produced. INOVASI's GEDSI and technical content teams are working with WarTek on each stage of the video development; concept, scripting and filming. The team is meeting regularly to review quality and curriculum compatibility. Due to the urgency of populating the platform, not all content has been quality reviewed. INOVASI continues to raise the need for a quality review process.

To support the development of content for the *Merdeka Mengajar* platform we ran a training session on incorporating GEDSI principles into the materials for WarTek personnel, teachers and education personnel directorate writing teams, as well as other book writers, illustrators, reviewers and developers (189 participants, 50 per cent women). The session covered the need to use

¹⁶ 70% of schools that registered for Kurikulum Merdeka options had at least one teacher who accessed the platform.

¹⁷ Uploaded materials: 20 literacy teaching modules; 2 language transition modules; 12 numeracy teaching modules; 14 inspirational videos.

¹⁸ Microlearning is described as a training program created by experts and consisting of a variety of topics containing short, relevant and practical materials that can be studied anywhere and anytime. <https://guru.kemdikbud.go.id/>

differentiated learning strategies; being conscious about the gender of students in any instructions, examples or illustrations; making adjustments for children with disability; language transition; and multigrade contexts.

We shared our literacy and numeracy resources with other development partners as well. We made our e-numeracy module available to the [Tanoto Foundation](#) for their learning management system and we shared our literacy diagnostic assessment tools with [UNICEF](#) to be used in Papua. INOVASI also provided technical inputs and feedback to [Yayasan Guru Belajar](#) in their process of adapting the tools and finalizing their 'pocketbook'.

Children's reading books

MoECRT's book centre is responsible for managing its book system and addressing the need for both textbooks and non-textbooks to support implementation of the new curriculum. The centre also establishes the technical policies for the book system. Government counterparts confirm that INOVASI helped accelerate reforms in the book centre, including in the ministerial and technical regulations for its book information system (known as *Sistem Informasi Buku Indonesia*, or SIBI), in the book assessment process and by preparing guidelines for inclusive reading books. Other ongoing support we gave the book centre during this period included:

- Advice on finalising their 'roadmap for books' by focusing on an outcomes-based theory of change and involving other units within MoECRT;
- Support in developing a 'big map for literacy' to improve supply and demand for children's books and in training and mentoring teachers in 81 districts in remote areas that received a book grant from the language agency;
- Using a problem-driven iterative adaptation (PDIA) approach with the education standards, curriculum and assessment centre, book centre, language agency, non-government organisations and stakeholders to increase the quality and quantity of children's storybooks, including in remote and poor areas – the book centre is using these findings to develop a business model for publishers and book distributors;
- Following a World Bank policy note on inclusive curriculum developed for MoECRT, the book centre has also asked INOVASI to help develop a framework for reviewing *Kurikulum Merdeka* textbooks with respect to gender, disability and social inclusion.

In response to the MoECRT Book Centre's interest to have workshops by international writers, in May 2022, INOVASI arranged for an Australian writer, Jackie French, to lead a webinar and workshop to give writers an in-depth understanding of the role that picture books play in stimulating children's literacy and to offer guidance on creating quality storybooks and picture books for children.

INOVASI and MoECRT organised a national dialogue on 9–10 June 2022, to discuss the topic: *Improving the quality and quantity of children's books*, with sessions by the book centre, language agency, the Indonesian publishers' association, IKAPI and INOVASI. The Minister of Education and his wife, also took part in the dialogue and the discussions resulted in recommendations to improve school libraries and reading corners. We are following up on the Minister's request for a meeting between him, INOVASI, and other stakeholders to brainstorm solutions to increase the availability of children's books in remote areas.

At a sub-national level, writers and district education officers in East Nusa Tenggara are well informed and understand the appropriate standard required in writing children's storybooks after a training program in January 2022 presented by expert trainers from INOVASI, the local language agency, YLAI and MoECRT's book centre. There were 44 participants (14M, 30F) from five partner districts. The post-test results showed that 95 per cent of participants understood the standard for non-textbook eligibility. Following the workshop, the participants produced 51 story drafts which will be published online in a digital library being developed with INOVASI support called 'Uma Baca'.

INOVASI provided technical assistance in finalizing three of six minister's regulations on book systems, and we are also supporting the development of four technical regulations on MoECRT's book assessment process. INOVASI has sought to incorporate GEDSI aspects into all drafts of these regulations.

Following an evaluation to gather inputs from key stakeholders on the book information system, the book centre asked us for technical input in improving its functionality in terms of classifying and levelling non-textbooks for easy searching by teachers.

'Discussion with INOVASI helped us to define the concept for the book information system, the framework and how the performance should look. INOVASI assisted us step by step.'

INOVASI has been discussing a book levelling system with MoECRT since Phase I. Although the book centre has a set of 'pocketbooks' for early readers (classes one to three), much of the language is not levelled for these grades. As input into MoECRT's draft book levelling guidelines we proposed an innovative solution to the levelling system, the explicit inclusion of digestible and decodable books, issuing international standard book numbers (ISBNs). MoECRT's education standards, curriculum and assessment centre issued the book levelling guidelines (No 030/P/2022) on 2 June 2022. They include the tagline INOVASI proposed of 'buku ramah cerna' (digestible books) to emphasize the characteristics and mix of text and image in materials that early readers can understand easily.

After various approaches, the MoECRT book centre is confident that, with INOVASI support, they are developing a more effective and transparent book assessment mechanism for publishers and a better recruitment process for prospective book authors, including independent writers. The centre also acknowledges our inputs.

'INOVASI provides a different perception from ours. So far, our perception is only from the side of the regulator. In fact, there are many different perceptions to be taken into consideration. For example, illustrations are needed for the books to be attractive. So far only publishers were allowed to participate, but INOVASI shows where we can find aspiring independent book writers who are also good and now they can be included as well.'

The *Temu Inovasi* event in East Nusa Tenggara in March 2022 was on 'Realising the freedom to learn: using the mother tongue for single-language students learning' organised in collaboration with the provincial language agency to commemorate International Mother Language Day.

Sub-nationally, in February 2022, INOVASI and Sulinama used the teachers' working groups to train 83 East Nusa Tenggara teachers (78F, 5M) from nine early childhood education centres (PAUD) and thirteen primary schools to use mother tongue as a transitional language. The need for transitional language programs was highlighted by the assistant for government and people's welfare from the East Nusa Tenggara secretariat:

'INOVASI has supported mother tongue programs in Southwest Sumba, East Sumba and Nagekeo. I hope other districts that also have a variety of languages will also carry out this program.'

Moderasi Beragama

The National Medium-term Development Plan (RPJMN) 2020–2024 mandates all ministries and state institutions to support the religious moderation program, *Moderasi Beragama*, to reinforce the values of tolerance and social harmony. For national harmony, religious moderation activities need to be harmonised with the character education activities implemented by MoECRT that are based on the *Pancasila* student profile concept.

INOVASI has supported MoRA to develop *Moderasi Beragama* teaching modules and materials and to integrate these into curriculum materials and textbooks. In this period, we supported MoRA to pilot the program through a series of train-the-trainer activities and recommendations for strategies in delivering the modules. INOVASI continued to partner with Indonesia's two mass Islamic education organisations, *NU Ma'arif* and *Muhammadiyah* in East Java. This included developing and piloting approaches to character education (in collaboration with Universitas Airlangga and *NU Ma'arif*) and gender responsive schooling (with *Muhammadiyah*), along with scaling out approaches to literacy and numeracy. Overlapping themes of anti-violence, tolerance and justice are evident in both *Moderasi Beragama* and gender responsive schooling materials. *Moderasi Beragama* materials have been reviewed from GEDSI and child protection perspectives by an INOVASI gender resource person who is also a representative of NU Maarif, however MoRA has still not reviewed the modules at this time.

INOVASI continues to provide technical assistance to MoRA's Directorate General of Islamic Education on the supporting systems, policy and regulations. At present, all five divisions within the directorate general are integrating *Moderasi Beragama* into their programs, but there is no single strategic framework for *Moderasi Beragama* in the Islamic education system. Implementation has thus been fragmented, with no standardized curriculum principles or guidelines. During this period, our activities with the directorate general included: support to develop a theory of change to guide strategic direction, planning and monitoring of *Moderasi Beragama*; technical assistance to integrate *Moderasi Beragama* principles into teaching materials at specific education levels; and developing guidelines for Islamic student associations (known as *Rohani Islam*, or *Rohis*). A MoRA stakeholder commented that:

'INOVASI's technical inputs to integrate Moderasi Beragama into teaching materials have helped improved the quality', and that discussion with INOVASI 'confirmed the need for us to develop blended (online and offline) training materials for Islamic education.'

Character education

The foundational skills associated with character education became more prominent in this period, firstly with the release of *Kurikulum Merdeka* that provides for 30 per cent of class time to be dedicated to project-based learning and character education, and secondly, the education report (*Rapor Pendidikan*), that includes results of the school climate and character surveys.

MoECRT's character education work at the national level has focused on community education and the senior secondary and higher education levels. Nevertheless, we contributed to developing and piloting teaching resource materials on character education by writing an introductory module on strengthening character education and another on developing positive schools or *madrasah* (at the primary level). They are not yet completed due to more urgent work on the microlearning videos on the *Pancasila* student profile for the *Merdeka Mengajar* platform.

INOVASI finalised three videos on *Pancasila* in April 2022, and they are pending curation and upload to the *Merdeka Mengajar* platform. We also helped fund contributors to a character education module for school principals being developed by the Directorate of Basic Education. The module provides a guide on developing character education in school management, including in planning, implementing and evaluating the program.

