



# Local socio-economic and cultural contextual analysis of basic education

Lepadi, Ranggo, and Tembalale villages  
Pajo sub-district, Dompu, West Nusa Tenggara

February 2019



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*The Governments of Australia and Indonesia are partnering through the Innovation for Indonesia’s School Children (INOVASI) program. INOVASI seeks to understand how to improve student learning outcomes in literacy and numeracy in diverse schools and districts across Indonesia. The first phase of the Program (AUD49 million) began in January 2016 and will continue until December 2019. Working with Indonesia’s Ministry of Education and Culture, INOVASI has formed partnerships with 12 districts in: West Nusa Tenggara; Sumba Island, East Nusa Tenggara; North Kalimantan; and East Java.*

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABK	Children with special needs ( <i>anak berkebutuhan khusus</i> )
APBD	Regional or local government budget ( <i>Anggaran Pendapatan Belanja Daerah</i> )
APBDes	Village budget ( <i>Anggaran Pendapatan Belanja Desa</i> )
Bappeda	Regional development planning agency ( <i>Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah</i> )
BOS	Schools operational funds ( <i>Biaya Operasional Sekolah</i> )
BPMPD	Community and village government empowerment agency ( <i>Badan Pemberdayaan Masyarakat dan Pemerintah Desa</i> )
Dikdas	Basic education ( <i>Pendidikan Dasar</i> )
Dikpora	Education, youth and sports office ( <i>Dinas Pendidikan, Pemuda dan Olahraga</i> )
FGD	<i>Focus group discussion</i>
GSC	Healthy and Smart Generation program ( <i>Generasi Sehat Cerdas</i> )
INAP	Indonesian National Assessment Program
KTSP	Unit-based curriculum ( <i>Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan</i> )
<i>Madrasah</i>	Islamic or religious primary school
PATBM	Community-based Integrated Child Protection program ( <i>Perlindungan Anak Terpadu Berbasis Masyarakat</i> )
PNS	Civil servant ( <i>Pegawai Negeri Sipil</i> )
PPPA	<i>Women's empowerment and child protection (Pemberdayaan perempuan dan perlindungan anak)</i>
SD	Primary school ( <i>Sekolah dasar</i> )
SDN	<i>Government primary school (Sekolah dasar negeri)</i>
SLB	Specialised school ( <i>Sekolah Luar Biasa</i> )
SMA	Senior secondary school ( <i>Sekolah Menengah Atas</i> )
SMP	Junior secondary school ( <i>Sekolah menengah pertama</i> )
TKI	Indonesian overseas workers ( <i>Tenaga Kerja Indonesia</i> )
TPQ	Koran educational park ( <i>Taman Pendidikan Al-Quran</i> )
UPTD	Technical services implementing unit

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Background

The Government of Indonesia's Law No 35 of 2014 on child protection states in article 9 (1) that every child has the right to receive education and teaching to develop their personality and intelligence to their full potential and according to their own interests and talent. Under this law the state guarantees to protect and respect this process for every child. However, not all children in Indonesia obtain a proper education (Folia 2018). In terms of access and enrolment, education in Indonesia has improved significantly but improving the quality of education remains a challenge.

The results from the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2015 indicated that 42 per cent of 15 year-old students in Indonesia failed to achieve the minimum standard for reading, mathematics and science. In Dompu district, West Nusa Tenggara province, where the INOVASI program is being implemented, the baseline survey conducted in 2018 showed that Dompu district had the highest percentage of students that failed to pass the basic literacy test and the lowest average literacy scores among students in grades one to three. In addition, Dompu district has the highest proportion of students with special needs in various categories.

Based on dialogue between the INOVASI team and a number of relevant stakeholders, socio-economic and cultural factors in Dompu, especially in the rural areas, influence the quality and access to education. For example, during the horse-racing and harvest seasons, children may be absent from school as they become jockeys or spectators or accompany their parents to the fields.

In response to these issues, INOVASI initiated a program called 'Learning in school and in the community' (*Belajar di Sekolah dan Masyarakat* – BERSAMA) in Dompu district in 2017. The objective of the BERSAMA program is to strengthen cooperation between basic education institutions, parents and communities in improving enrolment, access and the quality of learning in targeted areas.

We needed to gain a deeper understanding of the socio-economic and cultural conditions of the people of Dompu, particularly in INOVASI's targeted villages, to be able to better place any activities we initiate in the right context.

## 1.2. Objectives

This study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the socio-economic and cultural context of people in three villages in Dompu where the BERSAMA program is being implemented, especially with regard to educational participation as well as the quality of and access to basic literacy learning.

Specifically, the study aims to answer the following questions:

- a. What is the participation or enrolment rate of primary school students in villages where the BERSAMA program is being implemented?
- b. How easy is it for children to access quality literacy learning in primary schools in the villages where the BERSAMA program is being implemented?
- c. What are the socio-economic conditions and cultural contexts of the people in the villages where the BERSAMA program is being implemented?
- d. How far do the conditions and contexts in these villages influence children's participation and learning rates as well as their access to literacy learning and the quality of this learning?
- e. How well is the child protection concept understood by the community, by notable figures in the community and by the local government?



### 1.3. Study method

The study was conducted in October–November 2018, in three villages targeted by the BERSAMA program, namely Lepadi village, Ranggo village and Tembalae village, all located in Pajo sub-district in Dompu district, West Nusa Tenggara. We collected data in the field from 31 October to 7 November 2018.

Taking a qualitative approach allows researchers to examine people's personal and social experiences and practices as well as to explore how far the issues are shaped by the context (Skovdal and Kornish 2015). In this study, we used the qualitative approach to obtain in-depth information on the socio-economic and cultural factors influencing the access, participation and quality of education in the three villages. With this approach, we expect the research results to provide insights and inputs to the BERSAMA program on the realities, potential and needs of the local communities.

Primary data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, group interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), observation and casual interviews. Secondary data collection took statistical data on village profiles, education profiles, policies and other issues at the village, sub-district and district level, and used results from INOVASI's baseline survey in the area.

We selected informants using a purposive method based on specific criteria relevant to our research objectives. The characteristics and number of informants interviewed are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Characteristics and number of informants involved in the study**

Characteristics	Number			
	In-depth Interview	Group interview	FGD	Casual interview
a. Parents of children considered vulnerable	2 parents of jockeys 1 farmer parent 2 farmer parents & Indonesian migrant workers	-	-	-
b. Parents of children not considered vulnerable	3 parents	-	-	-
c. Parents and public	-	-	5 people	-
d. Children considered to be vulnerable	-	1 child jockey 1 child of farmer 1 child of Indonesian migrant worker	-	-
e. Children not considered to be vulnerable	-	7 children	-	-
f. Community figures	2 village heads 2 village secretaries 1 traditional leader	-	-	1 sub-district head
g. Educators	1 principal 1 vice principal	-	5 teachers	3 teachers
h. Parties relevant to horse racing activities	-	-	-	2 horse owners
i. Parties relevant to agricultural activities	1 head of farmers group	-	-	
j. Stakeholders at the sub-district and district level	- Head of the PPPA - Head of the basic education division, Dikpora	-	-	UPTD, Dompu sub-district



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Head of the BPMPD</li> <li>- Members of the education board</li> <li>- Head of the Islamic education section, religious affairs office</li> <li>- Head of UPTD and supervisor, Pajo sub-district</li> <li>- Head of the social and cultural division, Bappeda</li> </ul>			
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Notes: PPPA = *Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak* (women's empowerment and child protection office) office; UPTD = *Unit Pelaksana Teknis Dinas* (*Technical services implementing unit*); Dikpora = *Dinas Pendidikan, Pemuda dan Olahraga* (Education, youth and sports office); BPMPD = *Badan Pemberdayaan Masyarakat dan Pemerintah Desa* (Community and village government empowerment agency); Bappeda = *Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah* (regional development planning agency)

Outside of the laid down criteria, the study also used the snowball effect approach to selecting informants, based on recommendations from the field. This was particularly to collect information related to horse racing, a sensitive issue for the community, and the issue of migrant workers that arose during the data collection process in the field.

## 2. THE VILLAGE ENVIRONMENT

The three villages targeted for the BERSAMA program are Lepadi, Ranggo and Tembalae villages. These villages are located not far from one another in Pajo sub-district, Dompu district, with Lepadi village the most northerly, Ranggo between the two and Tembalae village the most southerly. The three villages are connected by one main road, the Lakey highway, that connects Dompu city and Huú sub-district. This road also divides the western and eastern part of each village. These three villages share similar characteristics and they are all in agricultural areas where corn and rice are the primary commodities. Most people living in these villages are Moslems descended from the Bima-Dompu ethnic group. In terms of basic education, children from any of the villages can attend any of the available schools.

### 2.1 Lepadi village

Lepadi village was established as an expansion of Ranggo village in 1966 which was still part of Huú sub-district at the time. In 1967, Lepadi village was integrated into Potu village in Dompu sub-district but a year later after further expansion Lepadi village became a separate village in Pajo sub-district. In 1999, some of the northern area of the village detached into Kareke village and was included in Dompu sub-district.<sup>1</sup>

Geographically, Lepadi village covers 1,162.67 km<sup>2</sup> and borders Kareke village in Dompu sub-district to the north, Ranggo village in Pajo sub-district to the south, Bima district to the east and Mbawi village in Dompu sub-district to the west. The village incorporates the following five small villages: Lepadi, Pajo Permai, Jati, Timah and Wera. Most of the residents live in the small villages of Lepadi and Pajo Permai.

Based on 2018 data, Lepadi village has a population of 2,321, with an almost balanced ratio of 49 per cent men and 51 per cent women. Out of these, 635 are heads of family. Most of them graduated from senior secondary school (45 per cent), 22 per cent did not graduate from primary school, 19 per cent graduated from primary and junior secondary school and 12 per cent graduated from academies/universities.

However, 39 per cent of the households fall into the economic status of 'pre-prosperous' families although, most people appear to live in acceptable permanent housing. The subsequent economic status categories in Lepadi village are: prosperous 1 (22 per cent), prosperous 2 (19 per cent), prosperous 3 (16 per cent) and prosperous 3 plus (4 per cent). In terms of land ownership, most people have non-irrigated lands (*ladang*) while some have irrigated lands (*sawah*). Some people officially own their farmlands (with certificates of ownership) but others use forest land owned by the government. Meanwhile, irrigated lands are either officially owned or passed down from generation to generation.

Around 60 per cent of the villagers are farm owners, mainly growing rice and corn but also some other crops. The rest of the villagers work as farm labourers, civil servants and company workers. Agriculture in this village uses rain-fed irrigation and can have two to three harvest periods annually, depending on the rainfall. The rice growing cycle is from November to April, coinciding with the rainy season, then corn is grown from April to August, coinciding with the first dry season (if possible) and then corn is grown again from August to December or during the second dry season.

While in social terms, people are not completely traditional, the villagers generally respect their village heads and officials as the ultimate decision makers in the village. The traditional leader is chosen by the village head and becomes one of the village officials. The function of traditional leader is limited to providing recommendations on various issues in the village. Existing community organisations are limited to village organisations, like the family welfare development agency and community empowerment groups.

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<sup>1</sup> The word Lepadi is from two words, namely 'le' (collection) and 'padi' (fragmented) indicating the fragmented or diverse way of thinking of its people although some people believe the name comes from Hima Padi, the person who initially established the village.

Around 99 per cent of the villagers are Moslems, like the people of Bima-Dompu in general, and almost all of them are descendants of the Bima-Dompu ethnic group. Although Lepadi village has a number of migrants, they are generally from the same ethnic group and come from other Dompu areas or from Bima district. Only a few villagers are from Java, Lombok or East Nusa Tenggara.

The villagers communicate in their own local Bima-Dompu language called Mbojo with only a few villagers using Bahasa Indonesia within the family – generally migrants from other areas. Some villagers, usually older parents and children who are not yet at school, cannot speak Bahasa Indonesia fluently. So while the language of instruction at school is Bahasa Indonesia, in the early grades, teachers often use the Mbojo language to help students not fluent in Bahasa Indonesia.

Based on interviews with the village head, principals and several villagers, all primary school-aged children are registered in schools within and across the villages. In Lepadi village, there are two government primary schools (SDN) – one in Pajo small village and one in Wera small village – and one private Islamic primary school (*madrasah*) in Timah small village.<sup>2</sup> Students in these three schools are mainly drawn from Lepadi village although some may come from neighbouring villages.

