

POLICY BRIEF

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND SCHOOL MANAGEMENT



INOVASI is an education program partnership between the Governments of Indonesia and Australia. It aims to find and understand ways to improve student learning outcomes - specifically those related to early grade literacy and numeracy at the school and classroom level.



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Inovasi Untuk Anak Sekolah Indonesia



INOVASI Pendidikan

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WHY IS SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IMPORTANT FOR LEARNING IN INDONESIA?

The critical role of school leaders and especially principals in delivering quality education has long been recognised.¹ Since the reforms of the early 2000s, the Indonesian government has implemented a policy of school-based management that gives principals the authority to develop and implement school plans and budgets in partnership with teachers and the school community through school committees.

Systems for the recruitment, promotion and professional development of school principals and supervisors are not consistently implemented, to support the strong leadership required to improve schools. Systems for performance appraisal are unclear.² INOVASI's stocktake study in East Java³ identified several cases of outstanding leadership and supervision – and we are learning from these cases. Preliminary findings in East Java confirm that strong leadership is one of the driving forces behind highly progressive changes in schools.

WHAT DO WE KNOW?

In 2017, INOVASI conducted a systematic review of research conducted in Indonesia.⁴ The review found that managerial skills and supervision by principals is one of the factors affecting literacy and numeracy results, with a stronger role for numeracy than literacy. Building on this emerging evidence, and the experience of the previous Education Partnership Pro-DEP program, INOVASI is piloting new approaches to improve leadership and supervision in West Sumba and Batu, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Culture's Centre for the Professional Development of Principals and Supervisors, (LP2KS). INOVASI 2018 baseline data from Batu City and West Sumba painted an interesting picture of school leadership and learning:⁵

In West Sumba, we identified a significant gap between teachers' perspectives of classroom supervision and the principals' perspectives



66%

said that the principal provides classroom supervision with 59% reporting that supervision takes place two or more times per semester

84%

of principals surveyed reported that they conduct classroom supervision on average 18 times per semester

A gap was also observed in Batu City.

90%

said that the principal provides classroom supervision with 44% reporting that supervision takes place two or more times per semester

94%

of principals surveyed reported that they conduct classroom supervision on average 4.3 times per semester

When asked what type of feedback teachers with good performance receive from principals, teachers in both West Sumba and Batu City said that the most common type of feedback was acknowledgement, followed by no feedback at all. In Batu City, there was a higher case of principals giving tokens of appreciation and program prioritisation.

¹Caldwell 2014

²https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259624348_Instructional_leadership_in_Indonesian_school_reform_overcoming_the_problems_to_move_forward

³<https://www.inovasi.or.id/en/publication/report-education-innovations-in-east-java-a-review-and-analysis-of-inovasi-stocktake-study/>

⁴<https://www.inovasi.or.id/en/publication/report-interventions-practices-and-contextual-factors-linked-to-indonesian-students-literacy-and-numeracy-outcomes/>

⁵<https://www.inovasi.or.id/en/publication/infographic-leading-a-generation-of-learners/>

In 2019, INOVASI implemented a school leadership pilot in West Sumba, NTT. With the right tools, training and knowledge, initial pilot endline data⁶ showed that there was a distinct improvement in participating principals' knowledge, with 78 percent improving their knowledge between pre and post tests. There was an almost 10 percent increase in principals conducting supervision on a scheduled basis at school, and a 58 percent increase in principals making a concerted effort to improve learning outcomes in their school, including through more regular meetings with teachers, providing more learning media and resources, evaluating teacher performance, and providing teacher feedback.

WHAT ARE THE KEY ISSUES?

Misunderstood role of school management and leadership

Not all principals and supervisors understand their role with regard to improving the quality of learning and few appreciate the urgent need to improve learning outcomes. Principals tend to focus on administrative needs rather than on leading, managing, and learning and teaching strategically - that is, demonstrating their educational leadership.⁷ At the primary school level in particular, principals often have no school administration officer to help them manage school funds. The national standard for principals places more emphasis on managerial competence than educational leadership.