We disseminated the findings from our baseline study on character education programs to national partners in May 2022 to inform their development of a character education module for primary schools. Evidence from the monitoring exercise in the East Java *madrasah* was inconclusive however in terms of positive change in schools and classes and the integration of character education in classroom learning as a result of the pilots. However, the head of Sidoarjo's district education office was impressed with the pilot training results and asked the University of Airlangga to develop a strategy for character education training and mentoring in their schools. As further evidence of uptake of INOVASI work, LP *Ma'arif* is planning to replicate INOVASI's literacy, numeracy and character education program (conducted for MoRA in February 2022) in their annual workshop, *Turun ke Bawah* (down to the bottom)

Evidence-based policy development

At a national level, the GoI continue to use data from the INOVASI *Learning Gap Study* in advocating for changed policy. INOVASI's expertise in monitoring and evaluation is recognised by MoECRT. As an example, INOVASI provided technical assistance to MoECRT's Directorate General for Teachers and Education Personnel (GTK) in the design, instrument development and data analysis of three school surveys to identify teachers and school interest in *Kurikulum Merdeka*. The surveys were

implemented in January, March/April and June/July 2022, and results of the surveys informed MoECRT's implementation strategy¹⁹.

In this period, INOVASI was also asked to support MoECRT's curriculum centre in developing a theory of change as a planning and monitoring tool for the *Kurikulum Merdeka* implementation. However, we expected to provide capacity development for the team prior to this exercise and since the centre considered the theory of change more urgent, they went ahead with other partners. INOVASI will continue to explore options for strengthening MoECRT's capacity in these areas.

INOVASI support to MoECRT's evaluation of the *Program Organisasi Penggerak* (PoP) continued in this period - through technical input to finalise the qualitative study design, including the framework and sampling methodology. INOVASI also contributed to its implementation, including the recruitment of and training for field researchers, and joining in data collection. We also helped analyze the baseline quantitative data for Grade 3 and Grade 7, which has now been presented by the POP team to the Director General of GTK.

Both MoECRT and MoRA are using the monitoring and adaptive approach taken by INOVASI and they have requested our technical assistance in this regard. The MoRA Directorate of Curriculum, Facilities, Institutions and Student Affairs has already instituted monitoring and evaluation guidelines (May 2022) to monitor the implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka*.

Sub-national governments are also increasingly referring to evidence in their decisions, for example, in scaling out the literacy approach introduced by INOVASI, targeting schools to participate in certain programs and in replicating specific practices learned in previous periods. Examples of this are described further under intermediate outcome 5.

Intermediate outcome 2: Improved policy, systems and practices for teacher and principal management and capability

Much of the work for this outcome builds on the approach used by TASS and INOVASI Phase I of developing models to support the reform of teacher recruitment, principal selection, school accreditation and developing teacher competencies. For example, INOVASI's significant input into the MoECRT teacher competency framework in previous periods is now positively influencing the updating of teacher and principal standards, the recruitment of teachers, and the development of teacher training resources.

While implementation of activities for this intermediate outcome was affected in this period by school disruptions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, and a reduced ability to undertake activities in schools and with principals and teaching staff, nonetheless much was achieved. This section focuses on outcomes that are not linked to the COVID-19 pandemic, so while evidence on positive changes driven by the pandemic context has emerged in teaching practices and school leadership, these are

¹⁹ The first survey was an expression of interest for KM. When responses were low, MoECRT opened up a second survey that included a self-assessment of school readiness for AKM and that gave schools a recommended implementation option. Following review of data from the 2nd survey, and data from the Merdeka Mengajar platform indicating in June that very few teachers had accessed the platform, MoECRT then issued a third survey which asked questions of school preparedness and gave schools the option to revise their implementation option. Data on preparedness and teacher access to the platform also informed MoECRT decisions to rapidly provide access to resources on USB drives for non-urban areas. INOVASI supported development of the three surveys and analysis of the data. The third survey was proposed by INOVASI.

reported under intermediate outcome 4 that covers *targeted policies, systems and practices to address participation and learning recovery (COVID-19)*.

The data available suggest that during this period improvements in teachers' capabilities in foundational literacy and numeracy was achieved through INOVASI and district-led training. Furthermore, MoECRT has ensured that teachers now have better access to teaching resources in implementing *Kurikulum Merdeka* through the *Merdeka Mengajar* platform. However, access rates to these resources are still low and as yet we have limited evidence on the use of the resources in the classroom. MoECRT will strengthen systems for monitoring teacher capacity in future periods, once regulations and guidance on teacher standards have been passed.

Teacher competency framework and standards

INOVASI provided support to two ministries (MoECRT and the Ministry of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform) to draft regulations on implementing the new teacher competency framework that we helped to draw up in 2021.²⁰ The drafts of the MoECRT and Ministry of State Apparatus Empowerment regulations on teacher standards will create improved systems to manage teacher and principal capabilities. Once endorsed, this will affect all teachers at all levels and schools managed by the ministries.

During this period, INOVASI supported MoECRT to prepare an academic paper that outlines the purpose and rationale for enacting the regulations on standards for teachers and principals. However, the target dates for MoECRT's launch of these regulations was not met due to internal delays. This has flow-on impact on the use of the teacher competency framework and the proposed teacher standard as references for MoRA and MoECRT teacher development.

A senior GoI stakeholder advised:

'The teacher competency framework provides a clear reference for all teams to interpret the policy ecosystem which is diverse ... the framework also helped us to work with program priorities, such as Guru Penggerak, pre-service professional training, Guru Penggerak, ASN P3K [fixed term contract employees]. For instance, for Guru Penggerak, the product is assessment or simulation for teaching ... all are available in the competency model for school leadership ... We want to maximise usage of the teacher competency framework and do not want to add new things. We have to keep things simple and avoid additional things which may look good but will not work.'

INOVASI has also supported the Directorate General for Teachers and Education Personnel in developing literacy–numeracy competency standards for primary school teachers. This competency standard (Regulation No 0340/B/HK.01.03/2022) was issued on 18 January 2022 and provides direction for teachers to reflect on their own abilities. The standard also guides universities and

²⁰ In 2021, INOVASI successfully supported MoECRT to develop a teacher competency model that was formally adopted in Director General for Teachers and Educational Personnel regulation No 6565/B/GT/2020 on the Competency Model for Teachers' Professional Development. The regulation outlines twelve required competencies, along with indicators describing the essential behaviours that represent them and presented in a continuum from beginner to advanced levels.

teacher training institutions in developing appropriate approaches for teachers to use that will improve students' literacy skills in a systematic and levelled manner.

Teacher Selection

Ongoing national and sub-national INOVASI activities in this period that contributed or will contribute to improved teacher capability, directly or in future periods, included the psychometric work done by ACER under an INOVASI grant in previous periods, used by MoECRT to develop a selection test for recruitment of new civil service teachers. The ministry used the test in late 2021 and early 2022 to recruit over 400,000 teachers²¹. The test will also be used for their remaining recruitment rounds in 2022. In May 2022 INOVASI provided a further grant to ACER to provide technical expertise to develop a teacher selection tool for entry to the ministry's professional education program for teachers (*Pendidikan Profesi Guru*). MoECRT's Director General of Teachers and Educational Personnel also recently noted that INOVASI had helped establish an association of teacher training institutes and also communication forums for district governments throughout West Nusa Tenggara. He saw the potential of these two forums in solving teacher management issues in the province. (See Box 1.6)

Teacher capability

There is increasing evidence that sub-national agencies are building on the outcomes of INOVASI activities completed in earlier periods to improve teacher capability in literacy and numeracy, typically with some contribution from INOVASI of funding and/or technical advice:

- Six teacher training institutes in East Java (Muhammadiyah University of Surabaya, Muhammadiyah University of Sidoarjo, University of Muhammadiyah Ponorogo, University of Muhammadiyah Malang and Muhammadiyah University of Lamongan, University of Muhammadiyah Gresik) have integrated INOVASI literacy and numeracy training approaches into their curriculum.
- Following the well-established collaboration with Weetebula teacher training institute in Southwest Sumba, East Nusa Tenggara, their pre-service teacher trainees have established *Ransel Literasi* (literacy backpack), a children's reading program, as part of their community service (*Kuliah Kerja Nyata*, or KKN). This year we have supported their activity with a further five hundred levelled story books (bringing our total supply of books for this activity to 4,620 books). The institute also engaged the Indonesian Children's Literature Foundation to facilitate training for 20 lecturers (10M, 10F) and 45 pre-service teachers (13M, 32F) on using the books effectively.

An assessment in August 2021 found that student reading skills in remote areas of Malinau, North Kalimantan, were low compared to students from urban areas. INOVASI therefore commenced targeted teacher capacity development programs for these remote areas. In May 2022 this included foundational training in formative assessment and the use of reading books for 21 district facilitators (12M, 9F), who later trained contract teachers before they were sent to their work locations in remote areas. Before conducting the training, local facilitators from Malinau, together with INOVASI, adjusted the Early Grade Literacy Module for Remote Regions and made videos appropriate for the school context in remote Malinau. The teachers are expected to serve as agents of change to improve the quality of education in remote areas. Several of MoECRT's designated 'frontline

²¹ Information is not available to INOVASI as to the extent to which the selected teachers met the minimum standards

teachers' joined the training voluntarily, to increase their knowledge of basic literacy. One teacher said:

'I have been teaching for 17 years in Sungai Tubu, but I have never received any training. What is certain is that upon my return from here I will develop this in my school.'

INOVASI and partners have collected evidence on improved teacher capacity resulting from our activities. For example, during the period, INOVASI, supported by ACER, completed data collection for a baseline study on literacy scale-out in Bulungan, Tana Tidung, Probolinggo and Sumenep. This current baseline aims to assess changes in both system and practices at district and school level, determining readiness for scale-out. The baseline results from Phase I found that the training-of-trainers' approach was effective in disseminating learning, however the capacity and readiness to scale out across the districts was shown to be varied in the study.

