




## POLICY BRIEF

# TEACHER WORKING GROUPS AS A VEHICLE FOR CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



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 DO TEACHER WORKING GROUPS MATTER IN INDONESIA?

The community of practice concept refers to the process of learning that occurs when people who have common goals work together towards achieving those goals within a small social system. They have four key elements:

- a 'domain' of knowledge, such as student learning, in the day-to-day classroom experiences of teachers
- a 'community', members who care about that domain, such as members of a KKG
- shared 'practice' developed by community members, such as discussing teaching practices that support student learning
- leadership, an essential success factor in communities of practice (Buysse, Sparkman, and Wesley 2003<sup>1</sup>; McDonald 2015<sup>2</sup>; Timperley, et al. 2007<sup>3</sup>)

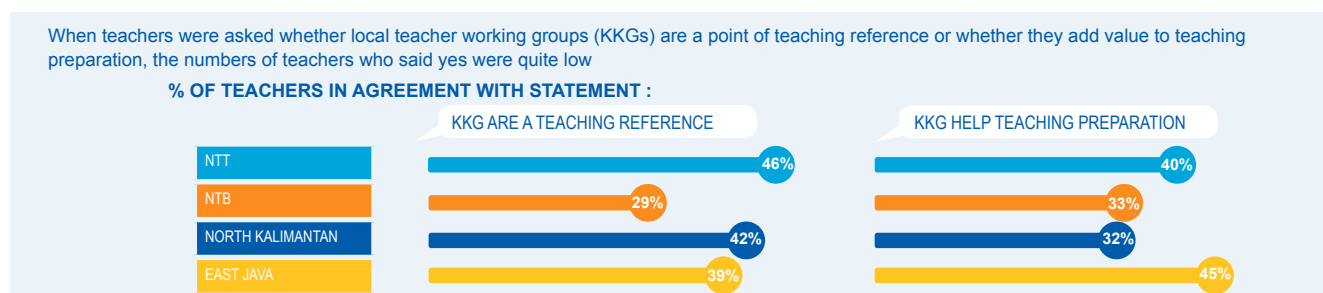
During the past twenty years, empirical research has shown that effective professional development is best located within a professional community of practice supporting teacher learning (Webster-Wright, 2009<sup>4</sup>) and that focuses on student learning (Timperley and Alton-Lee 2008<sup>5</sup>).

Studies of KKG in Maluku<sup>6</sup> and Sumbawa<sup>7</sup> show how well-accepted the idea of the KKG is in the social and institutional culture of teaching in those two locations. As seen in INOVASI's literacy pilot endline data from Sumba Island<sup>8</sup>, student learning outcomes increased in all four partner districts. This increase was not only for the student literacy test average score, but the student pass rates for tests in letter, syllable and word recognition. The increase in these scores can be attributed to improved teaching skills and knowledge, leading to changes in teaching practice. Given that teachers completed INOVASI's pilot activities through teacher working groups (KKGs), the potential of this mechanism for strengthening learning outcomes is clear.

Teachers, like all professionals, learn best when they have a stake in their learning and can manage their own professional development with their colleagues, defining their own needs and priorities<sup>9</sup>. When they are simply seen as passive recipients of training designed by a distant central system, they are typically far less committed. Furthermore, the training material may not be relevant to the local context<sup>10</sup> and the outcomes of the training can be disappointing.

## WHAT DO WE KNOW?

The Indonesian system of school clusters (gugus) and teachers' working groups (kelompok kerja guru or KKG) is well established, but is not yet used to best effect as a vehicle for teachers' professional development. In 2017, the Ministry of Education and Culture issued guidelines for the development of the teacher working groups. The guidelines stress the role of the teachers' working groups in supporting professional development and the urgent need for them to realize this role<sup>11</sup>. Notwithstanding this national policy, INOVASI school surveys found that teachers do not regard the teachers' working groups as a forum for professional development. Their motivation to attend teachers' working group meetings is generally low; the meetings are mainly used for developing test items and for routine tasks, such as completing requirements for education administration. There are few resource persons available to facilitate professional development, and the teachers' working group is rarely used as a vehicle for in-service training or continuing professional development.