The villagers and especially parents have latterly become concerned about teenagers and children's social interaction as drugs have allegedly entered the village. In addition, they are concerned that teenagers are entering into sexual relationships more freely, evident in the increasing number of teenage pregnancies, higher school dropout rates and prevalence of divorce. While there was no statistical data to support these perceptions, the village head said that the village had to issue around three underage marriage recommendation letters in a year.

Lepadi small village has a horse racing track that the Dompu district government built in around 1970 and, besides the regular Sunday practices, two to four major events are held there annually, with many participants drawn from various areas within Dompu district, from Bima and Sumbawa districts, as well as from East Nusa Tenggara.

Lepadi village has been a pre-pilot location for the BERSAMA pilot since 2017. According to the village head, INOVASI was the first education program to come to the village. The village had the Healthy and Smart Generation (*Generasi Sehat Cerdas* – GSC) program over 2015 and 2016 but it focused on health, specifically latrines, with a limited education element to promote education among parents through activities at the integrated health post (*Posyandu*). Plan Indonesia ran a similar program in Lepadi village focusing on health and latrines.

## 2.2 Ranggo village

When Ranggo village was first established in 1950, it was part of Hu'u sub-district but later it became a separate village in Pajo sub-district. Ranggo village has a total area of 4,345.5km<sup>2</sup> and is divided into five small villages: Ranggo, Sigi, Fupu, Ladore and Mangga Dua. Geographically, Ranggo village borders on Lepadi village to the north, Tembalae village to the south, Bima district to the east and Lune village in Pajo sub-district to the west.

Based on 2015 data, the population in Ranggo village is 3,286, consisting of 49 per cent men and 51 per cent women. The population is distributed unevenly across the five small villages, with Ladore being the most populous and Ranggo small village the least populous. With regard to education, 2 per cent of the villagers held bachelor's or master's degrees, 1 per cent had a diploma, around 21 per cent graduated from senior secondary school or equivalent Package C class, 16 per cent graduated from junior secondary school or equivalent Package B class and 15 per cent graduated from primary school or equivalent Package A class.

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<sup>2</sup> This Islamic primary school (*madrasah*) is not registered in the Ministry of Education and Culture's list of education units (schools).

However, 17 per cent of the population is illiterate. Out of the remaining 28 per cent, 10 per cent did not graduate from primary school, 10 per cent did not graduate from senior secondary school, and 8 per cent did not graduate from junior secondary school. Nevertheless, village officials reported that Ranggo village currently has the most people with bachelor's degrees in Pajo sub-district.

The village population includes 795 heads of families who generally live in decent economic conditions. The village houses are a mix of modern houses with floors and walls, and traditional houses (known as 'stage' houses) built by the families. With regard to economic status, 42 per cent of households fall into the Prosperous 3 plus category, compared to 27 per cent considered pre-prosperous while 12 per cent fall in the Prosperous 1 category, 9 per cent in the Prosperous 2 category and 10 per cent in the Prosperous 3 category.

The primary means of livelihood for people in the village is agriculture, either on fields or on their own farmlands, and they mainly grow rice and corn although not everyone has agricultural land. On average, the people manage around a hectare of land which can also be owned by the government. The farmers use a rain-fed irrigation system and follow a slightly different rice and corn planting cycle from Lepadi village. Corn is planted and grown from December to May while rice is grown from June to December. Outside the planting and harvest season, villagers have multiple jobs or activities, for example, clearing other people's lands, keeping cattle and doing construction work. Villagers also do other jobs, including being civil servants, small entrepreneurs or kiosk sellers.

Outside of these livelihoods and not recorded in the village profile data, all informants from Ranggo village reported that many villagers choose to work abroad or outside the village, hoping for a better income. People working as migrant workers are generally from poor families. They go to Malaysia or the Middle East as domestic or plantation workers. A small number of villagers also work in palm oil plantations in Kalimantan. Based on the informants' observations, at least two or three heads of families in each of the small villages become migrant workers, known as Indonesian overseas workers (*tenaga kerja Indonesia* – TKI) every year.

Working as a civil servant or official are the most sought after jobs in the village and have the highest social status. In addition, being a farmer with your own extensive lands is highly regarded.

People cooperate and work well together in their agricultural activities but this is less evident in other aspects of their daily lives, for example, in carrying out village chores. The village mid-term development plan (RPJMDes) comments on people's low participation in village development, including among women and the lower middle classes.

The highest decision maker in the village is the village government and the current village head is a woman.<sup>3</sup> Besides the local village organisations, the village has the Creative Youth Association of Ranggo (PERAK), established through the We Save Foundation, a non-profit organisation focusing on social, educational, youth empowerment and environmental issues. Their activities include teaching primary and junior secondary children English and religious studies through the Koran reading park (TPQ) in the afternoons. As compensation, children are asked to 'pay' with trash. According to one village official, the organisation has played a major role in changing the mindset of villages, especially with regard to health and the environment. Beyond that, many of the organisation's activities involve university graduates, facilitating their absorption in the workforce and encouraging graduates to come back to the village.

The people in Ranggo village are Moslems largely descended from the Bima-Dompu ethnic group with some people from Sumbawa, Lombok or Java. As in the neighbouring villages, the main language people speak and use is Mbojo. While most people are fluent in Bahasa Indonesia, a small number understand it but do not speak it fluently and a few people do not understand Bahasa Indonesia at all. These are generally older parents who did not go to school or did not graduate from primary school.

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<sup>3</sup> Conversely, the name of Ranggo village was taken from the word 'rangga', meaning 'a strong and brave man'.

In 2012, the historic village of Ranggo was established as a cultural centre and some traditional activities continue, such as weaving and traditional wedding ceremonies. The organisation was established through village discussions and plays an active role in the community, especially in resolving village issues or settling conflicts.

According to several informants, marriage at a young age and divorce are sources of concern, although statistically, the annual divorce rate in Ranggo is less than 5 per cent.

In Ranggo village, there is one government primary school in Fupu small village and one Islamic primary school (*madrasah*) in Mangga Dua small village. Almost all the students attending the school in Fupu come from Ranggo, while many students at the *madrasah* are from outside the village, and even from Dompu sub-district. As in Lepadi village, village officials reported that all primary school-age children are registered in schools both within and outside the village.

Plan Indonesia ran several programs related to education in Ranggo village from 2000 to 2014. The activities included providing textbooks or other school equipment and promoting the value of education among the villagers. In addition, the Healthy and Smart Generation (GSC) program ran from 2015 to 2017 but focused more on health with some socialisation activities at the integrated health post to promote the importance of basic education among the villagers.

## 2.3 Tembalae village

Tembalae village began with the expansion of Ranggo village in 2010 and was officially declared a village in 2012.<sup>4</sup> Tembalae village is geographically adjacent to Ranggo village to the north, Woko and Adu villages in Hu'u sub-district to the south, Bima district to the east, and Ranggo and Lune villages in Pajo sub-district to the west. With a total area of 3,831km<sup>2</sup>, Tembalae village is divided into five small villages, namely: Pelita, Rasa Bou, Lawiti, Restu and Nata Kehe.

Based on 2017 data, the population of Tembalae village is 3,434 with 51 per cent men and 49 per cent women, and 11 per cent of the population are aged 7–18 years and are all at school. Out of people aged 18–56 years old, only 0.5 per cent never went to school and 0.8 per cent did not graduate from primary school. Meanwhile, 30 per cent graduated from primary school, 25 per cent graduated from junior secondary school, 25 per cent graduated from senior high school and 3 per cent have either diplomas or bachelor's degrees.

There are 945 recorded household heads living in this village but no statistical data is available on their levels of prosperity. However, the village head reported that many poor families live in the village, evident by the number of household heads receiving social assistance from the government, for example, conditional cash transfers, the Healthy Indonesia card and the Smart Indonesia card. About 120 households receive social assistance, roughly 13 per cent of the total households registered.

The primary means of livelihood for the villagers is farming although only 28 per cent of villagers own their own land and this land is generally under five hectares. Meanwhile, 40 per cent of the villagers are farm labourers working on someone else's land. The agriculture in this village uses a rain-fed irrigation system, with the same cycle as Ranggo village. Out of all the land owners, only a few people own fields. Unlike farming lands, fields can either be managed by the land owner or pledged to another party through an auction system or '*mori masa*'. A *mori masa* pledge is defined as giving parts of the fields to another party to be used for a minimum of one harvest period. In return, the owner receives an agreed sum of money that is to be returned at the end of the mutually-agreed pledge period. This is done because the land owner often needs cash for specific purposes. The land serves as collateral, and the owner returns the money to gain the land back. There is no interest involved, as the loaner will be able to make a profit by using the land for farming during the period. In

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<sup>4</sup> The name of this village derives from the word 'Temba' (well) and 'Lae' (the native name of the village) which means the source of life. Some says that 'Tembalae' is the name of a past hero from Dompu kingdom.

an auction pledge, the duration of the field use is determined at the beginning and land owners do not need to return the money paid to them. Both pledge systems are used in Lepadi and Ranggo villages. Outside the planting and harvest season, farm labourers usually do various odd jobs, for example, gathering honey in the forest or working as construction workers or carpenters.

In addition to agriculture, the village profile shows that 31 per cent of the population, made up of 751 men and 304 women, work as migrant workers overseas. According to the village head, the high number of migrant workers is due to the limited jobs available in the village. Most of the migrant workers are from Pelita and Restu small villages and most work in palm oil plantations in Malaysia while others, particularly women, work as domestic workers in the Middle East. A small number of people also migrate to Kalimantan to work on the palm oil plantations.

Other jobs the villagers do include being vendors, cattle farmers and government officials. As in the other two villages, civil servants and officials are considered the highest social level, along with the more wealthy people in the community.

No one person is established as a particularly dominant community figure in the village although there are traditional and religious leaders. According to the village head, they do not have complete authority over all the villagers so their role is limited to giving advice to resolve social and community issues. Generally, issues in the village are resolved by amicable discussion and decisions are made ultimately by the village government, including neighbourhood associations and small village heads and traditional or religious figures.

Villagers tend to cooperate on community projects, for example, building mosques, cleaning cemeteries or renovating homes. More than 90 per cent of the villagers are from the Bima-Dompu ethnic group and the rest are from Java, Makassar, Flores and Sumba. However, they are all Moslems and they all speak Mbojo at home and in the community. At school, while the language of instruction is Bahasa Indonesia, teachers use the Mbojo language when necessary.

Tembalae village has more education facilities than Lepadi or Ranggo: one government primary school in Nata Kehe small village, four government primary schools in Rasa Bou small village and one *madrasah* also in Rasa Bou small village. With this number of schools and the policy of students from one village being accepted in schools in other villages, there is fierce competition for new students. According to the village head, each primary school has established an early childhood education centre to attract students from an early age. In addition, some schools try to influence parents and students by offering free shoes and uniforms. The *madrasah* is popular with students from Tembalae and the surrounding villages. According to several informants, this is because they offer an affordable, religious-based education with boarding school facilities, especially for junior secondary school level and above.

In 2016, the Community-based Integrated Child Protection (PATBM) program was established in Tembalae village, facilitated by the local women's empowerment and child protection (PPPA) office and supported by a decree from the village head. The organisation's management was selected from the local villagers. Tembalae was also declared a child-friendly village. In 2016-2017, the PPPA office provided the organisation's operational funds but in 2018, the village had to allocate these operational funds from the village budget (APBDes). PATBM activities include socialising the community on preventing and resolving law violations committed by children, and facilitating meetings and mentoring for troubled children and their parents. The kinds of cases that often arise include students' gang fights and physical or sexual abuse of children. PATBM also pays special attention to children who are left in the care of others when their parents go to work overseas.

The GSC program has also been implemented in the village over the last three years although there were no program activities in 2018. The program's education-related activities have included providing uniforms for primary school students and promoting the value of education among parents, teachers and village officials, using both specific events and by coinciding with other activities at the integrated health post.



Plan Indonesia also ran an education and health program in Tembalae village for around eight years, up to 2015. The education-related activities included: training parents and village officials on child protection issues and the value of education; seeking foster parents for children from poor families; and training teachers in making teaching tools and materials.

### 3. CHILD PROTECTION AND EDUCATION

Dompu district has a policy on child protection and education that acts as an umbrella for various policies to protect children, safeguard their rights and ensure they receive a quality education. Nevertheless various challenges persist and particularly those linked to the socio-economic and cultural factors within the community.

#### 3.1 Relevant policy

##### **Protecting children**

Child protection, as defined by the Government of Indonesia Law No 35 of 2014 on amending Law No 23 of 2002 on child protection defines child protection as: any activity to ensure and protect children and their rights to optimally live, grow, develop and participate according to their dignity and humanity, and to be protected from violence and discrimination.