In January 2022 an Early Literacy workshop was conducted with the district education office in Sumenep, East Java for thirty early childhood teachers and principals (26F, 4M). Participant testing showed an increase of knowledge - the average test score increased from 59 to 87 for female participants, and from 55 to 80 for the male participants. A joint monitoring study of selected primary schools and *madrasah* in East Java (Sumenep, and Probolinggo) was conducted by INOVASI, the district education offices and local stakeholders in March and April 2022. The visit found that the schools continue to use the INOVASI literacy modules 1 and 2. Furthermore, the monitoring found that almost all aspects of the literacy training conducted by INOVASI are practised in the classroom.

Overall, there have been positive changes observed in the classroom learning atmosphere following earlier INOVASI and district teacher training. The study found that most schools (over 92 percent) had reading corners although many were unattractive and lacking a range of textbooks and storybooks. In Sumenep, of the 58 teachers observed (45F, 13M), 74 percent used learning media to explain concepts, 47 percent were able to create and use learning media, 90 percent encouraged students to keep trying, 55 percent provided feedback to generate creativity and 60 percent asked open-questions and encouraged students to express their own opinions. Similar results were found in Probolinggo.

Principal capability

Principals and supervisors have been active participants in a variety of workshops and training to develop leadership roles and implement the curriculum in their schools and districts. Highlights include: a workshop on gender-responsive primary schools with Muhammadiyah University of Sidoarjo (May 2022) for ten pilot schools in East Java; completion of a series of online workshops on effective leadership of *madrasah*; and a series of school development planning workshops conducted by the Bima district education office with 418 primary school principals. There is a focus on leadership in all the modules and materials presented. As a general approach, all our school training uses a whole-school approach whereby not only teachers are involved, but also school principals and supervisors. This is to ensure that all school stakeholders are on the same page and support the same agenda. Outcomes of this integrated approach to leadership training are evident in the success of pilots and scale-out. In order to more accurately determine the impact of the integrated approach on leadership, and the impact of this on teaching and learning outcomes,

INOVASI intends to analyse data from baseline studies to identify change in leadership behaviours and correlations between this and changes in teaching and learning outcomes.

INOVASI facilitated training for 878 principals (or their representatives) from five partner districts in East Nusa Tenggara to assess and map student reading competencies. INOVASI has since supported the district education office to analyse the student reading data resulting from the training.

In preparation for the *Kurikulum Merdeka* implementation, INOVASI supported recruitment of ten leadership for learning facilitators in Nagekeo that will support implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* in 20 schools. In West Nusa Tenggara, 244 (171M, 73F) SD/MI principals from four key partner districts (Bima, Central Lombok, East Lombok and Sumbawa) were trained by supervisors and facilitators on implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka* preparation. This training was to strengthen understanding on the *Kurikulum Merdeka* principles, positive mindset on curriculum change and implications for principals' leadership roles. INOVASI also supported the East Java provincial MoRA office to scale out effective leadership material from the UNESCO Teacher Task Force's School Leadership Network. Participants included forty *madrrasah* principals, six supervisors, and four MORA staff (40M, 10 F).

We are currently exploring the possibility of examining the baseline-endline data for six pilots in Phase 2, to explore the leadership correlation with teacher behaviours and learning outcomes.

Local government capability

INOVASI worked with sub-national agencies to improve their capacity for monitoring and evaluation. As a result, we identified on-going practice by partners, supported with capacity development by INOVASI, in leading their own monitoring of classroom teaching practice. For example, the district education office monitoring of education programs in East Nusa Tenggara will be strengthened by joint monitoring with other relevant agencies (*Bappeda*, DPRD, etc.). The district education office in Central Sumba has updated their theory of change (developed in March 2020) to the changing educational context. The district education office also issued a decree (PPO/07/53.17/III/2021) to establish a monitoring and evaluation team. The head of primary school supervisors in Nagekeo agreed to develop a supervision instrument that is integrated with monitoring of the literacy scale-out program. The East Sumba district education office has prepared a roadmap and a district level assessment mechanism (baseline) that can be used as a reference to capture later program improvement as well as advocacy material for regional leaders to measure government performance achievements.

Intermediate outcome 3: Improved and targeted gender equality, disability and social inclusion policies, systems and practices

Across INOVASI, the breadth and depth of work towards improving GEDSI policies, systems and practices demonstrates the momentum that we have built up over the program. The GEDSI aspirations of the Indonesian government, DFAT and INOVASI are reflected throughout the work described in this report. Following the updated GEDSI Strategy, we have focused on four domains: (1) teachers' capacity for gender-sensitive and inclusive teaching; (2) teachers' capacity to conduct diagnostic assessments for children with disabilities and for children returning to school after the COVID-19 pandemic; (3) scaling out the use of GEDSI-sensitive resources; and (4) demand-driven research and technical support. This includes two 'flagship' activities: gender-sensitive teaching in

madrasah; and support systems for identifying disability. GEDSI influences that are integrated into activities are also described under the other outcomes.

GEDSI-sensitive teaching in *madrasah* and schools

INOVASI, in partnership with the gender studies and child protection centre at the Muhammadiyah University of Sidoarjo (UMSIDA), completed the draft of the gender-responsive school module. Pilot training for the module took place in ten primary schools in Sidoarjo, where participants practiced integrating gender into their school learning implementation plans. Commitments detailed in school plans include one school committing to construct private change rooms for girls, another school committing to creating a program that encourages boys to take up creative arts to breakdown stereotypes and perceptions about certain subjects being perceived as “feminine”. In the coming period INOVASI will explore two strategies for continued use of the modules. First, to discuss with local government in Sidoarjo that has expressed interest to expand use of the modules for training more schools. Second, to adapt core elements of the modules into simple guides and micro learning videos that include testimonials from pilot schools, to disseminate for broader use, centrally and to other provinces/districts as a light touch alternative to the 3-day training modules (e.g. on how to make school management more gender responsive, classrooms more gender responsive, and school facilities more gender responsive). During this reporting period, teachers in three of the ten pilot schools began to implement the gender responsive actions detailed in their teaching plans (RPP), with the assistance and mentoring of UMSIDA’s Centre for Gender and Child Protection Studies (*Pusat Studi Gender dan Perlindungan Anak*) facilitators. Furthermore, the gender module has been integrated into five subjects in the primary school teacher education study program at UMSIDA. A representative from Sidoarjo’s district education office commented that more schools in Sidoarjo will be implementing *Kurikulum Merdeka* and so promoting gender-sensitive schools will become more important:

‘Gender responsive schools are strongly aligned with the Kurikulum Merdeka, particularly in terms of differentiated teaching,’

To support schools in remote areas, in previous periods INOVASI collaborated with UX Indonesia and the North Kalimantan educational quality assurance council to develop the e-learning platform, ‘*e-Guru*’, to support teachers’ access to training materials and literacy resources. In May 2022, the quality assurance agency (BPMP) agreed to manage the platform and establish a team to facilitate teachers using the platform for their own professional development. The benefits of a local platform will allow local materials needed by teachers to be uploaded or shared, especially in remote areas which may experience difficulty in relying solely on the *Merdeka Mengajar* platform. Local content can also be better targeted, for example for teachers using mother tongue approaches in NTT and inclusion in NTT can share materials for their specific contexts.

INOVASI’s partnership with the University of Mataram (UNRAM) supported the establishment of the ‘inclusive education laboratory’, incorporating inclusive education (IE) materials in the teacher training curriculum, including methods of identifying students with learning difficulties. In West Nusa Tenggara, the learning management system, *NTB Belajar*, is being piloted for teacher professional development. Content on the platform includes six INOVASI inclusive education modules and a MoECRT video on bullying. In January 2022, 114 district facilitators (64M, 50F) were introduced to

the platform and encouraged to use it. In April 2022, 71 teachers (45M, 26F) attended a workshop on accessing *NTB Belajar* to identify courses to support their own professional needs, including materials on GEDSI and child protection²². The West Nusa Tenggara district education office advised us that to date 130 users have accessed the GEDSI materials and 70 have accessed the literacy materials. As there are around 100 district coordinators in the four partner districts, this result is promising. Further monitoring needs to also capture whether teachers apply the knowledge in their teaching practice.

Support systems for disability identification

Significant progress has been made to overcome the stumbling block preventing teachers using functional assessments in diagnosing learning needs or difficulties. Existing government regulations required any disability to be categorised medically, but the medical approach can lead to poor validity and reliability in disability data. This led INOVASI to start work on the student learning profile (*Profil Belajar Siswa*, or PBS), that uses function as the basis for identifying disability, consistent with the approach in the [United Nations Washington Group](#) disability statistics.

In MoRA's guideline for delivering inclusive education in *madrasah* (Directorate of Islamic Studies Decision letter No 758 of 2022), the student learning profile is incorporated as an example of a functional assessment instrument for teachers to use. Following input by INOVASI (including calculating the estimated costs and the staff structure under the regional office), MoRA has regulated a new structure with disability service units for education coming under the MoRA general secretariat and located in all MoRA provincial offices. This is expected to boost the process of identifying students with disability, using the student learning profile and provide access to free services.

MoECRT has asked INOVASI to adapt the disability data collection system in DAPODIK, replacing the previous SIMPKB platform, and improve readability and user experience of the PBS. In close partnership with UX Indonesia, INOVASI developed and tested a simplified version of the PBS in the form of an application which can be integrated into the DAPODIK system. In February 2022, INOVASI hosted a workshop for 31 (28M, 3F) national and local stakeholders to develop a framework for inclusive education, covering lessons in measuring disability, updates on regulations to enable teachers to use the instrument and the revisions to the student learning profile. Stakeholders included representatives from NTB provincial education office, NTB Bappeda, the UNRAM Inclusive Education laboratory, the Universitas Hamzanwadi Disability Service Centre, MoECRT and MoRA. To further socialise use of the platform, we presented it to over 360 supervisors in partner and non-partner districts, who will promote its use to teachers in 1,464 schools.