<sup>1</sup>[https://www.scrip.org/pdf/CE\\_2017051715105258.pdf](https://www.scrip.org/pdf/CE_2017051715105258.pdf)

<sup>2</sup><https://www.springer.com/gp/book/9789811028656>

<sup>3</sup><http://www.oecd.org/education/school/48727127.pdf>

<sup>4</sup><https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.3102/0034654308330970>

<sup>5</sup>[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/240801997\\_Reframing\\_Teacher\\_Professional\\_Learning\\_An\\_Alternative\\_Policy\\_Approach\\_to\\_Strengthening\\_Valued\\_Outcomes\\_for\\_Diverse\\_Learners/link/55e8ac1c08ae3e1218424cdc/download](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/240801997_Reframing_Teacher_Professional_Learning_An_Alternative_Policy_Approach_to_Strengthening_Valued_Outcomes_for_Diverse_Learners/link/55e8ac1c08ae3e1218424cdc/download)

<sup>6</sup><https://eprints.utas.edu.au/22399/1/Whole-Heyward-thesis.pdf>

<sup>7</sup>[https://www.inovasi.or.id/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/KKG-Study-Report-05012018\\_final.pdf](https://www.inovasi.or.id/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/KKG-Study-Report-05012018_final.pdf)

<sup>8</sup>INOVASI Endline Study, Sumba NTT, 2019

<sup>9</sup>[https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Effective\\_Teacher\\_Professional\\_Development\\_REPORT.pdf](https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Effective_Teacher_Professional_Development_REPORT.pdf)

<sup>10</sup><https://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=5734&context=theses>

<sup>11</sup><http://www.materipendidikan.net/2017/05/download-standar-pengembangan-kkg-mgmp.html>

As part of INOVASI 2019 study<sup>12</sup> on KKG and KKKS effectiveness in NTB, only **48%** of those surveyed said that their KKG had local budget (AD/ART). The rest did not have this documentation support. This is despite the fact that MoEC policy suggest all working groups should have AD/ART.

From those KKGs surveyed, only **25%** had received monitoring and evaluation of working group activities in the past.

The most frequent activity conducted in the KKGs was learning administration, while professional development for teachers was not a common discussion topic.

**88%** of those KKGs surveyed were supported by local government funds (BOS). A small number also received funds from individual teacher contributions.

## WHAT ARE THE KEY ISSUES?

### KKG working guidelines

The 2017 guidelines regarding the establishment, operation and management of teachers' working groups (KKG and MGMP) are not yet widely disseminated or implemented. A recent INOVASI study on KKG effectiveness found that some of the standards are actually not possible to fulfil for some schools, for instance the requirement that every cluster must have a meeting room, computer, training media, LCD and telephone<sup>13</sup>. The teachers' working groups do not typically function as a forum for teachers' professional development. As organisations, they do not yet have the capacity to run continuing professional development programs.

### Management and operations

The management and organisation of teachers' working groups is generally weak with regard to programs of professional development, quality monitoring, accountability, coordination, funding and developing networks – problems still arise in organising the venue, covering costs, membership, choosing topics for discussion and activity schedules. Clusters in remote areas are often not viable as teachers' working group forums because the distance between schools is too great.

### Government resourcing

Resources (facilities, infrastructure, funds and instructors) to support teachers' working group programs are limited and the quality of materials is an issue. Qualified instructors or suitable facilities are generally unavailable and school principals and



supervisors do not have the capacity to facilitate continuing professional development for their teachers. Similarly, senior teachers tend to have limited capacity to provide the coaching, motivation and experience needed in the teachers' working group forum. Meanwhile, district facilitators – often teachers or principals who have been trained by donor-funded projects – have no status within the system and are unable to play a continuing role as facilitators for teachers' professional development after donor-funded projects come to an end. Learning materials to support working group activities are also not readily available, such as via an online e-learning site<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>12</sup>This study aims to map the existence and understanding of the conditions of the KKG (teacher working group) and KKKS (principal working group) in five of INOVASI's six partner districts in NTB province, namely BIMA, Dompu, Central Lombok, Sumbawa and West Sumbawa. The study was not carried out in North Lombok because it was not feasible after the earthquake. The total sample of this study was 53 KKG and 34 KKKS.