A child is defined as someone who has not reached 18 years of age and this includes children still inside their mother's womb.

The children's rights that are protected include: the right to practice their religion; the right to think and express themselves according to their age and level of intelligence level; the right to education and teaching based on their passions and talents, including special education for children with disabilities and special education for children with high abilities; the right to be cared for by their own parents; and the right to be protected from activities that undermine these rights, such as: violence, abuse, exploitation, armed conflicts, riots, wars and sexual crimes.

The law mandates that the state, government (national and sub-national), communities, families and parents or guardians are all obligated and responsible for delivering such child protection.

##### *Local regulation on child protection delivery*

In line with and in response to this national law, the Dompu district government issued a local regulation, No 6 of 2014 on the implementing child protection. This local regulation defines the scope of child protection, children's rights and the rights of children victimised by mistreatment and violence, as well as the responsibilities and tasks of the local government, communities and parents.

The scope of child protection covers: preventing any violations of children's rights; preventing any mistreatment and violence against children; managing children who are victims of mistreatment and violence; and managing the process of recovery and social reintegration for such children.

The duties and responsibilities of the local government related to child protection include:

- a. Making every effort to prevent any mistreatment of and violence against children;
- b. Providing protection for child victims of mistreatment and violence;
- c. Providing recovery and social reintegration services for child victims of mistreatment and violence;
- d. Supervising child protection services for victims of mistreatment and violence involving the community;
- e. Promoting and improving community participation.



To carry out these responsibilities, the local government has the authority to formulate policies and programs and to coordinate efforts to eradicate mistreatment of and violence against children and to protect and provide services for child victims of mistreatment and violence.

Meanwhile, the community carries out its responsibility for protecting children through various activities, including: strengthening people's understanding of child protection issues; disseminating information; providing emergency help and protection to child victims of mistreatment and violence; advocacy on behalf of victims; providing information to authorised parties in cases of mistreatment and violence against children; sustaining and developing local wisdom in line with the principles of child protection; and engaging children as individuals and/or within institutions in a series of child protection activities.

Families and parents are responsible for protecting their children and this includes: caring for them; nurturing and educating them; ensuring their safety and not mistreating them or using violence against them; fostering and guiding them according to their ability, talents and passions; and preventing their early marriage and their employment for income.

This local regulation limits the scope of child protection to issues of mistreatment and violence. This leaves out some integral elements of the child protection law, including: children's rights to hold a religion, be healthy, receive nine years of basic education, including for children with disabilities; children's freedoms to express their ideas according to their conscience and religion, acquire verbal or written information according to their age and development, form groups, gather, rest, play, engage in recreational and creative activities, and produce art and cultural creations; children's rights to protection that start in the womb, including from abortion and life-threatening diseases; and children's right to healthy and safe playing facilities.

#### *Local government regulation on a child-friendly district*

In addition to the child protection regulation, Dompu district also issued Local government regulation No 8 of 2017 on a child-friendly district. This regulation relates to the district's efforts to fulfil and protect children's rights and supports the local women's empowerment and child protection office project called 'Eradicate three' that aims to eradicate: violence against women and children; human trafficking; and any disparities in women's empowerment.

This regulation defines a child-friendly district as one with a development system based on promoting children's rights. The district government, communities and local businesses make a comprehensive, sustainable commitment to children's rights and allocate resources to fulfil these rights. To this end, the child-friendly district policy promotes the development of child-friendly schools, health services and villages.

Child-friendly schools are based on fulfilling children's rights in the teaching and learning process, ensuring a safe, comfortable environment that is free from violence and discrimination, and creating room for children to integrate, participate, cooperate, and appreciate diversity, tolerance and peace.

When examined further, this regulation covers children's rights more comprehensively than the child protection regulation, referring to Law No 35 of 2014 on child protection and including civil and freedom rights, the rights to a family environment and alternative care, basic health and prosperity, education, recreation and cultural activities, and special protection. These rights are clustered and become indicators for a child-friendly village.

The following are the five indicators for the education, recreation and cultural activities clusters:

- a. Participation rates for early childhood education and development;
- b. Percentage of the 12 years compulsory education attained;
- c. Percentage of child-friendly schools;
- d. Number of schools with programs, facilities and infrastructure for children to travel to and from school;
- e. Availability of child-friendly, creative and recreational activities outside the school, accessible to all children.

These indicators give local governments the responsibility to respond to these policies, for example, by providing inclusive schools, organising children's out-of-school activities, arranging safe and secure routes and zones, and establishing child-friendly schools.

In addition to establishing policies, this local regulation also mandates forming child-friendly village task forces and local action plans. The task force combines the executive, legislative and judiciary elements in charge of children's rights and creates a forum for universities, non-governmental organisations, the business community, parents, families, young people and children. The task force coordinates efforts to create child-friendly villages, including by developing, delivering and supervising the local action plan.

This regulation on a child-friendly village has more substance and scope in that a number of stakeholders – local governments, civil society and business communities, parents and children – are responsible for fulfilling children's rights and are engaged in creating child-friendly environments.

#### *Local government regulation on eradicating human trafficking*

Dompu district government issued Local government regulation No 11 of 2010 on preventing and eradicating human trafficking. This regulation was issued before the national Law No 21 of 2011 on preventing and eradicating the crime of human trafficking. From a historical perspective, this regulation was a response to various laws and regulations on violence against women and children, including Presidential decree No 88 of 2002 on a national action plan to eradicate the trafficking of women and children.

This regulation defines human trafficking as recruiting, transporting, housing, delivering, moving or accepting individuals with threats of violence, kidnapping, abduction, forgery, deception and using abuse of power or their vulnerable position, debt entrapment or payments or benefits to the parties with control over these individuals, domestically and internationally, thus ostensibly obtaining consent to exploit these individuals or cause them to be exploited.

Anyone can become a victim of human trafficking, but women and children are the most vulnerable groups for a number of reasons. West Nusa Tenggara province, including Dompu district, is known for having many workers who leave to work in other areas, both domestically and internationally. The recruitment processes used for these workers are often illegal or they violate aspects of the law. Women and children are most often victims in this process and, based on the modus operandi and objectives of the actions, this can be categorised as human trafficking. This regulation aims to spare people, especially women and children, from human trafficking and provide rehabilitation and social integration services for human trafficking victims.

However, this regulation is not as comprehensive as the national Law No 21 of 2011, its legal umbrella, since it was conceived first.

#### *Implementing regulations*

Although Dompu district government has issued many relevant regulations, especially on protecting children's rights, the PPPA office responsible for this sector, admits its limitations in implementing them. The PPPA office, established around 2017, is relatively new and still lacks human resources capacity, with a number of strategic positions remaining vacant.

The core duties and function of the PPPA office itself are to coordinate activities related to women's empowerment and child protection. However, some programs are still in the early stages with pilot projects being developed so the office is more active in following up public reports of violence against women and children, and providing counselling. The office is currently developing a district head regulation as a follow up to the child-friendly village regulation.

Since 2016, Tembalae village has been the site of a pilot for the Community-based Integrated Child Protection (PATBM) initiative. This initiative aims to prevent and respond to cases of violence against children by building the community's capacity to resolve various problems in their surroundings independently. This initiative

targets children so they are able to protect themselves, families to develop their nurturing skills and communities to build and strengthen existing norms. Following up on this activity, in 2018 Tembalae village allocated funds from the local government budget to maintain PATBM activities.

## Education

Education policies in Dompu district refer to Regulation No 5 of 2012 on education which was derived from the national government regulation. In interviews with several stakeholders, it emerged that the current district policy does not specifically address the issue of the quality of education and still prioritises infrastructure development. Local government funds have largely been allocated to operations and infrastructure development although more recently the district has been supporting various INOVASI activities aiming to improve the quality of education. The local development planning agency (Bappeda) aims to duplicate these activities in other regions with better planning in subsequent years.

Due to limited funds, Dompu district's overall road map for education has not yet been drawn up but the district does have a road map for literacy and numeracy that INOVASI helped to develop. The education board, usually responsible for facilitating the mapping process, does not have sufficient funds to organise in-depth discussions and conduct relevant studies. The function of the board is currently limited to monitoring the implementation of national examinations and new student enrolment and making recommendations to the district assembly and the education, youth and sports offices (Dikpora) for education planning.

The head of the social and cultural division at the regional development planning agency (Bappeda) said that the village budget should be able to provide funds to improve the quality of education, thus sharing the burden with the local government. For this to happen, the community empowerment and village government agency (BPMPD) needs to encourage the village governments by explaining and exploring educational issues and discussing allocations during the development planning meetings (*musrenbang*). According to the BPMPD office head, the development planning meetings make the final decisions on using village funds but public participation remains low, including from educator groups in the village. Funds for basic education are not considered a priority compared to early education since the schools' operational funds (BOS) were introduced. The BPMPD does not have any authority over the use of village funds but it has promoted reading by recommending appropriate reading materials on topics like corn farming to improve public knowledge. As a result, several villages in Dompu district, including Lepadi, have built libraries or village reading parks.

In May 2016, the West Nusa Tenggara government declared that it was a 'literacy province' in a bid to improve the quality of education. However, the results of this declaration have not been felt optimally at the district level. According to the heads of the basic education and the education, youth and sports divisions, literacy activities in schools have not been supervised regularly or specifically because this is usually combined with other activities. In addition, the commitment of teachers and parents needs to be strengthened to achieve the goals of this literacy declaration.

In the Indonesian National Assessment Program (INAP) survey in 2016, more than 50 per cent of grade four students in Dompu district scored less than 400 (the national average is 500). In response, over the last two years, the education, youth and sports office recommended that all schools allocate some of their schools' operational funds towards additional benefits for teachers. Teachers receive these benefits if they provide extra lessons for primary school students who are unable to read, write and count fluently.<sup>5</sup>

The Dompu District head regulation No 28 of 2017 regulates the implementation of inclusive education in the district. Four primary schools in Dompu district are designated as inclusive schools. Beyond that, all

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<sup>5</sup> The SMERU field report: Diagnostic study on basic education learning in Dompu district of West Nusa Tenggara Province (page 9), mentions a memorandum of understanding between the education, youth and sports office and primary school principals in the district on mastering basic reading, writing and counting skills (*calistung*). The memorandum was valid from 2008 to 2010 and is no longer implemented due to a change in the office head. Regardless of this, principals are still assigning teachers for special mentoring activities with students lacking in these basic skills in many primary schools.

government schools are also obliged to accept children with special needs (*anak berkebutuhan khusus* – ABK). The provincial government is planning to provide additional trained special-needs shadow teachers to be placed in schools that need them. According to the head of the basic education division and members of the education board, however, the need for inclusive schools is limited and the inclusive school program is yet to be rolled out in Dompu district. This contradicts the results of the baseline survey conducted by INOVASI in 2018 where the proportion of students with special needs in Dompu district reached 35.36 per cent. The absence of official data on children with special needs may be the cause of this difference in understanding.

To demonstrate attention to children with special needs, the BPMPD also issued a recommendation to all villages to consider providing for children with special needs in drafting the village budget, although their needs in education are not specifically mentioned.

At the village level, Lepadi will issue policies relating specifically to education through village regulations. So far, the village funds have been used for the following: to grant incentives to early childhood education honorary teachers; to provide scholarships for education and Koran reciting to six students selected for their academic achievements and recitation skills, with each student receiving IDR500,000; and developing a village park. The village park is also going to be a reading centre although it is currently used as a recreation facility for villagers. So far, the books for the park have been donated by a teacher at a *madrasah*, also the wife of the village head, so they are limited to religious books or textbooks. This literacy-related program is included in the 2019 village budget drawn up in December 2018. The village is also planning to issue regulations to increase the use of Bahasa Indonesia. Schools and Koran reading centres will be obliged to use Bahasa Indonesia and all neighbourhood, community, village or social welfare organisations will need to disseminate information in Bahasa Indonesia. The teachers and principals we interviewed agreed that teaching in class needed to be in Bahasa Indonesia. In addition, the village government is planning to use the reading park and rooms available at the village office to set up a daycare centre for children whose parents are farmers. The village is also discussing having a night curfew for students.

In Ranggo village, the traditional organisation wants to promote a regulation on 'Koran reading at dusk', where village children are kept inside at this hour to read the Koran at home or at the mosque.