We have also made progress in strengthening the process of identifying student disability and using the data through the West Nusa Tenggara inclusive education dashboard, with Phase II focusing on collecting village-level data and socialising the dashboard. As a result of our initiatives, the West Nusa Tenggara development planning agency has invited INOVASI to be part of its human development index acceleration task force.

²² The platform now has resources on PDIA, teaching at the right level foundational skills for literacy and numeracy, complemented by GEDSI (INOVASI GEDSI Strategy, a MoECRT video for character education on bullying), the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women convention and modules on inclusive education (INOVASI pilot in Phase I – SETARA) as well as child protection materials (a powerpoint and relevant references such as children's rights and child protection, types of violence).

Teaching and learning materials and resources focusing on gender equality, disability and social inclusion

The *Bahasa Indonesia* Bookbot reading application for children with dyslexia and other reading difficulties was successfully developed and completed in this period. MoECRT formed a cross-directorate Bookbot technical team to be actively involved and work with INOVASI and Bookbot P/L, that was crucial to the success of the project. The technical team helped to collect 1,000 hours of children's voice recordings in a range of dialects from across Indonesia. These recordings are used to train the Bookbot artificial intelligence application to detect correct and incorrect reading and help children with different accents from across the country.

The application now has over 1,000 books, approved by the book centre and aligned to the curriculum and to a detailed scope & sequence developed with MoECRT, civil society organisations, the [Indonesia Dyslexia Association](#) and [Saya Suka Membaca \(I love reading project\)](#). Bookbot is available on the Google App store. Work in the next phase will focus on socialising Bookbot across MoECRT, led by the Directorate of Community Education and Special Education, implementing with teachers across both INOVASI and non-INOVASI districts and learning from implementation processes focused on how to succeed at scale.

Progress has been made with MoECRT on editing and illustrating two MoECRT disability-inclusive education handbooks to make the information accessible, user-friendly and practical for non-specialised teachers and parents of children with disabilities. Our editing reduced the content from 500 to 150 pages in the teacher's handbook and from 300 to 100 pages in the parents' handbook. The teams involved in drafting and editing included our short-term advisers with disabilities themselves, enabling firsthand knowledge and expertise to prevail throughout these handbooks. Through the upcoming process of testing the handbook, it is likely to be reduced in length, according to what parts of the content parents find most useful.

Following a World Bank policy note on inclusive curriculum developed for MoECRT, the book centre has asked INOVASI to help develop a framework for reviewing *Kurikulum Merdeka* textbooks with respect to gender, disability and social inclusion. This is a significant request and will ensure widespread coverage of GEDSI principles across Indonesia.

Support in reviewing GEDSI criteria for authors of education textbooks, providing inputs to a teacher's manual on writing special education books, conducting workshops to build capacity in writing good quality storybooks for young children and in selecting authors – this will help the centre meet the new MoECRT regulation on special education requiring them to provide six targeted special education books (one for students with an intellectual disability and five for students with more than one functional disability).

Research and technical support

The child marriage study conducted by the University of Indonesia gender research centre with INOVASI funding and quality assurance was completed in February 2022. Advocacy of the study findings includes the development of a series of draft policy briefs by PRG-UI and INOVASI to guide group discussions with respective agencies. In the next reporting period, a policy brief will be finalised for sharing with MoECRT for consideration on the role of education institutions, through their education programs and school support in reducing child marriage. A key focus will be to work in NTB Province (initially) with local schools and government partners to trial approaches to improving existing programs and messaging in schools on the risks of child marriage, for example

into Kurikulum Merdeka. The findings were also used by DFAT as input for their [rapid evidence review](#) on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on girls' education and wellbeing and a subsequent case study focused on child marriage.

The two [women in leadership studies](#) conducted with INOVASI funding by [Cakra Wikara Indonesia](#), have also been completed (March 2022). These studies examine what obstacles female teachers face in becoming school principals, how women principals lead and manage their schools, and how gender affects school leadership and management. Study findings met with a positive response from MoECRT's *Program Guru Penggerak* consultant team when we shared them during the April 2022 celebrations for Kartini Day (commemorating R.A Kartini, an Indonesian pioneer of women's education). At our national Steering Committee Meeting in June 2022 both MoECRT and MoRA expressed strong interest in promoting female leadership in their schools. MoECRT now plans to analyse gender-disaggregated teacher registration data for the first round of *Program Guru Penggerak* to look at the selection of candidates, their performance during the program and any appointments as principals.

In March 2022, on international women's day, INOVASI presented our female leadership study at a Hamzanwadi University webinar on: 'Contribution of Women's Leadership in Building Glorious West Nusa Tenggara'. The findings highlight the role of local governments in ensuring gender equality in selecting school principals.

We helped to improve the quality of three draft MoECRT regulations (on reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities, special education and services in higher education) by providing technical advice and ensuring compliance with the disability law. These, and the formation of the disability service units should be ratified before the end of 2022. The draft regulations also now include clauses to allow schools to use a functional approach to identifying disability. The regulation drafting workshop decided it was better not to name a particular instrument in the regulation. This allows for use of the PBS, without forcing sub-national governments to use this instrument. It is anticipated that once the PBS is built into DAPODIK in the coming six months, that PBS will be the obvious instrument of choice.

INOVASI has continued to support MoRA's inclusion working group through the roadmap for inclusive education in *madrasah*, the inclusive Islamic education roadmap (waiting for formal endorsement) and the Decree of the Director General of Islamic Education No 758 of 2022 concerning Guidelines for Implementing Inclusive Education in *Madrasah*. Appreciation from two counterparts in MoRA's inclusion working group in the Directorate of Curriculum, Facilities, Institutions and Student Affairs illustrates our contribution:

'INOVASI provided a needed perspective and a framework on inclusion that was not readily available.'

'The only one who has the technical knowledge of inclusion is INOVASI; their advice helped us to have better roadmaps.'

At a sub-national level, INOVASI supported the revision of the West Nusa Tenggara Governor's Regulation No 2 of 2016 on Inclusive Education that is considered an important step in aligning with the *Kurikulum Merdeka* implementation. In addition to supporting three drafting workshops, we provided expertise in the consultations and in finalising the document with the legal office at the West Nusa Tenggara secretariat. In East Java, INOVASI helped raise awareness about incorporating inclusive education in MoRA's education management information system, included in the Director General of Islamic Education's Decision No 104 of 2022 on Inclusive *Madrasah*. The team later live-streamed a talk show on '[Building inclusive madrasah](#)', in collaboration with MoRA's inclusive *madrasah* working group, provincial MoRA offices and *Muhammadiyah*. We have also supported including children with no national student identification number in the system in East Sumba by coordinating across the district agencies and data systems, including with the Department of Population and Civil Registration, the regional development planning agency and MoECRT's DAPODIK student database. This work has supported around 875 primary school or *madrasah* students to obtain documentation so they can continue to secondary school.

Intermediate outcome 4: Targeted policies, systems and practices to address participation and learning recovery (COVID-19)

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in lost opportunities for learning, especially for marginalized children. In 2020, INOVASI pivoted to align with Australia's development response for Indonesia and the Indonesian government's own policies and programs in response to the pandemic. We established a targeted program to work with the government to develop and implement policies, systems and practices to address participation and learning recovery. Our objective in this area is for our government and non-government partners to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on students' learning and wellbeing and then institute policies and practices to mitigate its adverse effects on foundational skills, especially for disadvantaged children more at risk of learning loss.

A rapid analysis of MoECRT enrolment data and national statistics that we conducted in May 2022 revealed no significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on enrolments or drop-out rates at primary or secondary school levels over the four years from 2018 to 2021. Nationwide, girls are less likely to drop out of school than boys but the pattern of change in drop-out rates by gender was not consistent across our four provinces. While there is undoubtedly a difference between 'participation' as measured by enrolment data and real engagement in learning or school attendance during the pandemic, the enrolment data suggests that in terms of schooling, a generation of children has not been lost due to the pandemic, as feared.

INOVASI has therefore focused on learning recovery rather than participation recovery – and we continued to make a strong contribution in this area in this period. National and sub-national stakeholders continue to reference the learning gap study in their advocacy for educational reforms (such as for the *Kurikulum Merdeka*) and for budget allocations for recovery initiatives. The learning gap study is seen as a seminal evidence base on learning loss due to the pandemic (MoECRT, INOVASI, ACER, 2022; Spink, Cloney and Berry, 2022; Randall *et al.*, 2022).

Our main contribution to addressing learning recovery has been through technical advice and support to our provincial and district government and civil society organisation partner agencies implementing learning recovery programs. This includes partner initiatives to improve children's reading levels, for example, through the community reading centres in North Kalimantan and the volunteer reading program, RELASI, in West Nusa Tenggara – also being scaled out to East Nusa

Tenggara. The emphasis is on children formally assessed as experiencing difficulties in reading due to learning loss caused by school closures. This section also provides an example of sub-national (provincial, district and school) budget allocations for targeted learning recovery programs.

Community reading centres

Communities have also supported learning recovery in North Kalimantan, for example, through the community reading centres or parks in Tana Tidung and Malinau (known as *Taman Baca Masyarakat* – TBM). These centres are expected to benefit 1,679 (843M, 635F) grades one to three students in Tana Tidung and 4,163 grades one to three students in Malinau (2,156M, 2,007F). The Malinau family welfare and empowerment mobilisation team,²³ a community-led initiative (albeit established by government), plans to establish reading centres in all villages in Tana Tidung to help children develop their reading comprehension skills and their enjoyment of reading. The centres will work with local schools so that the reading centre activists can connect with children who need extra help with reading.

The project began by conducting an initial mapping of community reading centres in the villages. The mapping showed that only 13 out of 28 villages had a reading centre, and of these only three had appropriate children's storybooks. The mapping also found that reading centre activists do not typically understand how to use and differentiate books for children. Based on this data, it was decided to increase the capacity of the facilitators before further centres were opened.

