USING MINIMUM SERVICE STANDARDS TO SUPPORT EDUCATION DECENTRALIZATION: INDONESIA'S EXPERIENCE

ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

USING MINIMUM SERVICE STANDARDS TO SUPPORT EDUCATION DECENTRALIZATION: **INDONESIA'S EXPERIENCE**

6 ADB Avenue, Mandaluyong City, 1550 Metro Manila, Philippines
Tel +63 2 632 4444; Fax +63 2 636 2444
www.adb.org; openaccess.adb.org

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Note: In this publication, "$" refers to US dollars, and "Rp" refers to Indonesian rupiah.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
APBD	*Anggaran Pendapatan dan Belanja Daerah* (Local Government Annual Budget and Expenditure)
APBN	*Anggaran Pendapatan dan Belanja Nasional* (Central Government Annual Budget and Expenditure)
BAPPEDA	*Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah* (Regional Development Planning Board)
BAPPENAS	*Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional* (National Development Planning Agency)
BE-MSS	Basic Education Minimum Service Standards
BOS	*Bantuan Operasional Sekolah* (School Operational Assistance)
CDP	Capacity Development Program
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
Dikdas	*Pendidikan Dasar* (Basic Education)
DIPA	*Daftar Isian Pelaksanaan Anggaran* (Government Annual Budget)
DPRD	*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah* (Local Parliament)
ESSP	Education Sector Support Program
EU	European Union
MOEC	Ministry of Education and Culture (*Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan-Kemendikbud*)
MOF	Ministry of Finance (*Kementerian Keuangan*)
MOHA	Ministry of Home Affairs (*Kementerian Dalam Negeri*)
MORA	Ministry of Religious Affairs (*Kementerian Agama*)
MSS	Minimum Service Standards (*Standar Pelayanan Minimal*)
MI	*Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* (MORA's primary school)
MTs	*Madrasah Tsanawiyah* (MORA's junior secondary school)
RPJMD	*Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Daerah* (Local Government Medium-term Development Plan)
SD	*Sekolah Dasar* (Primary School)
SMP	*Sekolah Menengah Pertama* (Senior Secondary School)
SPM	*Standar Pelayanan Minimal* (Minimum Service Standards)
SQA	Status Quo Assessment
TA	Technical Assistance
TOT	Training of Trainers

FOREWORD

Improving education quality and access at the same time is an uphill battle in Indonesia. While access to basic education (K-9) has increased significantly since the mid-1970s following the massive construction of primary schools in every village and the launch of universal basic education in the 1980s, education quality has not improved along the same trajectory. In 2018, the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) still ranked Indonesia 72nd among 78 countries, showing that the quality of the country's teaching-learning process still needs a lot of improvement. Quality also varies among regions, between urban and rural areas, and between public and private institutions, across all levels of education.

The Indonesian education system is not only large—it serves more than 60 million students with 3.3 million teachers across 17,000 islands—it is also complex. It is decentralized to 34 provinces and 514 districts and municipalities, with each level

of administration having certain roles and responsibilities. As part of efforts to improve education quality and reduce disparity across regions, the government has issued a policy instrument called Minimum Service Standards (MSS), which aims to guide local governments in delivering public services that were originally part of the central government's functions. The standards outline what local governments and education providers should do, and sets out the key indicators for the services to be provided in line with the given resources. The MSS for basic education defines the minimum quality and quantity of services that should be delivered to ensure that every school has at least the minimum conditions for quality teaching and learning to occur.

This publication aims to capture lessons from the implementation of a capacity development program for implementing MSS for basic education in more than 100 districts and municipalities within 16 provinces across Indonesia. The program was implemented from 2013 to 2017 with support from the Asian Development Bank and the European Union. Through the program, each district learned how to conduct surveys and status quo assessments of their MSS achievements, analyze gaps, and eventually prepare a 3-5 year roadmap based on their status and fiscal capacity.

There are several lessons that can be drawn for future activities. For instance, the program shows how key stakeholders at the district, school, and community levels should be engaged to ensure success in a decentralized context. The program also provided lessons on managing resources using a reimbursable mechanism, which is a relatively a new modality under an on-granting scheme. Another key learning was the importance of developing a sound communications strategy to reach as many stakeholders as possible.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Ministry of Education and Culture and the European Union for their support and collaboration during implementation of the Program. Without their close collaboration, the program would not have achieved its intended outputs and outcome. My appreciation also goes to Ms. Isabella Tirtowaluyo and Mr. Totok Amin Soefijanto, who analyzed the data and prepared the draft manuscript, and Ms. Jet Damazo-Santos, who provided editorial services. Thanks to Ms. Gi Soon Song, Principal Social Sector Specialist, South Asia Department and Ms. Smita Gyawali, Senior Project Officer, Nepal Resident Mission for their critical reviews and invaluable inputs to the draft report.

Finally, I would like to thank to Mr. Rudi Hendrikus Louis Van Dael, ADB Senior Social Sector Specialist, who initiated the publication during his tenure in Indonesia, Mr. Sutarum Wiryono, Senior Project Officer, who managed the program and led the preparation and finalization of this publication; and Ms. Maria Angelica Magali Vivar, Associate Project Analyst, who tirelessly handled the administrative and managerial work for the publication.

Winfried F. Wicklein
Country Director
ADB Indonesia Resident Mission

SUMMARY

Improving the quality of education requires synchronized efforts. The government needs not only clear vision and policy direction, but also solid public support and oversight, effective coordination among stakeholders during implementation, and strong support from all levels of bureaucracy throughout the entire process.

Indonesia's experience is an important case to be observed closely. Following a political reform movement in 1999, the responsibility of managing most government affairs and public services—including education—was decentralized to local governments.