Tembalae village has no ongoing initiatives for regulations on children's education. The provincial government helped set up a reading centre based at the village office in 2014 but it is no longer used due to people's limited interest and the lack of a socialisation program to promote the centre among villagers. Nevertheless, the village plans to rebuild the reading centre in 2019 after the village offices have been renovated.

## 3.2 Public perceptions

### Protecting children's rights

Law No 23 of 2014 that is an amendment to Law No 23 of 2002 on child protection includes key issues relating to children's rights, for example: the definition of a child; the categories of children covered by the law; children's general and special rights; their protection from activities that undermine these rights; and who is responsible for protecting these rights. Almost all the local governments have followed up on this law, including Dompu district government. Local governments reported that they have conducted various socialisation activities on children's rights for parents, families and communities, although these have been within a limited scope. People's understanding and perceptions of children's rights influences their fulfillment, whether in the family environment, wider society or in educational contexts.

People's understanding of children's rights varies and with the villages' limited socialisation programs not everyone appreciates the scope of children's rights enshrined in the law. For example, not everyone recognises that children have the right to play as a part of their right to express themselves according to their intelligence and age. Some parents complain when their children play with their friends while others let their children play outside without supervision.

However, most informants acknowledged that some primary aspects of children's rights deserve extra attention, namely: children's education; their basic need for food and drink; and their protection from violence and crime. All stakeholders interviewed in this study, including parents, educators, and religious and community figures understood the obligations to fulfil these rights

One area where people's perceptions may differ from the law is children working after school to earn extra pocket money. Very poor and poor families consider this normal and allow it, as long as their children stay in school or finish their work after school. In places like Lepadi village, children are allowed to work in a brick company, for example, provided that they work in the afternoons after school, and they can earn around IDR20,000 per day.

## **Education**

Almost all informants in all three villages have positive perceptions of education. The parents and communities in these villages consider children's rights to an education vital, whether this is in regular or religious schools. Parents are prepared to work hard to ensure that their children obtain the highest education possible and perhaps even graduate from university. They teach their children Koran recital or religious education from the earliest age possible.

Education has become a priority for people living in these three villages and they realise it is crucial for their children's future. Almost all primary school age children are enrolled at schools in and around the villages and although village-level statistical data is not available, the Pajo sub-district data shows the gross participation rate for primary school is 97.41 per cent while the net participation rate is 96.10 per cent (Dikpora Dompou district 2016/2017). The following are some of the comments made during our interviews:

'If you want to do well in the world, use knowledge. If you want to do well in the afterlife, use knowledge. Both must use knowledge' (Lepadi village head).

'School is mandatory for your own future, not going to school will bring you misfortune ... you need it to have a job later on' (Parent of a non-vulnerable child, Lepadi village).

'You need school to have a lot of knowledge. If possible, children's education must be higher (than their parents) [and continue] all the way to college. Their success is the parents' pride. Work can get you money, becoming a civil servant or non-permanent civil servant is fine too' (Parent of a vulnerable child, Tembalae village).

'I want my children to go to school like their friends. They can have their own skills. I want them to be honorary teachers' (Parent of a vulnerable child, Ranggo village).

'For the people here, going to school is important. Not eating is fine as long as their children go to school' (Ranggo village secretary).

'School is like a part of the customary law. It is an embarrassment for parents if their children do not go to school. Traditional leaders can confront parents as to why their children are not in school' (Ranggo village secretary).

Law No 20 of 2003 on the national education system describes education as an intentional and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning processes so that students actively develop their potential, including: their spiritual strength; self control; personality; intelligence; honourable behaviour; and skills needed by themselves, their communities and the nation. Some of the informant's statements cited indicate that informants agree that education helps children develop their abilities and equips them with knowledge and expertise for the future. People expect that children with higher education levels will secure good jobs. Thus, public perceptions of education in the three villages reflect the function and objectives of education stated in this Law.



The desirable jobs cited in interviews and focus group discussions tended to be limited to: government officials and employees or civil servants; both civil servant and honorary (non-permanent) teachers; and police jobs or military positions. This fits the perception that government officials and civil servants have the highest social status in the village. Only one informant mentioned that he wanted his child to become a religious figure and be able to show kindness to many people.

From the children's point of view, schools are important so they can become smart and achieve their goals. Thus, they realise they need to learn. Almost all the boys want to be police officers or hold other military positions while the girls generally want to be teachers with a few also attracted to the police.

### **Influencing factors**

Perceptions of education are influenced by internal and external factors. In this study, the internal factors include the parents' life experience and educational background, the family's economic situation and the parents' values while the external factors include the assumptions within society, the children's social environment and programs being run in the village.

Education is considered a means of changing family lives for the better. Parents own experiences of hardship – for example, in obtaining higher education with limited family income, being left to fend for themselves after their own parents' death or being forced to work for their families at a young age, as well as their difficulties in securing good jobs with limited skills – are the primary motivations for informants to send their children to school. These perceptions of the value of education grow as more villagers obtain bachelor's degrees and become officials or civil servants in the village. Being a civil servant has become the dream job for villagers because it generates a fixed and relatively high income and also provides old age insurance (pension).

Other people's success is considered a catalyst in changing people's mindset about education. However, if more villagers with bachelor's degrees return to the village unable to secure jobs or have to go back to being farmers, this could have the opposite effect and demotivate parents and children. According to the Tembalae village head, the lack of jobs in the village and in Dompu district in general has resulted in low absorption into the workforce, even for well-educated candidates.

Perspectives on education also relate to the education level that parents attained. Their own level of education usually becomes the reference point for the level they expect their children to complete. Parents who graduated or did not graduate from primary school generally expect their children to go on until senior secondary school. Meanwhile, parents who graduated from senior secondary school want their children to graduate from university. 'Children must be better than their parents' is the statement often heard from informants.

Another factor influencing people's expectations for their children's education is the family's economic situation. Lower middle-class parents may want their children to get a higher education but they tend to be resigned to having no specific targets since it will depend on whether they can provide the funds. In many cases, parents have to sell their assets to pay for their children's school costs. Parents from the upper middle class are inevitably more optimistic and expect their children to achieve the highest education levels. Some informants had even put money aside specifically for their children's education.

Boys and girls generally have the same right to education and the numbers of boys and girls are almost evenly balanced in the village schools. However, in a situation of limited funding, the priority for education would be the boys in the hope that they will secure jobs to sustain their families. This situation occurs especially at the senior and higher educational levels when the costs begin to escalate. In the rural areas in Indonesia, families will generally prioritise their boys' education if the family has economic challenges.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> This finding differs slightly from the participation rate at the sub-district level where boys' participation rates at the primary level are higher while at the junior secondary school, it tends to be more balanced between boys and girls (Dikpora Dompu District, 2016/2017). We need to see the situation in other villages in Pajo sub-district to understand this difference. As reference, in other regions in Indonesia, such as North Kalimantan, the tendency is similar where the participation of boys and girls is relatively balanced in early grades but starts to be imbalanced in later grades when boys are forced to drop out of school to work and help their families.

Life values or principles greatly influence parents' attitudes to putting their children through school. For example, most villagers are Moslems and they believe they have an obligation to seek knowledge and provide general and religious education for their children. Parents want to fulfil this obligation, including by sending their children to Koran recital lessons.

The external factors strong enough to influence educational perspectives in society are the various assumptions developing related to education itself. In these three villages, education becomes a symbol of success as parents who can enrol their children up to the highest education level (university) are considered wealthy and are highly regarded in society although many poor families also enrol their children at these levels. Parents feel embarrassed if their children do not go to school. This situation can occur in their daily lives, for example, if children do not want to go to school because they have no pocket money, parents will borrow money to make sure they go to school. With parents' awareness of the importance of education, letting children not go to school is considered an indication of their indifference to their children's future.

Parents also choose their children's education depending on their children's social environment in the village. Parents are generally concerned about young people being drawn into using narcotics or drugs, indulging in free, extramarital sexual relationships and getting exposed to crimes such as fighting among teenagers, whether in their own environment or on television. In this context, some parents believe that instilling religious values from an early age is the most important defence. They may choose religious-based education to prevent their children from engaging in negative behaviour. To illustrate this, with 14 government primary schools and two *madrasah* (MoEC 2018) in Pajo sub-district, the gross participation rate for regular primary schools is 78.29 per cent while it is 19.12 per cent for the *madrasah* (Dikpora Dompur district 2016/2017). In these three villages, the numbers of students registered in the first grade at government primary schools and at the *madrasah* are almost the same, namely around 17–24 students. At one *madrasah*, said to be the favourite among villagers, the number of students in grade one is up to 49.

Another factor affecting parents and villagers' perspectives on education is the various education programs that have been or are ongoing in the village. The Healthy and Smart Generation (GSC) program, implemented in the three villages, has socialised people on the importance of education. It has been going on for some time in Tembalae and Ranggo villages and aside from the socialising activities it has also dealt with child protection issues and foster parent assistance. The We Save Foundation in Ranggo village that provides extra lessons has also positively influenced people's attitudes. INOVASI conducted the pre-pilot in Lepadi village and this also highlighted the importance of education. In terms of children's rights, the PATBM initiative, with various socialisation and mentoring activities, has been building community awareness in Tembalae village. All these interventions have helped change the mindset of villagers with regard to the importance of education and its functions, goals and people's expectations.

Comparing child protection policy and public perceptions of child protection and children's rights, reveals differences in the scope of children's rights regulated and understood as well as in the attitudes towards these rights. The regulation on protecting children's rights is limited to protecting children from crimes and actions detrimental to their rights. At the community level, not all parents have the same perceptions or understanding of children's rights, resulting in different attitudes towards these rights. However, parents, educators and communities all agree on the importance of children's right to education.

### 3.3 Issues and influencing factors

#### Access

In terms of the number of educational facilities in Lepadi, Ranggo and Tembalae, the villages are more than well served. All the village officials and sub-district heads reported that all primary school age children from the three villages are registered in schools, including children from lower economic groups. In these three adjacent villages there are a total of 11 primary schools, divided into eight government primary schools and



three *madrasah*. Children from the three villages or other neighbouring villages are free to attend any of these schools, although most students attend the schools in their own villages. An exception to this is where a favourite school attracts students from outside the village.

With basic education free, access to education is increasingly open for all layers of society, in both government primary schools and *madrasah*. Parents usually choose religious primary schools based on their reputation of excellence in teaching religion which is considered important in protecting young people from the free social interaction in the villages. There is no cost difference between the schools in the three villages so they are all affordable. Additional costs are only incurred when parents enrol their children in the 'excellent class' in one of the *madrasah*. The school offers this class for first grade students whose parents can afford to buy their own learning tools, including materials and textbooks. Unlike in other classes, students can take these tools home with them. Parents see this 'excellent class' as a way of providing the best education possible for their children. However some teachers from other schools suggested that this 'excellent class' could create gaps and inequality between students from the upper and lower middle classes.

The abundance of educational facilities in the villages means schools have to work hard for new students. Some schools have even been known to accept underage students (five or six year-olds) to boost enrolment. Teachers are also asked to canvas for new students. Fewer students will reduce the schools' operational funds (BOS) and mean less compensation for teachers. One *madrasah* provides free transport for students as a way of attracting parents and children. This is in the form of special car that goes around the villages to pick up and deliver children. This service adds extra value for children who rarely have the opportunity to ride in a car and for parents who can choose a school some distance from their homes. The operational cost of the transport is covered by the school's operational funds. Another strategy that several schools in Pajo sub-district use is to give new students free uniforms or shoes. The messages used to promote schools so far is still largely limited to the material and operational aspects of the school rather than the quality of the education. However, these strategies address people's practical needs since buying uniforms and shoes is still an unwelcome expense for many families and the free transport helps parents who are out working all day.

Access to educational facilities in terms of distance is generally not an issue in the three villages except when children are forced to go to the fields with their parents, especially at harvest time (see Box 2). With the increase in corn farming in Dompu district,<sup>7</sup> many villagers, particularly those with no lands of their own, cultivate new lands in the mountains that are part of forestry lands owned by the government. This makes the distance between the fields, homes and schools much farther. If children have to stay at the fields with their parents, they cannot make the trip to school every day.

Access to libraries and learning media remains limited in these villages. Libraries or reading gardens in Lepadi village are still at the pioneering stage and available books are still limited to religious book donations. In one school, teachers have even been copying out some books and tools for reading practice so students can have access to them. These facilities contribute to children's levels of interest and enthusiasm for studying.