In May 2022, INOVASI therefore provided a training of trainers' session for 88 reading centre facilitators (86F, 2M) from Tana Tidung and Malinau. The trainees will disseminate this information in 15 sub-districts in Malinau and five sub-districts in Tana Tidung. The training included guidance on helping children study at home, the importance of reading aloud, developing fun activities to encourage reading and strengthening inclusion and child protection measures. These facilitators still need more training, however, as post training tests showed that only 25 per cent of participants had increased their knowledge.²⁴ Nevertheless, it has been reported that reading is now more widely being demonstrated throughout the community as a result of this activity.

Other learning recovery activities

To add value to the evidence base from the learning gap study, we published two further related reports. These were the [*Beyond letters and numbers: The COVID-19 pandemic and foundational literacy and numeracy in Indonesia*](#) published by INOVASI and ACER (Spink, Cloney and Berry, April 2022) and [*Reforming Indonesia's curriculum: How Kurikulum Merdeka aims to address learning loss and improve learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy*](#) published by INOVASI and the Educational Standards and Policy Centre (Randall *et al.*, June 2022).

Other learning recovery activities with strong leadership from our sub-national partners included:

²³ The team (*tim penggerak pemberdayaan kesejahteraan keluarga*) is a partnership of government and community organisations that function as facilitators, planners, implementers, controllers and movers at each level to implement the family welfare and empowerment program. The team is made up of members of the community, both men and women volunteers who do not represent organisations, groups, political parties, institutions or agencies. They function as planners, implementers and controllers for the family welfare and empowerment movement.

²⁴ Low scores may have resulted from inexperienced volunteers who had no prior experience with pre and post-tests; the sentences and constructs may not have been easily understood by participants. However, at the practical level, the participants were observed practicing the strategies they had learnt in training.

- The district education office in Bulungan, North Kalimantan, issued an instruction for student learning loss management (No 443.1/630/Disdikbud.III/2022) requiring all primary and junior secondary schools to conduct periodic diagnostic assessments. The first student assessment data were collected from January to March 2022. The findings showed that teacher approaches to literacy in the district (including teaching at the right level and diagnostic assessments) were working with an increased percentage of children passing the basic literacy test in 2019 (87 percent of Year 2 students) compared with 2017 (68 percent). However, the findings show a decline of students' learning ability (with 72 percent of Year 2 children passing the literacy test) in 2022 compared to the 2019 data, although the percentages were still higher than 2017. All three diagnostic tests used the same construct in testing basic literacy skills; letter, syllable and word recognition. The first two assessments involved paid enumerators. The most recent was completed by the teacher due to two reasons; the COVID-19 context and the district's request for teachers to complete formative assessment at the beginning of the new academic year. The district used this context to develop teacher capacity in using formative assessment.
- Four regencies in East Nusa Tenggara have issued instructions on mapping and improving foundational literacy and numeracy skills in primary schools and madrasah to support learning recovery. Principals were trained on assessing and mapping students' reading competencies and asked to share their knowledge with their teachers. The teachers were also trained by district facilitators through the teachers' working groups. Schools have been instructed to use their own operational (BOS) funds to conduct relevant activities. The district education office plans to evaluate the implementation of their instructions.
- The literacy volunteer program, RELASI (*Relawan Literasi*), is a response to the pandemic that started in 2020 and is still helping children to learn to read in 2022. Further detail on and its scale-out is provided below, under intermediate outcome 5.
- In June 2022, INOVASI began a book grant program for schools in our partner provinces to support learning recovery in literacy. The impact of these books on children's reading in schools, whether they are targeted by our literacy programs or not, will be monitored by INOVASI and our partners and reported on during the next period.

Intermediate outcome 5: National and sub-national governments scale out implementation of effective education policies, systems and practices

There is strong evidence of national and sub-national governments 'scaling' effective policies, systems and practices with respect to curriculum and assessment, and teacher quality improvement. These policies, systems and practices were developed earlier with contributions from INOVASI – from the Indonesian evidence base that we have established and from the specialist experience of our technical advisers gained in Indonesia, Australia and elsewhere. Examples of these are discussed under the other intermediate outcomes.

This section provides examples of provincial and district education offices and civil society organisation partners in all four partner provinces scaling out activities that we carried out (and reported) in previous periods in collaboration with our partners. In this period, the scaled-out activities include: activities to improve children's reading; the teaching at the right level approach (TaRL); and teacher training in literacy and numeracy. Scaling includes broadening the geographic reach of the initiatives to sub-districts (including those in more remote locations not previously reached) and

allocating budgets for the activities from general purpose funding (such as local budgets and school funds – APBD and BOS). The level of scale-out is encouraging, given the budgetary and resourcing pressures our partners are experiencing, and this reflects the work done in previous periods on including budgets for these activities in relevant forward plans. During the next period we will begin a policy study to determine the effectiveness of INOVASI ways of working, including the PDIA approach, collaborative working with our partners, communicating evidence on the effectiveness of the activities and ongoing advocacy and support for the scale-out activities.

Literacy volunteer program – Relawan Literasi

The West Nusa Tenggara provincial education office launched the literacy volunteers or *Relawan Literasi* (RELASI) program in August 2020. INOVASI worked with teacher training institutes in West Nusa Tenggara to develop a program where trainee teachers volunteer to visit students in the community, particularly children in the early grades at primary schools or *madrasah*. Following this first stage conducted with INOVASI, the West Nusa Tenggara teacher training institute lecturers' association (initiated by INOVASI in Phase I) formed the West Nusa Tenggara reading consortium to continue the program. Currently RELASI engages 16 teacher training institutes, 82 civil society organisations and four village administrations in West Nusa Tenggara. From INOVASI's initial training of 128 volunteers (85F, 43M) in October 2020, over 1,100 West Nusa Tenggara RELASI volunteers have been trained up to the end of February 2022. RELASI is planning to scale out to 118 schools in Mataram in 2022. The West Nusa Tenggara RELASI program has also now been replicated in East Nusa Tenggara.

Inspired by the success of RELASI, MoECRT has adopted the materials and invited district facilitators from West Nusa Tenggara to provide additional sessions for 16,000 university students registered for the *Kampus Merdeka* (independent learning campus program).

Teaching at the Right Level approach scale out

Scaling out of the teaching at the right level or TaRL approach is taking place continuously, in collaboration with district education offices, MoRA and with technical support from local district facilitators. Examples of this are as follows:

- In February 2022, 59 primary school or *madrasah* supervisors (49M, 10F) in three districts (Central Lombok, West Sumbawa and Bima) attended a workshop on the TaRL approach led by district facilitators with some financial support from INOVASI
- In June 2022, MoRA invited all *madrasah ibtidaiyah* in Central Lombok to participate in a workshop on *Semua Anak Cerdas*, a partnership program with Universitas Mataram focusing on literacy using TaRL. The district education office has recruited 46 new district facilitators to supervise the scale-out.
- *Partnership for Learning* events in Lombok and Sumbawa provided an opportunity to expand the use of the TaRL approach to seven districts (three in Lombok and four in Sumbawa) with a total of 124 participants (75M, 49F). All participants were invited to engage in a series of activities to see how effective the approach is in solving basic literacy problems. Success stories from teacher training institutes, district education offices and MoRA in Bima were disseminated in a breakout session of the mini-PDIA process.

Teacher training scale out

Districts are now initiating the scale-out of teacher training activities and replicating effective training that INOVASI delivered earlier. They are funding the process themselves using their regional revenue and expenditure budget (APBD) and school operational funds (BOS). For example:

- The East Java district education offices, MoRA offices and civil society organisations conducted teachers and madrasah principals' working group refresher training using their own local budget funding of around IDR 40 million to improve the capabilities of Probolinggo schools to implement the multigrade approach;
- Success stories from the *Gemar Literasi* (community literacy movement) program managed by Taman Siswa teacher training institute in Bima has generated wide attention. Following INOVASI financial support for district facilitators to train new facilitators, the head of the Bima district education office encouraged all public primary schools in the district to allocate their BOS funds to replicate *Gemar Literasi* in their schools;
- The success of earlier INOVASI training programs to develop teacher capabilities in literacy and numeracy have resulted in four districts in East Nusa Tenggara allocating budgets from their 2022 APBD to replicate these programs;
- The commitment of the Nagekeo district education office and STKIP Citra Bakti to scale out these programs has increased. The Nagekeo district education office has allocated an IDR 30 million budget for monitoring the implementation of the language transition program in the Boawae sub-district and its expansion to ten schools in Aesesa sub-district;
- In the 2021/2022 financial year, the district education office in Central Sumba, East Nusa Tenggara is preparing to scale out the literacy and numeracy programs using APBD funds. The total budget allocated is IDR 415 million to cover 40 primary schools in the district;
- West Sumba, East Nusa Tenggara, plans to allocate IDR 1.5 billion to replicate teacher and principal improvement programs through teachers' working groups. There are also self-funded initiatives from schools, principals, teachers and supervisors. With no district budget, 13 primary schools in Waikabubak city sub-district have agreed to conduct literacy, numeracy and character education scale out with contributions of IDR 10,000 from each principal to implement the teachers' working groups held between March and May 2022.

2.2. Progress towards the end-of-program outcomes

There are two pathways for achieving INOVASI's end-of-program outcomes. Firstly, at the sub-national level, by INOVASI's districts adopting better policies and scaling out good practices in their schools. Secondly, at the national level, through better systems and policies that are informed by the sub-national experience. The program is well on track to achieving its two high-level end-of-program outcomes. INOVASI has contributed substantially to the design of Indonesia's ambitious reform agenda and continues to support and inform its iterative implementation. These reforms that address the short-term need for learning recovery and the longer-term need to improve learning outcomes, are still a work in progress for the government and sub-national implementing agencies and schools.