Principals lack supervision skills

Teachers' professional development currently relies on external training. Principals and supervisors do not always have the capacity to independently supervise, train and develop teachers themselves. Principals and supervisors need relevant examples of good practices that they can draw on when encouraging teachers and facilitating learning.⁸

Training, selection and performance management

Principals are appointed by district heads; many have not participated in the preparatory program



for prospective principals run by the LP2KS, as required. Many principals are appointed and placed in schools for reasons other than leadership merit or fitness for the position⁹. The training material that the LP2KS uses is limited in its coverage of educational leadership and opportunities for training are not always available, with demand outstripping supply. Ministerial decree No 212 of 2018 now provides for the agency to train current and prospective school supervisors and principals. Thus the agency needs to develop appropriate training materials to increase the educational leadership competence of both principals and school supervisors. Performance appraisals have not been used effectively as a basis for developing careers or for rewarding and recognising the achievements of principals and supervisors of high-performing schools¹⁰.

Politicization of principal appointments

The practice of using principal appointments and placements to reward individuals for political support, and to punish others for political opposition, can often occur. This patrimonial system is a major problem for the education system. It cuts across the principles of merit-based promotion and needs-based placements and makes local education systems unstable and ineffective¹¹.

⁶INOVASI Endline Data, Sumba Island, 2019

⁷https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259624348_Instructional_leadership_in_Indonesian_school_reform_overcoming_the_problems_to_move_forward

⁸<https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/176606/ino-principals-supervisors-competency-study-summary.pdf>

⁹<https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/176606/ino-principals-supervisors-competency-study-summary.pdf>

¹⁰<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/726801468269436434/pdf/Main-report.pdf>

¹¹<http://ceds.feb.unpad.ac.id/wopeds/201602.pdf>

POLICY IMPLICATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

NATIONAL

Policy recommendations and priorities related to the role and support of principals and supervisors at the national level include:

1. Consider revising the national standards on principals and supervisors, to take into account the different components of leadership and include a greater focus on academic supervision and the role of the principal in driving quality in their school. The standards could require principals and supervisors to have demonstrated experience in improving the quality of learning in the classroom and clarify their functions in supporting teachers' professional development and supervising the academic aspect of their schools.
2. The Ministry of Education and Culture could develop procedures for appointing school supervisors that include (a) preparatory programs for prospective school supervisors, and (b) routine, structured, performance appraisal for school supervisors. The LP2KS program could be strengthened to prepare prospective school principals and supervisors effectively and ensure they contribute to improving learning outcomes.

DISTRICT

Policy recommendations and priorities related to the role and support of principals and supervisors at the district level include:

1. Principals and supervisors need professional development, particularly through principals' working groups. They need training in practical skills to enable them to play their role as educational leaders – developing their teachers' skills and providing role models. They also need training in managerial skills so they can better support teachers and ensure quality learning is taking place. These working groups need better and more comprehensive training materials and independent learning materials (modules, videos, case studies) on educational leadership.
2. Require local governments to improve their human resource planning so they meet the educational leadership needs for teachers, principals and school supervisors in their regions. This would ensure more appropriate allocations and appointments. The leadership training needs of principals and supervisors could then be better planned and communicated to the LP2KS.
3. A mindset shift is needed so that the importance of educational leadership is recognised, with its direct link to supporting teachers and improving students' learning outcomes. The role of the principal could also include responsibilities for improving parental participation in learning quality. With this recognition, preparatory training for principals could be strengthened and more hours could be allocated for preparing school supervisors.
4. The management and performance assessment of principals and supervisors requires a Performance Quality Assurance System (SPMK) with clear functions. A professional performance and development culture is characterised by a clear focus on improving educational leadership and teaching as the means of improving student outcomes. In particular, it requires that supervisors, principals, and teachers: know what is expected of them; receive frequent, useful feedback on their educational work that includes evidence of student learning outcomes; and access to high quality support to improve their practice.

To ensure policy support down to the school level, key institutions need to be involved and these include: the LP2KS, the Centre for Development and Empowerment of Educators and Education Personnel, local education offices and teacher training institutes. The Indonesian School Principals Association (*Asosiasi Kepala Sekolah Indonesia*, or AKSI) and the Indonesian School Supervisors Association (*Asosiasi Pengawas Sekolah Indonesia*, or APSI) could also become an effective forum for professional development at the district, provincial and national levels if they receive funding and support for various professional meetings, conferences and national consultations. Coordination with MoEC's training centre for principals and supervisors, LP2KS, is also important.

This Policy Brief was prepared by INOVASI and the Center for Education Policy Research, from the Ministry of Education and Culture's Research and Development agency.

Data includes results from INOVASI's baseline and endline studies in partner provinces West Nusa Tenggara, East Nusa Tenggara, North Kalimantan and East Java.