In relation to education for children with special needs, inclusive schools are not yet available in the three villages. Most students with physical or mental disabilities are generally enrolled in specialised schools in one of the villages in Pajo sub-district. Some attend local primary schools but there are no teachers with the capacity and training to handle children with special needs. Even the term 'special needs' is not well understood by the villagers or village officials. When asked to define the term, respondents tended to focus on extreme physical or mental disability which is why not many students are deemed to have any special education needs.<sup>8</sup> This was not the case when we discussed the issue with teachers since they were able to identify students

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<sup>7</sup> TERPIJAR (People's sugar, beef, corn and seaweed) program is the Dompu district head's flagship program that has been implemented for the last eight years. This program aims to improve people's economic welfare, for example by planting corn (source: various articles in [www.dompukab.go.id](http://www.dompukab.go.id))

<sup>8</sup> Government regulation No 17 of 2010 article 129 paragraph (3) establishes that students with disabilities incorporate: blindness/low vision; hardness of hearing; muteness; mental disability; physical disability; social disability; difficulty in concentrating, slowness, autism, motoric disturbances, victims of narcotics, drugs and other additive substances; and other forms of disabilities.

with physical disabilities, learning disabilities (slow) and emotional or behavioural issues as children with special needs. However, in the learning process, teachers do not take special action besides using a more personal approach.

## Participation

In this study, participation can be examined in two dimensions, namely, students' attendance in school and parents' engagement in the learning process. The relatively positive perceptions of protecting children's rights to education in reality can be obstructed by various factors that hinder participation.

### *Student attendance*

Our teacher informants reported that students' attendance rates are generally good. As an illustration, in SDN 02 Pajo in Lepadi village, the student attendance rate from grades one to six in the last two years reached an average of 90 per cent. Attendance levels can be lower in certain situations but not drastically lower. For example, during the horse racing season in Lepadi village, some students skip school to be jockeys or simply to watch the races and during the planting or harvest seasons in three villages, students miss school when they are forced to stay at the fields with their parents. The issues of child jockeys and children staying with their parents at the fields are explored in more depth in Box 1 and Box 2.

#### **Box 1: Case study 'child jockeys'**

##### **What is the child jockey tradition?**

Horse racing is an established tradition for the Bima-Dompu people. They love horses and even have a local saying, 'Good wife, good iron, good house and good horse', implying that these are their priorities in life. An established element of this tradition is that child jockeys of just three to nine years old ride the horses. The horse owners believe that these lightweight jockeys will mean their horses run faster.

Children usually become jockeys because of their lineage – their father may have been a jockey or may be a horse breeder. The families encourage their boys to take an interest in horses from a young age – they learn to groom, feed and play with the horses. Once the boys are three years old, they learn to ride, initially practising on the beach to soften their fall. The child jockeys are then initiated in a ceremony to 'receive the sacred water'. A sacred person places a small cauldron of sacred water on the child jockey's head and breaks it to release the water. This ritual is said to add to the jockeys' immunity, protecting them from pain or harm when they fall.

The children are proud of being jockeys – they love the horses and they love to win races and prizes. Their friends look up to them as 'hotshots' and 'fearless'. However, a child does not choose to be a jockey. In horse breeder families, the parents decide to groom their child for this role. A child can also become a jockey if a horse breeder spots his interest in horses. As avid spectators, children can develop a passion for horse racing but it is breeders who decide to take them on. Once trained, these jockeys attend the horse racing events hoping to be chosen to ride someone's horse. Meanwhile, a jockey from a horse breeder family usually enters the arena on his own horse as a 'role model jockey.'

The horse owners are generally officials or wealthy people in the district who send their horses to breeders in villages like Lepadi and Monta village in Woja sub-district to be trained. The breeders are paid around IDR1.5 million a month which also covers the horse's upkeep. Horse owners become like patrons for the horse breeding families and generally step in when they need financial assistance.

People have been horse breeders and trained their children to be jockeys over the generations. However, the economic status of these families tends to be below the average villager. They generally rely on the horses and their jockeys as their primary livelihood, although some supplement their income with odd jobs or petty trading.

This study looked at the dilemma of child jockey families who are born into the profession and see no other economic options. The parents know how short-lived a jockey's career will be so if they have more than one son or a grandson, they train them to become jockeys too, creating a continuous cycle from one generation to the next.

**Where and when do the horse racing events take place and who attends?**

The Dompu district government built the horse-racing track in Lepadi village in the 1970s. Based on our discussions with informants, there are at least ten horse breeders in the village and up to ten child jockeys. Many of the child jockeys taking part in practices or racing events apparently come from outside the villages, although still within Dompu district. There are no child jockeys in Ranggo and Tembalae villages but when the figures are aggregated to the district level, they begin to be significant.

Horse racing activities are organised by the Indonesian Horseriding Sports Association (PORDASI) and its management is appointed and legalised by a district head decree. Horse racing is held at the Lepadi village arena two to four times a year, depending on funds but other events take place in Bima city and district, Sumbawa district and Sumba district. Child jockeys participate in five to six racing events a year, with each lasting for seven to ten days. However, practices are held at the Lepadi arena every Sunday when horse owners, breeders, jockeys and jockey parents come from other villages and sub-districts in Dompu district, as well as from Bima city and district.

The impact of horse racing in Lepadi village with regard to truant student spectators has been decreasing since people tend to go to watch after school hours. The racing usually starts in the late morning and goes on into the afternoon. Children from Ranggo and Tembalae villages are not too exposed to horse racing with only a few children watching with their parents

**Money matters in horse racing**

Horse owners claim that their horse's reputation is what matters, not the prize money. The punters' primary interest is also in the horses with jockeys playing just a complementary role. Jockeys are never introduced by name but if their horse wins, their fees increase for the next match.

The horse owners pay a race registration fee of around IDR250,000 per horse. In addition, they pay for stamina-enhancing drugs for their horses and transport fees for the horse breeders and jockeys.

Horse owners choose a jockey for the whole match or appoint different jockeys for each lap to avoid cheating or sabotage. At official events, the jockeys are paid IDR50,000–100,000 a lap and, with more horses than jockeys, they can ride up to ten horses in a match. For the Sunday practices, jockeys are paid IDR25,000–50,000 per lap. Favourite jockeys are hired for a full match and are paid around IDR1.5 million. If a jockey's horse wins, he is given part of the prize, for example, a motorcycle for first prize, a cow for second prize and a refrigerator for third prize – all depending on the funds available.

The jockeys' income is the family's main source of revenue and any prizes are sold to keep the family going. Despite the precarious situation, the family's relationship with the horse owners provides a safety net during hard times and a victory from their child jockey remains their primary hope.

‘When parents have a child jockey, they are like kings, they can be rich in a blink of an eye’ (Horse breeder, Lepadi village).

In this kind of economic situation, families take any opportunity to help meet their basic short-term needs, even if this affects their longer-term security. Child jockeys are an economic opportunity for families despite the risks for their future and the danger to their lives.

Outside the arena, large sums of money circulate for bets. For one favoured horse, one person can bet millions to hundreds of millions of rupiah. For favourite horses, betting money can be set to start from IDR20 million. The punters generally come from outside the village and may be horse owners or horse racing enthusiasts.

**Safety issues**

Riding is dangerous and the jockeys do not wear special safety equipment when they ride, making it easy to fall. Only some of the jockeys even wear a helmet. When an accident occurs, the horse owners do not automatically cover the treatment costs although they usually resolve the issue amicably with the jockey's parents.

**Child jockeys and education**

The child jockeys' lifestyle has adverse impacts on their schooling. They miss school during the horse racing events held locally or in other districts and fall behind in their school work. One child jockey informant we

met was in grade five but he was still unable to read, write and calculate fluently. The principal suggested that his low cognitive ability may also be due to bumps to the head during the races. He observed that the jockeys cannot concentrate and are tired after feeding the horses early in the morning and practising in the afternoons. He said that several child jockeys in Lepadi village had decided to leave school at junior secondary level as they were apparently ashamed of their slow progress.

Nevertheless, schools prefer to let child jockeys go on to the next grade because older children can disrupt primary classes. Also the jockeys would be embarrassed and unhappy separated from their peers and the schools want to keep them in class. Schools need to keep drop out rates minimal to protect the school's reputation. Although the child jockeys are given extra lessons like any other students needing help, with their already busy lives, their motivation levels are low and extra lessons may not always achieve results.

Jockey parents tend to shut out their concerns for their child jockeys' future. The temporary and irregular nature of the job means their children can still go to school and they know this is important. However, they set limited targets with senior secondary school the highest level they aspire to for their children. This perspective may be influenced by their own educational backgrounds that are often limited to primary school.

### **Perceptions of horse racing**

Jockey parents see being a jockey as a way of establishing a network. Our horse breeder informants explained that once child jockeys graduate from school, they rely on their good relationships with horse owners to secure better jobs although most of them still end up with odd jobs in the village or go back to taking care of horses.

While on the one hand, the relationship between child jockeys and their parents is like any other parent-child relationship, on the other, the parents' perceptions – or even their values, behaviour and attitudes – are in conflict with their children's right to protection. Jockey parents are aware of the risks but they take what they consider as the only viable choice they have to survive. Their children are conditioned to take a key role in their family's welfare at a young age. However, when children are employed by people outside the family with inappropriate, unsafe working conditions and abnormal hours that encroach on their education, it begins to enter the realm of child exploitation. This situation needs deep wisdom, especially in seeing the systemic social issues that result in such untenable choices.

At the community level, most informants not involved in horse racing, considered child jockeys an unacceptable tradition that needs to be changed. They were concerned about the age of the jockeys and the lack of attention to their safety. Another issue they raised was the jockey parents' dependence on their children's earnings which affects their development and education. Some informants felt that the children's lives were sacrificed to the horse racing.

By contrast, the Dompou district government believes that the horse racing tradition needs to be sustained. The district allocates funds to the horse racing events every year and appoints the horseriding association management through a district head decree. Horse racing is viewed positively as both a sporting and cultural event for the community. The child jockeys are considered part of the attraction of the sport. Nevertheless, they agreed that child jockeys need to be treated according to professional standards of safety and security, and in line with local, national and international laws on children's rights. When people engage child jockeys, they must consider their right to education and to the freedom to develop their talents.

### **The key issues**

As a long-established tradition, important aspects of child protection have been ignored in the case of child jockeys. Sociologically, this phenomenon leans towards a pattern of child exploitation where children are used for economic gain. Although the community realises that these practices are inappropriate they do not have courage to raise the issue. Different perceptions of children's rights, limited awareness about the impact of horse racing on the jockeys and the absence of advocacy on their behalf are some of the influencing factors. With many parties involved who have vested interests in horse racing this issue is sensitive and any unconsidered response could make matters worse.

The government's own involvement in this sport underlines the complexities of the situation. Solutions need to be found by developing the potential local wisdom on this issue without sacrificing children's rights to protection. This is particularly relevant since the Dompou district government declared itself a child-friendly district and is committed to developing child-friendly village communities. These communities and the

principles they abide by may offer a way of reducing the risk of children's rights violations in horse racing while minimising the potential for social conflicts.

### **Box 2: Case study 'staying at the fields'**

The primary means of livelihood for people in the three villages is farming. Corn is the dominant crop grown because only a few people own rice fields and also the Dompu district government runs a corn planting program. On average, villagers manage one to five hectares of corn fields either on their own lands (certified) or on government-owned lands. Self-owned lands are generally located near the village while government-owned lands tend to be more remote since they were previously forest areas. It takes the villagers one or two hours to reach the fields by motorcycle due to the distances and the harsh terrain, especially in the rainy season.

The average net income from a corn harvest is IDR4–5 million for each hectare of land, slightly less than from a rice field. This seasonal income usually has to fulfill the families' needs throughout the year since corn is generally only grown once a year, from December to May, unless there is enough rainfall for a second planting.

Unlike rice growing that uses labour-saving technology, corn requires a lot of work in the fields, including keeping the crop safe from animals like monkeys and boars. This means that corn farmers have to stay at the fields from the planting through to the harvest season, for four to five months. Some farmers decide that both husband and wife need to stay at the field, only going back to their houses to retrieve staple foods. Some decide that only one of them, usually the husband, will stay at the field while the wife stays home with the children. Some farmers have enough land to pay other people to work on the fields so that their families do not have to stay there. If both husband and wife stay at the field, their small children must stay there too while their school-aged children stay home with their grandmother or another relative. Sometimes the older children care for their younger siblings at home. Respondents said that school-aged children no longer stay at the fields for long periods. Although they may have to stay for a few days if there is no one to look after them, their mother will generally take them back home after a few days. On weekends usually the whole family stays over at the fields.