Further to the discussions on progress towards the intermediate outcomes in this period, in this subsection we present a summary of overall progress towards the end-of-program outcomes since the beginning of INOVASI Phase II.

End-of-program outcome 1: Education policy

National and sub-national actors implement education systems and policies to support learning recovery and the achievement of foundational skills for all children

As evidenced in the discussion of the intermediate outcomes, above, INOVASI continues to make solid progress towards achieving this outcome in strategic areas at the national level and in targeted focus areas at the sub-national level.

This period has seen growing evidence of the government's commitment to supporting learning recovery and achieving foundational learning for all children. The newly released *Kurikulum Merdeka* focuses on foundational skills, is adaptable to local contexts, promotes TaRL approaches, and will be supported by inclusive and accessible teaching and learning resources. During this period, INOVASI has begun to play a more active role as technical partner to MoECRT, in relation to Indonesia's big reforms in curriculum, assessment and teacher development.

MoECRT drew on evidence from INOVASI Phase I and II pilots and on the outcomes of TASS technical assistance, as demonstrated in previous reports. Since the progressive launch of the policies and systems, known collectively as *Merdeka Mengajar* and including *Kurikulum Merdeka*, during this reporting period, MoECRT has increasingly turned to INOVASI to: socialise the reforms; support implementation; provide feedback on the implementation; help generate evidence of efficacy and identify challenges; and inform the ongoing process of refining and adapting the policies. This period has also seen ongoing collaboration with MoRA to adapt and implement its reform agenda.

In this way, decision makers in MoECRT, MoRA and our partner provinces drawing on a range of evidence, engaging in coordination and collaboration, and progressively putting in place integrated policies, interventions and the resources needed to identify and address the constraints to improving learning outcomes.

In response to often urgent requests by our partners, INOVASI has continued to make some significant contributions to these developments. The timeliness, quality and relevance of our inputs has been recognised in statements by key national stakeholders and acknowledged in our inclusion in national education forums and in the range of inputs requested. The technical skills and knowledge of INOVASI's specialist advisers have been sought, for example, to improve the quality of regulations that MoECRT and MoRA were drafting and issuing.

As a core resource in teaching foundational skills, MoECRT has adopted INOVASI's updated early grade literacy and numeracy modules, initially developed in Phase I. To support fast-tracked implementation, MoECRT has also requested our expertise and more flexible resources to produce high quality, inclusive teaching content to support implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka* on the *Merdeka Mengajar* platform. These resources that include written and multimedia products, and microlearning courses will be critical, given the urgent need with over 145,000 schools across Indonesia starting to implement the new curriculum in July 2022, and government aiming for full adoption by 2024. As well as contributing directly to systems and policies that support learning

recovery and the achievement of foundational skills for all children, this technical support is helping to build capacity within the Gol for ongoing problem solving and information-based policy processes.

Substantial changes in systems and policy are occurring as a result of INOVASI's work on literacy since early in Phase I. This work included: pilots and partnerships across our partner districts focusing on changing classroom practice; support for schools, libraries and community reading centres; introducing levelled readers and big books for shared reading; plus advocacy and policy support to improve government funding, partnerships with non-government organisations and the book publishing industry, as well as book approval processes at national level. The outcomes of this work became more evident during this period in a range of INOVASI-supported developments, including: MoECRT's big literacy map; new guidelines and training for MoECRT on assessing the content and level of children's reading; expanding the range of authors (including from more remote areas) being considered by MoECRT; improving the usability of the book information system for teachers to identify suitable reading material; training authors to write and illustrate appropriate reading materials; and improving the supply and demand of books for children. There is growing awareness among national policymakers, that INOVASI has been contributing to since Phase I, of the benefits of using mother tongue in early learning. For example, in March 2022, the head of the Board for Standards, Curriculum and Assessment requested that INOVASI produce learning materials with a language transition component that can be loaded onto the *Merdeka Mengajar* platform.

MoECRT and MoRA are increasingly working together to implement reforms across both school systems, including in approaches to character education and the *Moderasi Beragama* program. In this period, both ministries participated in joint monitoring visits to INOVASI-supported schools in East Java and to Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, to assess the adoption of new approaches to literacy and numeracy, the use of resources and student-centred learning.

In April 2022, MoECRT released the first-round results of the new nationwide assessment. The district education report ([Rapor Pendidikan](#)) reports on results of the students' Minimum Competency Assessment, a school character survey and the school learning environment survey. Following earlier inputs by INOVASI on the Minimum Competency Assessment, it now has inclusive elements whereby teachers may adjust the time allocated for the assessment for children with special needs, and the assessment allows for regional language adjustments in student responses. MoECRT's aim for producing the education report is to inform districts and stimulate them to allocate resources and implement targeted programs to improve learning outcomes for all students.

Both MoECRT and MoRA recognize the value of inclusive education, articulated, for example, through the MoRA roadmap for inclusive education in *madrasah*. Significant progress has been made on identifying children with disability, through systems such as the student learning profile (PBS) and by changing regulations to allow schools to use a functional approach to identifying disability. This improves the quality of education system data on disability, supporting better policy on reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities and in the longer-term allocation of resources to support students with special needs. INOVASI has also worked with MoECRT to produce videos on teaching children with a disability, digital learning resources and a *Bahasa Indonesia* Bookbot reading application for children with dyslexia and other reading difficulties.

End-of-program outcome 2: Education practice

Education practitioners (teachers, principals, school supervisors) demonstrate practices that support inclusive learning recovery and the achievement of foundational skills for all children

The start of Phase II coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic and associated school closures. This meant that district plans to scale out the new practices in teaching and school management that they learned through INOVASI activities in Phase I were disrupted. However, INOVASI's work with districts and Islamic education partners has gone ahead and further development and scaling out of good practices has taken place in this period, as described above. INOVASI's work with partner districts over the past two years has meant that many districts have implemented regulations to address learning loss. They have also incorporated funding into their educational roadmaps, plans and budgets for teacher training and other activities to improve inclusive teaching practices and support learning recovery.

These plans are now being realised. Our partner districts have used their BOS and APBD funding to scale out teacher training (including through the KKG) to an increasing number of schools. North Kalimantan and West Nusa Tenggara have worked with INOVASI to develop information systems to make teacher training materials and teaching resources accessible to schools and teachers even in remote districts. In some cases, such as North Kalimantan, the introduction of *Kurikulum Merdeka* has been explicitly and systematically integrated into local policy and systems which INOVASI helped to establish, to address learning recovery.

Although partner reporting to INOVASI on school monitoring is still limited, there is some evidence, that teachers are putting into practice their training and sharing of good practice. The recent joint monitoring visit to West Nusa Tenggara revealed that schools are using approaches that INOVASI has supported since 2016, for example, in teaching literacy, numeracy and character education, using formative assessments, teaching at the right level and language transition approaches.

Provided they are supported by their principals, teaching practices in schools will be boosted when newly graduated teachers emerge from over eighteen teacher training institutes that adopted INOVASI teaching approaches and gave students practical field experience in helping students learn to read. Through sustained initiatives, such as RELASI in East Nusa Tenggara and the community reading centres in North Kalimantan, community organisations are also actively collaborating with local government, teacher training institutes and INOVASI to work with schools to improve reading levels for children who fell behind due to the pandemic.

While there are increasing examples of our partner districts and schools demonstrating inclusive teaching practices, the major impetus for more systematic and comprehensive change across all partner district schools will be when the national education reforms are finalised and implemented at the local level in an iterative process. Our structured visits by key national stakeholders (including those at the technical level) has proved effective in increasing awareness and understanding of district-level initiatives and the importance of stronger district ownership and collaboration in national reforms.²⁵

²⁵ This includes a joint-monitoring visit to Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, in March, and visits to East Nusa Tenggara, North Kalimantan, and East Java by senior MoECRT officials, including the head of MoECRT's curriculum and book centre, and the minister's key adviser for curriculum.

Successful implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka* will require significant discussion, planning, resourcing and adaptation in provinces and districts. In this period, we commenced work with our 19 district partners and education units (managing 3,060 schools) on foundational activities to build understanding of the new curriculum and to encourage schools to carry out self-assessments for readiness for change. Later we will facilitate their preparations and capacity building for district planning, implementation, communication or information sharing, and for monitoring and evaluation.

Building on earlier work with our partner districts, as evidenced by their own scale-out approaches, many of our sub-national partners are well-placed to implement the core teaching practices of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* over the next few years. This is already providing useful models for MoECRT and MoRA to emulate in other districts. Nevertheless, it would be unrealistic to expect substantive changes (and evidence of these changes) in teaching practices from MoECRT's reforms in our partner district schools before the end of 2023. Such changes will require the scale of inputs to be ramped up significantly (developing new regulations and policies, plans and tools for teaching and assessment) from national and provincial education agencies, community organisations and partner organisations, such as INOVASI.

How far this can be achieved will need to be monitored and assessed over the next 18 months to allow early adaptation, identification and communication of good practices and potential challenges. We are therefore working with our partners to improve their capacity in monitoring and evaluation. They can then report to MoECRT in real time so that MoECRT learns from monitoring the early implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka* in our partner districts and can use the findings to adapt the program nationally.

2.3. Lessons and Challenges

The big lesson here is that success in this context of development assistance, takes time. It is because INOVASI (including Phase I and TASS) has been designed and implemented over an eight-year period, that we have been able to achieve this high-level impact. (INOVASI was designed in 2014.) It is because the team is made up of experienced consultants and advisors, with a depth of understanding of the context, and long-standing networks and professional relationships, that we have been able to build a high-trust relationship with the GoI. It is also because INOVASI (including TASS) is an adaptive program, able to take opportunities as they arise, adjusting program plans, thinking and working politically, and going with the grain, that we have been able to achieve the successes described in this report.