<sup>13</sup><https://www.inovasi.or.id/id/publication/laporan-studi-kkg-kkm-kkks-kkps-sebagai-wadah-jejaring-pendukung-pengembangan-keprofesian-berkelanjutan-pkb/>

<sup>14</sup><https://www.inovasi.or.id/id/publication/laporan-studi-kkg-kkm-kkks-kkps-sebagai-wadah-jejaring-pendukung-pengembangan-keprofesian-berkelanjutan-pkb/>



# POLICY IMPLICATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

## NATIONAL

Policy recommendations and priorities for strengthening teacher continuous professional development and teacher working groups at the national level include:

1. A Minister of Education and Culture regulation (Permen) could be developed to provide a stronger legal framework than currently exists for the teacher working group system. The Permen should regulate the role of district / city and provincial education offices, as well as schools in developing teacher working groups, as well as the requirements for teachers to participate in their activities. A minimum proportion of BOS could be allocated for the professional development of teachers.
2. Partnerships could be developed between the district education office and training providers (the Education Quality Assurance Institution or LPMP, the Centre for the Development and Empowerment of Educators and Educational Personnel or P4TK, and teacher training institutions) to support and strengthen teachers' working group activities and to ensure coordination and regulation with and between institutions that can certify short courses and issue certificates to support teachers' career development.
3. At the national level, the Ministry of Education and Culture could work to change current perception of the role of the KKG, from limited routine and administrative activities to centers of teacher excellence and learning. The KKG should function as a pedagogic workshop, a space for quality control and the standardisation of teaching and school management activities, and an information center for teachers to learn and develop. KKGs should be a forum for discussing examples of good learning, best practice and innovation. The Ministry's new Continuing Professional Development program will use the teacher working groups in precisely this way and should serve to strengthen them.

## DISTRICT

Policy recommendations and priorities for strengthening teacher continuous professional development and teacher working groups at the district level include:

1. A team of district facilitators could be established to conduct in-service training in the form of well-structured short courses delivered through the teachers' working groups. These courses should be certified by the Education Quality Assurance Institution. Districts can regulate to ensure that schools use BOS funds to support teachers' working groups and their role in continuing professional development.
2. District government can provide support to implement the national guidelines and to institutionalise teachers' working groups for continuing professional development. This may involve developing regulations (a) to facilitate school cluster mechanisms for improving the competence of teachers and principals, and (b) for school clusters to be governed and managed in an educative, democratic manner (by and for the interests of members), so they are autonomous but at the same time take into account national and district programs - and other endeavours to improve educational quality.
3. District governments could ensure that teachers' working groups are systematically monitored and evaluated, both internally and externally. Areas that require monitoring include the preparation and implementation of the KKG work plan, and results and progress against this work plan. Evaluation methods may include independent evaluations bi-annually, and internal monitoring could be conducted by the school supervisor, the district education office, or the P4TK team. External monitoring could be done by third parties like NGOs, or research and higher education institutions.
4. Working within the system, school supervisors could be recruited on a merit-based selection (rather than based on seniority). This new cadre of supervisors could be trained and deployed to lead continuing professional development in teacher working groups. As an alternative, districts could develop a team of school supervisors district facilitators who can be released from regular teaching duties in schools and budget for schools to pay for relief or supply teachers to take their classes for a designated number of days per week (two or three). This team needs to be well-managed and funded to be able to conduct in-service training in teachers' working groups and follow-up mentoring in schools and classrooms.
5. Policy would be useful at the level of the district education office to utilize and maximize those teachers who have developed good quality capabilities as a result of the KKG training. They can be positioned as peer resources or tutors for the KKG guiding team. These district core teacher teams, regional facilitator teams, teachers, principals and supervisors can be used across local regions to support the quality of training, education, development and research within clusters.

*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.*