The period leading to harvest is the most critical when there is most work and during this period, usually the whole family comes to stay at the fields. The harvest period lasts for about a week and all layers of the community, from lower to upper middle income, stay at the fields.

Primary school aged children do not generally have special tasks to do when they are taken to the fields as only the older children can help their parents. Younger children may only be asked to watch over their younger siblings or bring drinking water for the family working in the fields. The isolated location of the fields makes it impossible for the children to play with their friends. The whole family sleeps in a temporary hut established at the field and while some parents claim they can still help their children study using an oil lamp, others say their children simply do not study while they are there.

While children missing school because they are at the fields with their parents has been an issue for a long time in all three villages, all our informants said that fewer children stay over now and when they do it is not for long. This way, they are not left behind in school. One issue is when these brief absences coincide with the examinations that are usually held in May. Schools need to remind parents and students in advance and teachers may have to fetch students from the fields if they are still absent.

According to the educators we spoke to, parents are aware of the importance of education and they generally ask the school's permission when they have to take their children to the fields. Schools agree because they understand the situation. However, they usually give permission for just a few days so students need to come back to school and ask permission again if necessary. In this case, even without permission, students may end up missing school.

"I asked permission from the teacher if I want to take my child to the field. If the teacher gives warning then I won't take (my child) too often [but I will still go] (Parent of a vulnerable child, Tembalae village)

The distance from home or school to the fields is another deciding factor and where distances make this possible, parents prefer to take their children to school and then go on to the fields, coming home again in



the evening. Where the distances are too great and parents have no other caregivers to call on they prefer to take what would be the smallest risk from a children's rights protection perspective, and take their children to the fields rather than leave them without proper care.

Once again, the factors influencing children being taken to the fields and the impact this has on their education and growth need to be examined wisely. Parents cannot compromise on the safety and welfare of their children and they cannot jeopardise the family's livelihood. While it may be possible to balance these issues by dividing tasks between the two parents, this is clearly not always straightforward, especially during the busiest times in the farming cycle. Communities need to explore solutions that protect all children's rights rather than force parents to choose between these rights.

#### *Parents' involvement*

Parents can play a vital mentoring role in their children's learning process and this can ultimately affect the children's participation in school. According to studies by Dwi Junianto (2015) and Laurence Steinberg (1996), parents' involvement in children's schooling affects the children's motivation to achieve academic excellence. Children's academic achievement is also affected by their family situation, for example, whether they feel loved, appreciated and supported, and whether their parents are consistent in limiting their behaviour and tolerant in encouraging their independence (Syamsuddhuha 2017).

All informants in this study agreed that parents are responsible for their primary school age children's education since children are only at school for around four hours day. Parents have to take care of their children and this includes going over the lessons they had at school.

In terms of child care in the family, the father and mother's roles tend to be divided. Some people consider mothers responsible for their children's education because they tend to be closer to the children and more diligent. There is even a saying that 'one mother equals a thousand fathers'. Meanwhile, others consider that mothers and fathers have equal responsibility for their children's education. In this context there is another role division with the father focusing on general education and the mother focusing on religion or the other way around, depending on their respective capacity. Some parents also divide the caring approaches with the mother using gentleness and the father taking a stricter approach.

Children from non-vulnerable families tend to have clear studying schedules. They eat rest and play when they get back from school and then their parents follow up on their school work, checking whether they have assignments or homework to do. After dusk, the children study, starting with reading from the Koran. Then they have dinner and go bed. This schedule is disrupted if parents have to stay at the fields and children are in another relative's care but they will still study if there is an adult to supervise. When children stay at the fields, these activities may continue but that depends on the parents and their circumstances. One parent said they enjoy teaching their children at the fields due to the more relaxed atmosphere. Another parent said he liked to tell stories to the children about his own struggles, reminding them to study more diligently to avoid having the same fate. Some parents ask the teachers for assignments for their children while they are away. This is different from the parents of child jockeys who do not usually have a set schedule for their children to study at home.

### **Box 3: Initiatives on studying at home**

This study came across some effective methods for teaching children literacy in the family. These methods were developed by two fathers who teach their children after dusk.

The first method was developed by a father who was a newcomer from Atambua. He regretted that he had to drop out of school when his parents died. To help his child learn reading, writing and counting, he wrote out all the letters of the alphabet and all the numbers on a piece of paper, asking his children to copy the letters or numbers they already knew. By repeating this activity every night, they could finally identify all the letters and numbers. After that he was able to teach them to read using textbooks from school.

Another method was developed by a father whose child always comes first at school. He writes short stories for his child to study. He started with simple stories or stories related to the child's personality, making him laugh and feel relaxed. They read the stories together and at the same time introduce the child to letters and reading. After the end of the story, they make the story into a paper aeroplane for the child to play with.

Unfortunately, parents do not generally share these kinds of initiatives assuming that teaching by parents at home is an internal affair.

Based on our observations, almost all villagers speak the Mbojo language in their daily lives. Those using Bahasa Indonesia at home tend to be newcomers or have one parent from outside the Bima-Dompu ethnic group. In supervising their children's studies at home, this can be a hindrance, especially if parents do not understand Bahasa Indonesia at all. Another challenge is when the parents' own educational background is limited (they did not graduate from primary school). In these cases, parents can only tell their children to study but cannot help them through the process.

The absence of parents over long periods of time is another issue that many informants raised. This absence may be because their parents died, divorced or are working out of town or overseas. With mothers often taking most responsibility for educating the children, being without their mother can affect this process even when children are cared for by grandmothers, aunts or other close relatives. The village head said that the divorce rate in these three villages is low but the number of villagers working overseas is increasing every year.



#### **Box 4: Children of migrant workers**

Becoming a migrant worker, is one means of livelihood in the three villages. As in other regions in Indonesia, the limited jobs available in the village and the need to cater for the family's economic needs are the primary reasons that villagers decide to work overseas. It is one way of earning a fixed monthly income. Women may decide to go overseas to work because their husbands cheated on them, divorced them or died, leaving them to cater for their family needs on their own.

In Lepadi village officially there are not many migrant workers, but our informants assured us that some villagers work overseas. Most informants in Ranggo village also reported that many villagers work overseas but there is no data on this. They mentioned about two or three heads of households who go overseas to work every year. Equally, informants in Tembalae village said that many villagers opted to be migrant workers, especially in Pelitan and Restu small villages. Village data is available in Tembalae and shows that 31 per cent of the villagers work overseas, with twice as many men as women. Besides going overseas, according to several informants, some villagers go to work on the palm oil plantations in Kalimantan.

Most of migrant workers go to Malaysia. They generally either enter the country legally but without the official documents allowing them to work or they enter illegally. Relying on information from friends already working in Malaysia, they look for work once they arrive in Malaysia. Among families, the men tend to leave first and once they have jobs, their wives and children join them. Some couples leave together, leaving their children behind with a close relative, usually a grandmother or aunt. In Malaysia, they tend to work on palm oil plantations. The men also work as fruit carriers and do other farming work while the women fertilise and spray the crops and pick fruit. Migrant workers in Indonesia live in groups so many friends from the same village work and live in the same location in Malaysia.

School-aged children tend to be left in the village while younger children and infants are taken to live in Malaysia with their parents. Otherwise the wife may wait for her children to be old enough to be left before following her husband to Malaysia. Some children are born in Malaysia. The Indonesian community in Malaysia provides a network, helping to take care for the young children while the parents work at the plantation. However, with their illegal work status, there are no schools or health services available for these children so their parents usually send them home when they reach primary school age, placing them in their relative's care so they can continue working in Malaysia.

Other destination countries include Saudi Arabia and other middle-eastern countries and some women are planning to try for work in Singapore. Migrant workers going to these countries are generally women working as domestic workers. They register for work through agents and gather in a shelter in Jakarta for an indefinite period before they are flown to jobs overseas. The workers generally do not fully understand the contracts that they have to sign. They find out about agents through friends from the village who have worked or are currently working overseas. These migrant workers do not take their families with them, leaving the children with their husbands or their grandmothers.

Migrant workers like these who use an agent have to pay a departure fee of about IDR4 million each. This fee is usually obtained by borrowing from 'loan sharks' in the village. However, with a monthly salary of IDR2–3 million and unreasonable interest rates, their debt increases to around IDR12 million. Paying this debt becomes a priority when they send money back to Indonesia while the sums of money sent for their children may dwindle and payments can become unreliable.

The children left behind when their mother or both parents become migrant workers generally live with their grandmothers. Care by grandmothers can have some limitations, for example, they may not have the same ability to help educate the children, coming from a different era. Many informants commented that children cared for by their grandmothers tend to be spoiled. They also claimed that children do not listen to their grandmother's advice and some even look uncared for in terms of cleanliness. Some informants further said that children could be left unsupervised and no one checked if they really went to school after leaving the house. One grandmother claimed that she had to use 'tough love' to get her grandchildren to remain in school. Another grandmother had to take her grandchild to the fields almost every day since there was no one to take

care of them at home. Parents and society pity the children left behind. In their view, this encroaches on the children's rights as they are deprived of their parents' love and this will affect their growth and development.

'Lack of education ... no one is taking care of them. Who will take care of them? Love from parents is different from any other [love]' (focus group discussion, parents and community).

However, the school reported that in terms of attendance these children who are left behind by their parents do not pose any problems. Some may have difficulty concentrating or are not as happy as the others. One issue that the school faces is when migrant workers' children drop out of school to accompany their parents to Malaysia. On their return the parents expect their children to be put in a grade according to their age rather than their ability but these children have been out of school while they were in Malaysia and are now far behind their peers.

The decision to leave a child and migrate overseas to work rests with the parents and it cannot be an easy decision to make. They have to explain to their young children that they need to work to earn money, urge them to behave well for their new carer and then leave them behind with promises that they may not be able to keep. The working period overseas is usually around two to three years for those with a formal contract but illegal plantation workers can be gone for longer. Parents who are working send money to these caregivers to meet their child's needs. However, the amount and frequency may become uncertain, leaving the grandmother or other relatives to meet the child's needs as best as they can.

Migrant worker parents believe education is important for their children which is why they often leave school-aged children behind or bring children back when they reach school-going age. Even if the caregiver has to enrol the children, the parents decide on the school. In one case, parents persuaded a primary school to enrol their five year old child because they had to go back overseas to work. Regardless of all the issues, we cannot generalise about this situation or about the parents and children involved. Some children are left behind in a normal and happy household with relatives and they succeed in school despite the fragmented family situation.

According to discussions with our informants, parents have different ways of mentoring their children or being involved in their learning processes. Most parents think it important to go beyond telling their children to study and are directly involved in the process – asking about their lessons, helping with homework, teaching them reading, writing and counting, teaching them to recite from the Koran, telling stories with moral or behavioural messages and sharing roles and styles in caring for their children. Some more vulnerable families may not have set patterns or learning routines and may end up leaving their children with no supervision or discipline for multiple reasons. This situation can also apply to children of migrant workers. However, we met one grandmother in this study who stood out because she cared deeply about her grandchild's growth and development and her grandchild was likely to thrive even with the parents so far away.

We found that parents' attitudes and awareness were greatly influenced by their socio-economic situation and their level of vulnerability. Vulnerable parents tended to play a more limited role in their children's care and especially in ensuring their right to education. Parents in better socio-economic situations were more aware about their children's education and they were generally more involved and caring in their approach to parenting. This in turn will help create child-friendly families and communities.

From the perspective of children's rights, children of migrant worker parents are generally more vulnerable to various rights violations. Social solidarity, gender equality in caregiving roles between parents and a child-friendly community atmosphere can help minimise the negative effects and reduce the risks should one or both parents be forced to leave to earn an income for long periods of time.

### **Quality**

The quality of learning can be determined by examining how the learning environment supports effective learning activities. In this study, the following factors that contribute to learning quality emerged: the quality of educators or teachers; the availability, use and suitability of learning media; the use of extra lessons and

mentoring for students who are lagging behind; communication between teachers and parents; and support from actors and facilities outside of school.