These are the major lessons from this period of INOVASI's implementation. Going forward, it will be important to maintain the trust and manage the relationships and expectations for INOVASI. This leads to the major challenges now facing the program. INOVASI is now in high demand – and the stakes are high. While the demand for technical assistance has increased as the big reform policies have been released publicly in this period, our resources have not. We are in a privileged position, frequently invited to give technical advice in highly consequential areas, around curriculum, assessment, approaches to teaching foundational skills of literacy and numeracy, religious moderation, inclusive education and gender-responsive schooling. These policies, if successfully implemented, can be a 'game changer' for Indonesia. In order to implement our work plan and our strategies to support these reforms, the team will need to focus on key activities, and work in highly efficient and well-coordinated ways. This is our challenge going forward.

3. IMPLEMENTATION AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

This section describes activity and outcomes in three areas of implementation and cross-cutting issues: (1) working with partners, (2) monitoring, evaluation, research and learning and (3) communications.

3.1. Working with partners

As INOVASI continues to shift its role from that of implementer to broker, we continue to focus on supporting the development of partnerships between local governments as users and service providers. These service providers²⁶ include over one hundred teacher training institutes, non-government organisations, disability organisations²⁷ civil society organisations, information technology-based companies, and mass organisations. INOVASI has strengthened the capacity of government partners, as users by helping them to identify their respective problems and find solutions through a matching technical provider. In addition, through the implementing process, their institutional systems are being strengthened so they can scale out their programs to more schools. As for service providers, the partnerships have focused on strengthening program management systems and capacity within the respective organisations, including in both programmatic and operational components.

INOVASI provided ongoing programmatic support to service providers through the partnership program in this period. This included capacity building in developing a theory of change, setting indicators for the intended outcomes and using data collected in monitoring and evaluation to inform further planning and scale out. Training was also provided to support partners in their operations and reporting. For example, in an unsolicited letter, the program manager from Tunas Aksara foundation expressed his appreciation and shared what he learned from INOVASI's partnership support in management. He compiled all the lessons he learned about implementing a program into a module that he then scaled out to other organisations through a series of training sessions that he conducted (See Annex 5A).

As most of the current partnership programs started during the pandemic, many support activities were conducted online, including: induction; orientation for grant operation; procurement and finance; and training in MERL, GEDSI, and child protection. Monitoring partners' implementation involved follow-up on grantee reports on deliverables through meetings online with individual grantees and provincial teams, rather than face-to-face at a mid-term assessment workshop as we would normally do. Any concerns we had during implementation were promptly addressed by coordinating with provincial teams and so far, there have been no major issues. We continued to provide online support to grantees, based on their needs. With the easing of pandemic restrictions, in the last two months of the reporting period, INOVASI's grants team provided face-to-face coaching clinics in the four provinces, focusing on better ways to report on MERL and GEDSI indicators and

²⁶ At June 2022, 12 existing grant partnerships (including UBT also a TTI), 2 new grant partnerships, about 18 TTIs (including UBT), 21 CSOs and 70 TBM 0

²⁷ Asosiasi Disleksia Indonesia
Asosiasi Pendidik Pendidikan Khusus
Wahana Inklusif Indonesia
Dria Manunggal
The Little Hijabi
CIS Timor Indonesia
Persatuan Tuna Netra Indonesia

outcomes, as well as child safe-guarding issues related to publications and working with children. The coaching benefitted 21 staff from grantees (10 M, 11F)

While in Phase I INOVASI partnerships sought approaches or models that would contribute effectively to improved learning outcomes, in Phase II, the partnership program emphasis is on sustainability and scale out. The sustainability strategy has always been an important component in partnerships, and it is a key component in assessing partners' proposals.

Through the partnership program, INOVASI also helps to build relations and trust among all parties involved. The success of this is evidenced in continued work between local governments, service providers and other parties, without INOVASI involvement.

The fourth Partnership for Learning event that took place in Jakarta on 15-16 June and in each province during the preceding weeks, brought together all partners, including government and service providers. These events are an important part of the process of building sustainability and trust, as well as raising awareness at central ministry level, particularly among staff from MoECRT and MoRA. The purpose of the event was twofold: to share stories of partnership sustainability; and to discuss how to maximise each institution's resources for future partnerships.

During the reporting period, INOVASI continued to focus support on selected partners, building on what they have achieved, iterating programs to scale out their respective initiatives, expanding previous programs, or piloting new modules. The grantee programs partnered with 97 primary schools and 106 *madrasah*, and 10 early childhood education centres, strengthening the capacity of 769 teachers (165M, 604F). More detailed information on each partnership can be found in Annex 5. The following summarizes the activities of partnership programs with sub-national agencies during this period:

- Teacher training institutions: strengthening inclusion, literacy and numeracy content in their programs; using differentiated learning approaches; provided training in teacher working groups, with a focus on literacy; developing and piloting character education and gender modules
- Partners in East Sumba (Sulinama) and East Java (Ma'arif NU and Muhammadiyah): Scaled out language transition, literacy and numeracy programs
- Training and production of books with LITARA; 15 books submitted for book procurement program, remote area schools
- Digital based initiatives; Bookbot and UX Indonesia, supporting beginning readers and training for teachers in remote areas.

These examples show that the INOVASI partnership program is now demonstrating some strong results. INOVASI will continue to collect evidence of these examples of good practice as an advocacy tool to support government education reforms

At national level, INOVASI partnered with two organizations, the Centre for Education and Policy Studies (PSPK) and the Indonesia office of the Australian Council for Education Research (ACER).

INOVASI funding in previous periods enabled the Centre for Education and Policy Studies to support MoECRT in developing and initiating three significant reforms: national assessments, curriculum and the school and district scorecards. In June 2022, INOVASI entered into a second grant with the

centre to support MoECRT in developing resources for the new curriculum, completing key support documents for curriculum implementation as well as in monitoring and evaluation of the new curriculum.

Our grant to ACER that concluded in March 2022 funded their psychometricians to work with MoECRT to develop a selection test as part of their recruitment of new civil service teachers. Following a request from MoECRT that recognised the expert contributions made by ACER, in May 2022 we provided a further grant to ACER to help develop a selection tool for entry to the ministry's professional education program for teachers.

3.2. Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning

Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning (MERL) activities in the period were guided by the updated MERL Strategy (February 2022 version) and the updated Theory of Change (November 2021), as aligned with the other program strategies. In this period, INOVASI adjusted its Results Framework to reflect changes in program outcomes, as per the updated Theory of Change. The framework now includes a range of clear quantitative and qualitative indicators, including the relevant DFAT Performance Assessment Framework indicators. While INOVASI is still an adaptive program, the framework now includes result statements as measures of success by the end of INOVASI for each of the eight program areas.

In addition to ongoing monitoring of INOVASI activities at the work unit and program levels, the MERL team worked with a strengthened GEDSI team in this period. This was to effectively integrate GEDSI into the six-monthly cycle of evidence collation, review and reflection, and thus report on GEDSI achievements (particularly with respect to the GEDSI-tagged result statements). Integrating the GEDSI activity checklist and health check into routine MERL activity has resulted in a more streamlined process. The new approach should strengthen our understanding of the progress, gaps and lessons learned in promoting gender equality, disability and social inclusion, and enable our team to reflect, prioritise and adapt our approach in the time that remains.

It is noted that INOVASI is typically unable to report reliable data on participant and beneficiary disability. Whilst data collection for the disability status of participants in INOVASI activities includes questions on disability in the participant biodata, there is highly likely under-reporting²⁸. The format and approach to disability in the biodata are being improved and standardised to respond to feedback on difficulties with participants filling in the questions. INOVASI partners are requested to collect disability data at the events they implement, but this data may also be incomplete. We will share the revised biodata form with partners and undertake socialisation about its purpose and utilisation. Disability disaggregation of government data, such as that used to report indirect beneficiaries of INOVASI programs, is likely to be inaccurate due to the existing flaws in identifying disability in DAPODIK; this is at the heart of the reason we have invested in PBS development and regulatory reforms.

The MERL team also worked with INOVASI's Communications team to develop a framework for evaluating communications and advocacy, resulting in improved reporting on the reach of communications during this period. In future reporting periods, the framework will enable us to report

²⁸ Of the 26,550 participants in training conducted directly by INOVASI from the period of July 2020 to June 2022, only 54 (28M, 26F) self-reported that they had a disability.

on the quality and usefulness of our communications products and the uptake of communication messaging and advocacy.

Evidence generated by our MERL studies will enable us to engage further with our partners on policy development and implementation. In the evaluation domain, the MERL team completed six baseline studies and shared key findings with the respective units. covered six districts, focusing on mother tongue (in Nagekeo and East Sumba); literacy (in Bulungan and Tana Tidung); and on scaled-out interventions (in Sumenep and Probolinggo). There are also reports on character education (in East Nusa Tenggara and East Java), gender-sensitive schools (in East Java) and on literacy and numeracy (carried out by *Muhammadiyah* and *Ma'arif NU* in East Java). The reports on the baseline studies for character education and gender-sensitive schools are still being completed at this time. In this period, INOVASI also completed five research reports on: child marriage, female leadership, policy sustainability in Probolinggo and Batu city (for multigrade and literacy policies enacted by the districts) and two reports in the learning gap series.

Learning and reflection are central to INOVASI's approach, enabling us to continuously deepen our knowledge and understanding of the context and its implications, to find ways to improve and adjust our overall strategy and activities based on the evidence and to communicate these findings internally and externally. In June 2022, the MERL team led a six-monthly collation and review of monitoring data for the period, as input to this report. Follow-up reflection workshops will take place in July-August 2022 to inform program adjustment and communications. A new internal learning initiative, *Belajar Bareng Keliling*, was also put in place, to better disseminate and discuss research findings, as relevant to provincial teams in our four partner provinces. The provincial teams will follow up for further dissemination and engagement with their partners.

Undertaking monitoring, evaluation, research and learning for such a large, multi-level and adaptive program continues to require careful management, especially in relation to collating and synthesising data from the various work units and programs, and for crosscutting areas, such as GEDSI. With many internal and external requests for INOVASI support, including in the MERL domain, it is sometimes challenging to prioritise activities and provide quality support and timely deliverables within the available time and resources.

As INOVASI's role as an implementer has decreased, we are more reliant on the quality and timeliness of the MERL data produced by external parties, and their willingness to share their data. The approach of using external third parties to conduct the six baseline studies resulted in work that did not meet INOVASI quality standards and was submitted late, requiring additional time for the MERL team to review and revise the reports, further delaying their completion.

INOVASI therefore continues its support to strengthen partners' capacity to conduct and learn from their own M&E and also so that they can provide INOVASI with credible evidence to report on our program outcomes. This initiative started in Phase I with dominant roles by the national MERL. Currently, provincial MERL teams play a key role in providing technical support for MEL by their district and non-government partners (for example *Muhammadiyah* and *Ma'arif NU*). Towards the end of this period, the MERL team started preparation for strengthening our partners' MERL capacity in two important interventions: book provision and *Kurikulum Merdeka* implementation. At the national level, INOVASI also supported MoECRT with a qualitative assessment of their *Program Organisasi Penggerak* (the baseline report was completed in this period) and an ethnographic study of their *Sekolah Penggerak* (currently being drafted).

3.3. Communications

In the past six months, two major factors impacted INOVASI communications. The first was the new Guiding Program Strategy and other program resets. The updated Communications and Stakeholder Engagement Strategy provides new directions for INOVASI communications and advocacy through to the end of the program. The second was the COVID-19 pandemic situation at the beginning of the year. The high number of cases caused us to cancel events because even a small online event requires us to meet in a small studio to host it. After March 2022, with gradual resuming of face-to-face interactions gradually resuming, we shifted to hybrid event hosting, and in some cases full face-to-face events.

Product development, sharing and management

The master repository or catalogue containing INOVASI knowledge products now lists 228 publications, with eight new publications added in this reporting period. Notable reports published in this period include the two from the Learning Gap Series co-published with MoECRT's centre for education standards, curriculum, and assessment. The INOVASI website has been revamped - the *Bahasa Indonesian* version went online at the end of May 2022 and the English version will follow in July 2022. Before going online, it went through a User Acceptance Testing (UAT) process involving DFAT and INOVASI team members. The website will go through a second testing process in July 2022, by inviting external users and program stakeholders to participate. Accessibility aspects of the website will be continuously strengthened in the next two months.

Public diplomacy

We continue to support DFAT's public diplomacy efforts through close coordination and ensuring that DFAT is updated with information related to INOVASI activities. In this period, three DFAT senior officials participated in eight INOVASI events, mostly by providing opening remarks in which DFAT's key messages were shared. The Counsellor (Human Development) also physically attended events in North Kalimantan and West Nusa Tenggara. For all these events, INOVASI provided briefs and talking points drafts to DFAT to ensure alignment of key messages.

Knowledge-sharing events

Key events held by INOVASI included the *Temu inovasi* East Nusa Tenggara #2 which was hosted online on 8 March 2022, and *Temu Inovasi* #13 hosted in hybrid mode on 7 June 2022.

The book supply chain event, entitled "Increasing quality and quantity of children's storybooks from Sabang to Merauke" was held on 8 June 2022. This event was attended by MoERCT Minister and his wife. It was invitation-only and was attended by 131 people (64M, 67F), (109 online and 22 offline) After the event, the minister promoted the key messages from the event on his Instagram account. Province and national level Partnership for Learning events were hosted to celebrate the results of partnership activities and to discuss sustainability. The national event took place in Jakarta, 15-16 June 2022, attended by 168 people (102M, 89F), representing local and national government representatives, civil society organizations, teacher training institutes and community organizations. Details of these events can be found in Annex 7.

Partnerships

We continued to engage closely with the information and publication unit at the secretariat for MoECRT's centre of education standards, curriculum and assessment. We shared content and our editorial calendars to align our communications. *Temu inovas*#13 was live streamed on the centre's YouTube channel and promoted on their Instagram account. At the end of June, INOVASI hosted a three-day joint event to provide training in creative facilitation for 22 people (13M, 9F) eleven from INOVASI and eleven from the centre.

For four major events, we also collaborated with MoECRT's Board for Standards, Curriculum and Assessment (BSKAP) for the post-event press releases, namely [the Temu Inovasi #2](#) , [the National Steering Committee Meeting](#), [the Temu Inovasi #13](#) , and [the Book Supply Workshop](#). They further shared the press releases to the Agency for Cooperation and Public Relations for publication on MoECRT's website.

In February 2022, the East Java INOVASI team started a monthly podcast with MoRA's provincial education office. The podcasts featured education and policy actors sharing their practices and experiences related to literacy, numeracy and inclusion. So far, three have been broadcast – the first one in March was viewed 1,701 times, and the second and third ones viewed 418 and 976 times respectively at the time of writing. The podcasts will continue until the end of the year.

Monitoring and evaluating communications

Since May 2022, an independent media monitoring service vendor, Indonesia Indicator (I2), has been providing monitoring reports covering online media and social media. We are working closely with them to ensure that their media monitoring tools can capture all the relevant data. During the period, there were 135 online media stories about INOVASI included in national and sub-national level media. There were also 17 printed articles about INOVASI activities, with the majority related to our events. The 113 posts on our Facebook page (followed by nearly 7,500 people) had 36,522 views and 1,307 likes in the period. Our website has the highest view numbers of all the channels, with 74,274 users and 102,527 unique page views. The website is promoted mainly through our social media; YouTube and Facebook. The website link is also available on INOVASI collaterals such as newsletters, reports and policy papers. Promotion is also done through WhatsApp, although this is challenging to track due to its highly organic nature. A summary of the media monitoring analytics is available in Annex 7.

4. OPERATIONS, MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

Throughout this period, INOVASI continued to work closely with DFAT and the Palladium corporate team to manage the program strategically, effectively, and efficiently. In the previous period, we undertook a comprehensive strategy-testing exercise that resulted in updates to INOVASI's Theory of Change, Results Framework, program structure and all our strategy documents. These updates were finalized during the reporting period - but have been guiding our program planning and implementation during the process. The updated strategies ensure a strong focus on sustainability and scale-out for the final two years of the program.

We continued to use the matrix management model as it was updated, with work units led by managers and cross-unit programs led by program leaders. This creates an integrated program of activity that focuses activity on achieving our end-of-program outcomes and ensures value for money. The senior management team, comprising the director and deputy directors, met on a weekly basis throughout the period, while managers and key consultants met biweekly to discuss issues and share information. Routine coordination meetings continued within work units and program

4.1. Human resources

As of 1 July 2022, INOVASI has a total of 112 staff on board (out of 115 personnel included in the latest organisation chart agreed in July 2021), distributed as follows: 98 national fixed-term staff members, five international long-term advisors, five international short-term advisors and four national short-term advisors.

The gender proportion of the 112 INOVASI staff is 47% female (54) and 53% male (60), reflecting a balanced gender distribution. The proportion of national staff is 52% (59) and provincial staff is 48% (55), also reflecting balanced national–sub-national staff distribution.

4.2. Operations and procurement

During the reporting period from January to June 2022, the INOVASI Operations team continued to support program implementation through finance, human resources, administrative, procurement and information technology (IT) functions. This period has seen the gradual transition from working-from-home to going back to working at the office, as a result of the government lifting many of the COVID-19 restrictions in the country during this period. The INOVASI operations team focused on supporting staff mobilisations back to their work base, re-opening INOVASI offices, and supporting the increasing field activities, face-to-face meetings, travel and workshops.

In more detail, some of the main achievements in this period were:

- Purchasing 114,875 children's books from seven different publishers to support 969 schools, 28 partner organisations and 79 community-based libraries in INOVASI target provinces. INOVASI is building partner capacity to conduct their own M&E regarding book utilisation and learning outcomes. In addition, INOVASI will also conduct studies to assess changes in the classroom resulting from the intervention.

- Finalising INOVASI's external independent audit for calendar year 2021. A draft audit report was submitted by the auditors Kantor Akuntan Publik Syarief Basir & Rekan in April 2022, and shows no findings of non-compliance.
- Resuming 100 per cent face-to-face operations and activities, starting from June 2022. Opening all INOVASI offices in Jakarta and the provinces, and supporting program staff in organising meetings and workshops, while adhering to the prevailing health protocols in accordance with the government (PPKM) guidelines.
- Completing the INOVASI BAST reports (handover notes for goods and services) for periods of January-October 2021 and November-December 2021 for both MoECRT and MORA. The BAST reports were signed by MoECRT and MORA between 27 December 2021 and 8 March 2022.
- Developing BAST guidelines that outline the process, methodology and submission dates of BAST reports. The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure all parties (MoECRT, MoRA, MoF, DFAT and INOVASI) are on the same page about the BAST reporting requirements and process.

4.3. Programmatic Risks

The risks of the COVID-19 pandemic disrupting activity and of staff infections, travel and movement restrictions and implications for budgets have been and continue to be a major concern. Early in this reporting period, the Omicron variant caused office and school re-closures which limited program activities. INOVASI closely monitored the situation, and progressively updated health and operational protocols as the risk declined and Indonesia began to open up and relax restrictions on movement following the Idul Fitri holidays in May.

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Ratu Plaza Office Tower – 19th Floor
Jl. Jend. Sudirman Kav 9
Central Jakarta, 10270
Indonesia
Tel : (+6221) 720 6616
Fax : (+6221) 720 6616

 info@inovasi.or.id

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 www.inovasi.or.id

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