#### *Quality of educators*

As reported in INOVASI's basic education survey and confirmed in this study, Dompu district has a lot of teachers although they are not all trained to the same high standards (INOVASI/SMERU 2016:2–3). In an interview, a member of the technical services implementing unit (UPTD) in Pajo sub-district explained that the issue of teacher quality is caused by a number of factors. Firstly, there are more honorary or temporary teachers as opposed to permanent civil servant (PNS) teachers in the district. In Pajo sub-district, for example there are 214 temporary teachers and 123 permanent civil servant teachers. The temporary teachers do not have the same training and level of skills as the permanent teachers. Classes usually have one permanent civil servant teacher as the homeroom teacher with one or two temporary teachers as assistants, depending on the number of students. Secondly, many teachers while well educated have different educational backgrounds so, for example, a class teacher position, usually requiring a bachelor's degree in education, may be held by a teacher with a bachelor's in a specific subject like geography. Thirdly, not all teachers have been trained to teach the 2013 curriculum (K-13) although schools are obliged to use it in Dompu district and have abandoned the previous unit-based curriculum (KTSP). The curriculum is also an issue in the *madrasah* and many schools are continuing with the old curriculum. Finally, not all teachers fully understand the implications of the term 'literacy'. They still sometimes consider literacy as synonymous with reading and lose the essential emphasis on understanding the reading material.

#### *Availability, use and suitability of learning media*

The quality of teachers also relates to the availability, use and suitability of learning media. The Dompu education, youth and sports office provide some learning materials but they are limited both in their coverage of the curriculum and in the quantity they produce. Also, the materials are not distributed equally to all schools. The equipment that is available includes globes and maps while other equipment, such as models of the human skeleton and teaching materials depend on the school's policy in using the school's operational funds. Teachers either buy the materials themselves or submit a proposal for using the school funds. The challenge is that the school's operational funds are issued once a quarter so teachers may have to wait some time before the materials arrive, even if their request is approved. In this situation, teachers must be creative and use whatever is easily available around them to make their own teaching aids or tools.

Plan Indonesia has run a teachers' training course on creating learning aids for reading, writing and counting and the teachers who attended the course now make their own materials. According to the representative from the Pajo sub-district technical services unit, teachers who have not been trained are not always creative enough to make their own aids. Besides the Plan Indonesia training, the benefits of the INOVASI program were also evident in one primary school in Lepadi village where teachers had made a wall dictionary and numbers tree diagram for the early grades. Some of the other schools have also begun to equip classes with literacy teaching aids, such as pictures to introduce vocabulary and numbers.

Although schools order the textbooks they need for teachers and students, apparently they always arrive late and sometimes they arrive several months after their teaching program has begun, forcing them to use out-of-date books. Also, the textbooks are revised every year. In one of the *madrasah*, early grade teachers took the initiative of adopting the reading learning module used by one of the integrated Islamic primary schools (SDITs) in Dompu district. They photocopied the module so they had a copy for each student to take home every day. The module covered several levels and teachers considered it suitable and easy to use for teachers and students alike.

The education, youth and sports office provides some supporting books for the library but they are not supplied regularly. Schools teaching literacy, especially those included in the INOVASI program, also keep reading books in every classroom. However, from our observations, these books are not always appropriate for the students' level as even in the grade one classroom the books had dense text. Big books are effective, enjoyable and easy to use in literacy activities but they are not always available.

Parents cannot easily provide reading materials for their children not only because of their economic situation but also because of the lack of bookshops around the village. Sometimes schools hold book sales where parents can buy books or they may take the opportunity on a visit to the city to buy books for their children.

Teachers did not complain about the lesson materials but the principals and supervisors said that the 2013 curriculum needs to be taught by quality teachers who can adapt the lessons to suit local conditions. The lack of capacity building and training for teachers was a recurring theme in this study. More motivated teachers make the effort to learn from their peers who have been trained. Ideally, according to the education board, there should be a sharing process with core teachers being trained as a priority so they can train the other teachers.

#### *Mentoring for students lagging behind*

Mastering reading, writing and counting is one indicator in assessing the progress of early grade students but policies differ among schools as to whether children who have not mastered these skills in grade one should repeat the grade or go on to grade two. Some schools, concerned that students may be discouraged and drop out, let these students continue to the next grade provided that the higher grade teacher is aware of the issue and agrees to continue the students' learning process. Some schools, concerned about their students' self esteem, allow them to advance although they will be assessed more rigorously on these skills in grade five. Regardless of these policies, early grade teachers do everything possible to ensure their students master these basic skills. One government primary school has appointed three assistant teachers to help any early grade students struggling to master the basic skills, with extra lessons at break time, in class or in the library. In other schools teachers give special attention to such students during class hours by giving the rest of the class other tasks to keep them occupied. At this school the teachers prefer to keep the extra work within school hours as they believe the students will not concentrate when their friends have already gone home.

#### *Communication between parents and teachers*

Parents are expected to follow up at home if their children have not managed to learn everything in class and so most teachers communicate with parents about their children's progress. This also lightens the teachers' load. Most commonly they write comments and suggestions in the students' exercise books or on a special sheet the students take home. Some teachers use Whatsapp groups to communicate with parents. Teachers and parents living in the local village can also communicate more casually when they meet up around the village. Another way is for teachers to chat with parents when they bring their children to school in the morning. These exchanges can have a positive impact if parents respond well and are willing to follow up by helping their children at home. However, challenges can arise if parents are illiterate or if they are not concerned about their children's progress. A few people still consider education the sole responsibility of the school. Also, parents may be absent and some teachers take the trouble to visit these students at home and assign their closest relative to help them. However many students in this situation are left with no guidance at home.

#### *Outside support*

Another way of improving the quality of learning is by creating a support system outside the school, making the learning process a part of children's daily lives. Examples of this external support currently in place are the extra lessons organised by the We Save Foundation in Ranggo village, the reading park initiative in Lepadi village and the plans to rebuild the library in Tembalae village. However, according to the head of Tembalae village, library use is not optimal and the villagers need to be socialised to develop a reading culture within the community. The Pajo sub-district technical services implementing unit is hoping to set up a mobile library to address this issue once the funds become available.

## 4. ACTION AND PROGRESS

Both village and district governments have established policies and regulations to promote and protect children's rights and we need to re-examine how far these have addressed the current issues. Beyond the policies, there are a number of initiatives in response to these issues, especially to improve children's participation at the primary school level.

### *Child jockeys*

As described at length in Box 1, the horse racing tradition is a complex issue. Government, horse owners and breeders want to preserve the tradition while the community is concerned about protecting the children involved. Policies relating this are still in the form of recommendations. Aside from urging students not to miss school, the education, youth and sports office has also proposed that schools nearest the horse racing track accept child jockeys when they are forced to be away from home. However, this has yet to be followed up. Schools discourage students from going to watch the sport and in the past teachers even collected the children from the track to take them back to school. Most parents forbid their children to watch horse racing.

INOVASI recently pioneered a program for child jockeys called the *Jara Daro* reading park located at horse racing locations. One principal in Lepadi village commented that the children from the village do not benefit from this program since because most of the children concerned are from outside of the village.

### *Children staying over at the fields*

The education, youth and sports offices have also recommended that teachers urge their students not to stay over at the fields during school time, especially if this coincides with examinations. If students are absent without permission for more than two days, the teacher should go to speak to the parents about sending the students back to school.

Overall, the representative from women's empowerment and child protection office did not consider these serious issues in the villages concerned. They will respond, however, to any specific complaints from the community relating to these issues.

INOVASI has responded to this issue by bringing learning facilities closer to the fields through the *Salaja Belajar Ompu Isa* program. The Dompur sub-district technical services unit supports this program and has assigned staff to visit the corn fields and give lessons to the children staying there. However, this scheme has limited reach and would be a workable solution only if the fields were not located so far from each other.

The villages are planning to draft a village regulation to establish daycare centres for the children of farmers working in the fields. This will be issued early in 2019, especially by Lepadi village, before the current village head's term of office ends.

### *Children of migrant worker parents*

The issue of migrant workers has been discussed by the social affairs, manpower and transmigration, women's empowerment and child protection offices and the regional development planning agency (Bappeda). As part of the gender equality program, the 2019 plan on migrant workers includes the following: establishing a job training agency in Dompur district to mentor skilled migrant workers; setting up childcare facilities for migrants' children left in the villages; and preparing regulations to restrict women with infants being employed as migrant workers.

At the village level, PATBM in Tembalae village has started recording data about children left behind in the village without their parents and especially children of migrant workers. PATBM is moving towards activities like mentoring for troubled children and raising awareness about children's rights and laws. Currently no follow up activities to the data collection process have begun but the village government has allocated operational funds for PATBM from the 2019 village budget (*APBDes*). In Ranggo village, the village government used the



family welfare development socialisation sessions to raise awareness about the risks of working overseas. Administratively, the village government is also trying to slow down the process of obtaining documents for those wanting to work overseas to reduce the number of migrant workers leaving the village.

#### *Education facilities*

The number of schools in the three villages and especially Ranggo and Tembalae villages, is considered excessive which means that schools have to compete for new students. This has even resulted in a few cases of schools enrolling underage students to boost their numbers. Also, schools offering an 'excellent class' for those who can afford extra materials could potentially promote social disparity.

Nothing has been done to resolve this situation of too many schools although members of the education board have agreed to review the regulation on the number and distance between established schools.

#### *Learning media and outside of school support*

The number, variety and distribution of learning media need to be improved. The education, youth, and sports office reported that around 80 per cent of schools in Dompu district do not have a library. Although there is an annual budget allocation for schools to procure books, schools have to take turns to benefit from this while allocations for other learning equipment are still dependent on provincial and national government assistance.

Creating an infrastructure and facilities outside of school can also generate interest and develop reading skills. Through the village government, the village community empowerment agency (*Badan Pemberdayaan Masyarakat Desa* – BPMD) has issued a recommendation that village funds be allocated to building village libraries to improve the literacy skills in the community. This has been rolled out in Lepadi village where a reading park has been established. INOVASI has also set up a mobile library in the village with books from the school library. Tembalae village is planning to rebuild their old library.

#### *The quality of teachers and mentoring for students lagging behind*

Dompu district government, working with INOVASI, has set up programs to improve the quality of teaching in the district. The education, youth, and sports office admitted that they have been relying on the national government to fund teacher training. While training has been conducted on using the 2013 curriculum, not all teachers were trained. Subsequently, the Pajo sub-district technical services implementing unit, using their limited funds, invited a trainer from IKA to mentor teachers on the 2013 curriculum, with each school paying for their own teachers using their schools' operational funds (BOS).

A large number of honorary teachers are now employed provide extra lessons for children who are lagging behind and they are paid from the school's operational funds, as recommended by the education, youth and sports office.

#### *Learning at home and parents' capacity to help*

The challenge that some parents face in helping their children with their schoolwork is their own limited capacity, especially if they do not have an adequate educational background or do not speak Bahasa Indonesia fluently. INOVASI conducted a *Sarangge belajar* activity in Lepadi village designed to help parents who want to supervise their children's learning at home.

In addition, Lepadi village is drafting a regulation to make it obligatory for teachers in schools and reading parks to use Bahasa Indonesia and for village institutions to use Bahasa Indonesia when they disseminate information. Lepadi village also has a scheme to motivate students through scholarships for high achievers. According to the village head, the national government's education scholarship for the poor with no conditions of academic achievement attached has demotivated students who would normally strive to win the scholarships based on merit.

In Ranggo village, the We Save Foundation organised extra lessons for students focusing on religious studies and English. This has helped some children and parents to study outside school.



### *Inclusive education*

Apparently, there are only a few requests for inclusive education for children with special needs in the villages. Despite the district head policy, no schools have implemented the inclusive approach so far and no teachers have been trained to teach children with special needs, although they are aware that children with special needs are enrolled in their schools.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

### **5.1 Summary of findings**

This study aimed to answer primary questions on:

- a. The participation rates, access and quality of literacy learning in three target villages for the BERSAMA program;
- b. The current social, economic and cultural conditions in these villages and their effect on the participation rate, access and quality of literacy learning;
- c. How the communities, prominent figures and local governments in these villages understand the concept of child protection and education.

This study examines how the concepts of child protection and education are reflected in local government policies and whether these policies have influenced the perceptions of these issues within the community. These policies and perceptions should ideally become the basis for action in fulfilling children's rights but implementing policies and the community's attitudes and behaviour are also influenced by social, economic, political and cultural factors. These factors reflect the realities of people's lives and can disrupt the participation rate, access and quality of literacy learning.

National government policies on children's rights to protection and education are available and disseminated to the district level. Dompu district government has followed these up with local regulations on child protection, a child-friendly district and on preventing and eradicating human trafficking. These policies are not yet widely implemented due to insufficient human resources. So far action has been limited to following up reports from the community related to violence against women and children and providing mentoring. The Community-based Integrated Child Protection program was established to help the women's empowerment and child protection office (PPPA) at the village level but it remains a pilot project in several villages. Meanwhile, in terms of education, the regulations still focus on providing infrastructure rather than prioritising the quality of education. Since INOVASI arrived in 2017, the Dompu district has begun to use local government funds (APBD) on activities to improve the quality of education. This trend is expected to spread to village governments and further support quality improvements. The community and village government empowerment agency (BPMPD) is expected to have more influence over the use of the village funds in future. Dompu district has responded to issues such as child jockeys and children having to stay at the fields with their parents although at this stage these are only recommendations rather than actions. At the village level, only Lepadi village has allocated funds from the village budget specifically for education and also issued a regulation related to this. In Ranggo and Tembalae villages, responses on education issues are still at the planning or recommendation stage.

Local policies relating to children's rights tend to be limited to protection from mistreatment and violence and the community is not yet socialised with the regard to the broad definition of children's rights included in national and international legislation. Nevertheless the communities are all in agreement about the importance of children's rights to education, food, drink and protection from violence and crime while perceptions of other aspects can vary. The villagers have been socialised on the importance of education through various programs. In addition, considering some families' economic situation and the assumptions within the

community, everyone has positive perceptions of education as a source of hope for a better life for their children in the future. All levels of the local government and community agree that children's right to education is not negotiable.

These positive perceptions are supported by the many schools in the villages making the student enrolment rate exceptionally high. However this oversupply of schools creates its own issues. Competition for new students is fierce and there have been a few incidents of schools enrolling underage children to boost their numbers. Also, some school schemes to attract students could widen the gap between children from different economic backgrounds. There are positive elements to this competition too, with schools offering free transport or free uniforms and shoes to new students. Difficulties in getting to school arise when children have to stay at the fields with their parents. Access to education is still limited for children with special needs and the Dompu district government's special policy on this has not yet been implemented. Besides the few requests received for inclusive education, special teachers have not yet been trained and so are not available in the area. However, the low demand for places for children with special needs implies a different understanding of special needs within the community, among educators and in local government and this needs further study.

The positive perceptions of education are evident in people's commitment to keeping children in school and the average student attendance rates are generally high in the three villages. However, some activities can potentially disrupt students' attendance, namely horse racing activities in Lepadi village and farming activities in all three villages. Furthermore, these activities are tied up with powerful social, economic and cultural factors. Horse racing is a hereditary activity passed down in families and those involved want to preserve this tradition. For relatively poor child jockey families the revenue they earn from horse racing is their primary source of income and their contacts in the horse racing world provide a safety net for their daily lives and their children's future. Farming is also the primary means of livelihood for most of the villagers. Farmer parents use all means possible to avoid taking their children out of school – depending on relatives, dividing the tasks so one parent (usually the mother) stays at home with the children, paying workers – but this is sometimes unavoidable, particularly at harvest time.

Parents' positive perceptions of education are also reflected in their often active involvement with their children's learning process at home. While mothers used to take most responsibility, parents are beginning to divide the role between them. Some parents have even developed their own effective learning methods for their children. Parents with a limited education themselves or who are unable to speak Bahasa Indonesia fluently are less involved but still supervise their children's learning. However most people in the three villages graduated from senior secondary school. The challenge of parent engagement is more an issue for children left behind in the village due to death, divorce or the parents going to work outside of town and overseas. The communities and educators felt that these children were disadvantaged in terms of their right to proper care and particularly in relation to education. This is an economic issue where parents are forced to seek work elsewhere and although their intention is always to support their children with regular remittances to the caregiver (usually the grandmother), this is not always the reality. In cases of divorce or the death of the mother, the gender issue still arises when fathers do not take any responsibility for their children.

Educators and other stakeholders outside the school demonstrate their commitment to quality education through a number of actions to support a more effective learning process and environment. Several schools have applied the recommendation from the education, youth and sports office to use school funds for teachers to coach students struggling to master basic reading, writing and counting skills. Some teachers follow this up by home visits. Home visits are also made when students are absent for more than two days. Teachers communicate regularly with parents using formal notes or reports and through informal chats. Village governments have built or are planning reading parks or village libraries and one program also provides extra lessons. The villages have enough schools and teachers but the challenge is to improve the quality of the education they offer. Training for teachers on implementing the mandatory 2013 curriculum has been limited. Teachers' creativity is crucial and needs to be stimulated by constant professional development. While some learning media are available, they are limited in content and in short supply. Communication between schools

and local government on all these issues is usually facilitated by the Pajo sub-district technical services implementing unit but apparently routine committee meetings have not always been held due to limited funding.

Various parties have responded to these issues. At the district level the response is still limited to recommendations but educators and other stakeholders have taken a number of initiatives. For example, some teachers visit their students at home if they need extra support or are absent from school; teachers have fetched students from the horse racing track to take them back to school; one foundation provides extra lessons for students lagging behind; and one organisation has been collecting data on children living without their parents. The issue of child jockeys has deep roots and any solutions will need to be sensitive to the complexities. Children of farming parents being absent from school also relates to families' economic realities but various school and village initiatives as well as the parents' positive attitudes to education are helping to address this issue. Meanwhile, various ways of mitigating the situation for children whose parents are absent have been used including: teachers visiting children at home to help set up a learning routine; and the Community-based Integrated Child Protection (PATBM) program mentoring troubled children.

This study found that efforts to address the existing issues tend to be limited to recommendations, individual initiatives and resolutions for specific cases. The policies already in place have not yet been fully implemented. Efforts need to be more structured and coordinated with the relevant stakeholders cooperating to address the issues and ultimately improve the quality of literacy learning.

## 5.2 Recommendations

Based on the study results, issues related to basic education in the three villages targeted for the BERSAMA program can be categorised as: student participation; parent engagement; the role of caregivers; and the quality of learning.

### *Student participation*

Participation rates for early grade students are high but can be prone to disturbances caused by horse racing events or harvest time. While these issues do not have a great impact in the villages concerned, they may need further exploration at the district level.

A broader study of the phenomenon of child jockeys will identify the villages in Dompu district that are concerned, the patterns of the children's involvement and the frequency and dates of horse racing events. The balance between preserving an established tradition and defending children's rights would need to be carefully managed to avoid conflict. However, the child jockeys are vulnerable and we need to find ways to ensure their rights to safety and education and protect them from exploitation:

- At the level of the children themselves, the challenge would be to motivate them to go to school and a personal approach combined with extra lessons so they can catch up may be effective.
- At the level of the family, the issue would be the family's economic situation and dependence on their child's income. Any efforts to raise awareness and change perceptions would need to be accompanied by programs to improve these families' economic capacity and opportunities.
- At the level of the community and other stakeholders, the issue would be arriving at an agreed response to the horse racing tradition and particularly the child jockeys' role in it. Without this agreement, any systemic change would be unlikely.

The incidence of children having to stay at the fields with their parents during school time has come down in recent years, with fewer children staying for shorter periods of time. The school and village governments continue to remind parents and children about not missing school but the parents' practical considerations sometimes make this inevitable. Schemes for teachers to visit children at the fields are problematic with the long distances between fields and limited human resources available. The younger children have time to study when they are at the fields since they have no special chores and some parents try to keep up a routine of learning and help them catch up the lessons they miss. These are viable solutions to maintaining the family's

livelihood and ensuring their children are not disadvantaged but not all parents have the capacity to teach their children.

- At the individual level, teachers could provide assignment sheets for children who have to stay at the field and give parents guidelines on how to help their children study.
- At the village level, the community could provide child care centres for the farmers' children during these periods although this may only cater for parents who come back home in the evenings. These centres would need to recruit a carer (possibly a volunteer) to be responsible for the children, ensuring their safety and supervising their activities. The village government would need to collaborate in setting up such centres, vouching for the competence of those involved and ensuring the children are protected. The INOVASI team could oversee this process. If the initiative planned in Lepadi village is successful, the village community empowerment agency (BPMD) can encourage other villages to set up similar facilities using village funds.

#### *Parents' engagement and the role of other caregivers*

Most parents realise that their children need to continue their learning at home and some parents even develop their own effective literacy learning methods for their children. This awareness and capacity is influenced by the education programs run in the three villages. A few parents are still limited by their educational background and language capacity. Where there are gaps in parents' knowledge or skills and particularly with the new approaches in the 2013 curriculum, parents need capacity building programs in addition to awareness raising.

- The *Sarangge Belajar* activity, rolled out as part of the BERSAMA program, can be complemented by parents sharing the various learning methods they have devised. The assumption that how parents teach their children is an internal family matter needs to be dispelled to encourage sharing and learning at the community level. Additionally, the increasing involvement of fathers in their children's learning process needs to be discussed and promoted in this sharing activity.
- All levels of the community need to be involved in this sharing activity, facilitated as part of the BERSAMA program, including representatives of the village government, well-known community figures or relatively influential indigenous figures. The aim is to make mutual learning and sharing a habit among the local communities.
- Parents' good practices in overseeing their children's learning at home and the division of roles between the parents in this activity provides the positive deviance that other parents need to replicate. This sharing process does not need to be confined to the village but can be done at a wider level, for example through the INOVASI activities at the district level.

For children left behind in the village without their parents for various reasons, a support system to replace the role of the parents is crucial, particularly if their caregiver is not able to carry out all the parental roles. Home visits by teachers taking a personal approach and finding a close relative to help with the children's learning process is one effective initiative. However, there also needs to be a more structured approach to mentoring for these children.

- The first task at the school and village level is to collect the data on these children, as the PATBM has been doing in Tembalae village.
- At the family level, the capacity of caregivers to mentor learning also needs to be developed. To address any current or longer-term economic issues, the caregivers and returning parents' own needs could be taken into account in any capacity building programs, for example, former migrant workers would benefit from a productive business program.
- Mentoring children living without their parents should not focus on troubled children only, instead we should create an ongoing support system. Group learning mentoring at home would help children and caregivers. Child care centres initiated by village or local governments could be used for mentoring as well although this idea needs to be refined to ensure neither purpose is compromised. The INOVASI team is recommended as overseer in implementing this plan.
- On a broader scale, developing a child-friendly community in response to the child-friendly district regulation will strengthen the delivery of programs on children's rights protection and education in the villages.

### *Access to and quality of learning*

While the local government provides access to schools and develops learning quality in various ways with support from village governments and external parties, there is still more that can be done.

- Generally, at the district level, there have been positive responses to the INOVASI programs to improve the quality of education. Bappeda wants these activities to be scaled out and the INOVASI team can help map out this process to extend efforts to improve the quality of education.
- As suggested by the education board, the system to set the distance and number of schools in an area needs to be reviewed to avoid the negative aspects of schools competing for new students.
- The educational infrastructure available for children with special needs and the implementation of the regulation on inclusive education need to be reviewed. Children with special needs in schools and villages need to be identified using a standard assessment approach giving local government the data they need to take action, for example by appointing assistants or shadow teachers for children with special needs.
- Developing child-friendly schools that integrate children's rights and local wisdom will support a school environment that comprehensively fulfils children's rights and their protection.
- The quality of teaching needs to be improved by providing equal training for all teachers. The process of training core teachers as a priority so they can share their skills with other teachers, needs to be ensured. The roles of the technical services implementing unit and the teachers' working groups need to be optimised to encourage sharing and learning among teachers.
- Allocating some of the school funds for teachers to coach children who are lagging behind is an effective strategy that can be replicated in other schools. This recommendation from the education, youth and sports office needs to be expanded and monitored regularly. This will involve examining the links between the extra tuition program and the schools' ability to reach its targets for literacy and numeracy in the early grades.
- The most effective ways of teachers and parents communicating can be collated to achieve an effective standard pattern that can be replicated in schools in INOVASI's program areas.
- In terms of learning media availability, the education, youth and sports office needs to review its procurement and distribution processes. The district government budget (APBD) allocations for basic education need to be analysed to ensure that funds are set aside for supporting activities, such as mobile libraries.
- The village government and other parties can also support schemes to bring reading materials to communities outside of school, like the BERSAMA mobile library project. Compared to community reading park projects that need people to be socialised, mobile libraries provide an easier option, especially for those living far from the village offices.
- When village governments establish reading centres or parks not only do they need to socialise the community but they need to generate an interest in reading within the community. They can do this in many ways, for example: reading stories, putting on performances and running workshops on practical information from the books in the library like growing certain crops or making solar-powered lights. The village government needs to include allocations for these kinds of activities as part of their literacy education budget.
- Youth organisations in the villages are not fully invested in education or child protection issues. However, there is potential to optimise their involvement, as with the Creative Youth Association of Ranggo (PERAK) that became a partner of the We Save Foundation and the PATBM program established in Tembalae village.



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