In a decentralized system, the Minimum Service Standards (MSS) policy instrument can be used to guide and monitor local governments in their delivery of public services. MSS describes the minimum quality and quantity of services a local government has to deliver in a specific sector, and includes quantitative and qualitative indicators to measure achievements.

Indonesia first introduced MSS for the education sector in 2001, following the enactment of decentralization laws in 1999. The policy was updated in 2004 following the enactment of the education law and a revision of the decentralization law. In 2010, the government issued a new version of MSS for basic education, which was then revised in 2013. The latest version of the education MSS was issued as a ministry regulation in 2018.

To support the use of MSS in basic education, the Government of Indonesia implemented the Minimum Service Standards Capacity Development Program (MSS-CDP) from 2013-2017 with support from a €37.3 million (equivalent to $47.03 million at the time of approval) technical assistance grant from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the European Union (EU). The program targeted 110 districts, which is equivalent to around 20% of the total districts and municipalities in the country. It aimed to improve their capacity in planning, budgeting, implementing, and monitoring MSS fulfilment. Of the target, 108 districts participated in the program, and 103 districts completed it.

The MSS-CDP began by assisting the participating districts and municipalities in measuring the status quo of their MSS achievement to derive a baseline. Subsequently, the program trained over 204,000 education personnel (34.6% female)—consisting of school principals, supervisors, district officers and school committees—on how to analyze their MSS gap and prepare a roadmap to meet the standards through planning and budgeting exercises. Towards completion, the program conducted a census to measure MSS achievement in 45,000 primary and junior secondary schools in 108 districts.

Out of the 108 districts that participated in the program, 100 completed their MSS

roadmaps, 66 of which have been integrated into their respective district annual work plans and district mid-term development plans. They also earmarked budgets for it in their plans for the coming 3-4 fiscal years.

The program has demonstrated impacts in strengthening local governments' capacities to analyze their MSS gaps, map out how they would achieve the standards, and develop action plans in line with their respective fiscal capacities. The following lessons can be drawn from the program implementation:

(i) Building ownership and commitment among key education stakeholders, both at the central and local government levels, is critical to the successful implementation of a program;
(ii) It is equally important to develop appropriate approaches and methods to deliver capacity building initiatives for different target groups;
(iii) An effective socialization and public awareness campaign, including the use of various media platforms, should be designed carefully from the beginning; and
(iv) Provision of effective guidance and technical advice from experienced field facilitators/district advisors is pivotal.

The MSS-CDP also provides a number of lessons for updating or reformulating education MSS, such as the following:

(i) Standards should only hold districts and schools accountable for matters over which they have control;
(ii) Standards should clearly define outputs or targets that can be interpreted with relative ease by local governments;
(iii) Standards should govern educational components;
(iv) Standards provide sufficient practical guidance that can be translated into the planning-budgeting process in line with common practices;
(v) Standards should not be a standalone policy; and
(vi) Standards reflect an affirmative agenda aiming foremost to help reduce regional and school-to-school disparity in education quality. ■

A. BACKGROUND

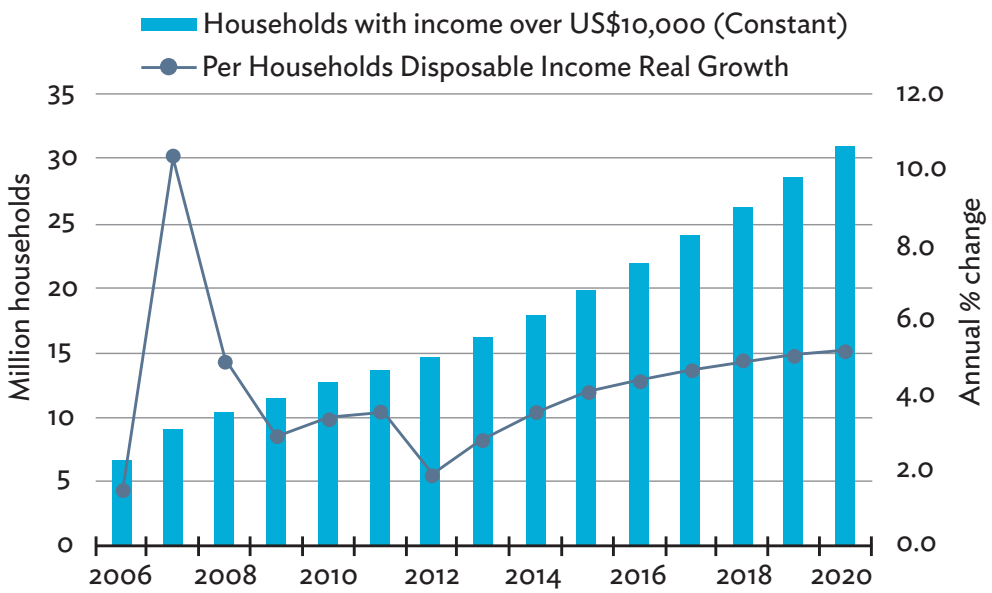
A.1. THE DECENTRALIZATION OF EDUCATION

Indonesia has had notable successes in improving access to education. For instance, since its independence in 1945, the country has implemented popular policies to tackle the illiteracy problem, successfully turning its 95% illiteracy rate to a 95% literacy rate over the span of 60 years.

By 2001, Indonesia had already achieved a 100% gross enrolment rate for primary education (grades 1-6), which it increased to 103.5% by 2020. For junior secondary education (grades 7-9), the country increased its gross enrolment rate from 76.1% to 101.3% over the same period.

These improvements are also in line with the significant growth of Indonesia's middle class (Figure 1). The positive results demonstrate

Figure 1. Growth of Indonesia's Middle-Income Class (Euromonitor Research, 2020)

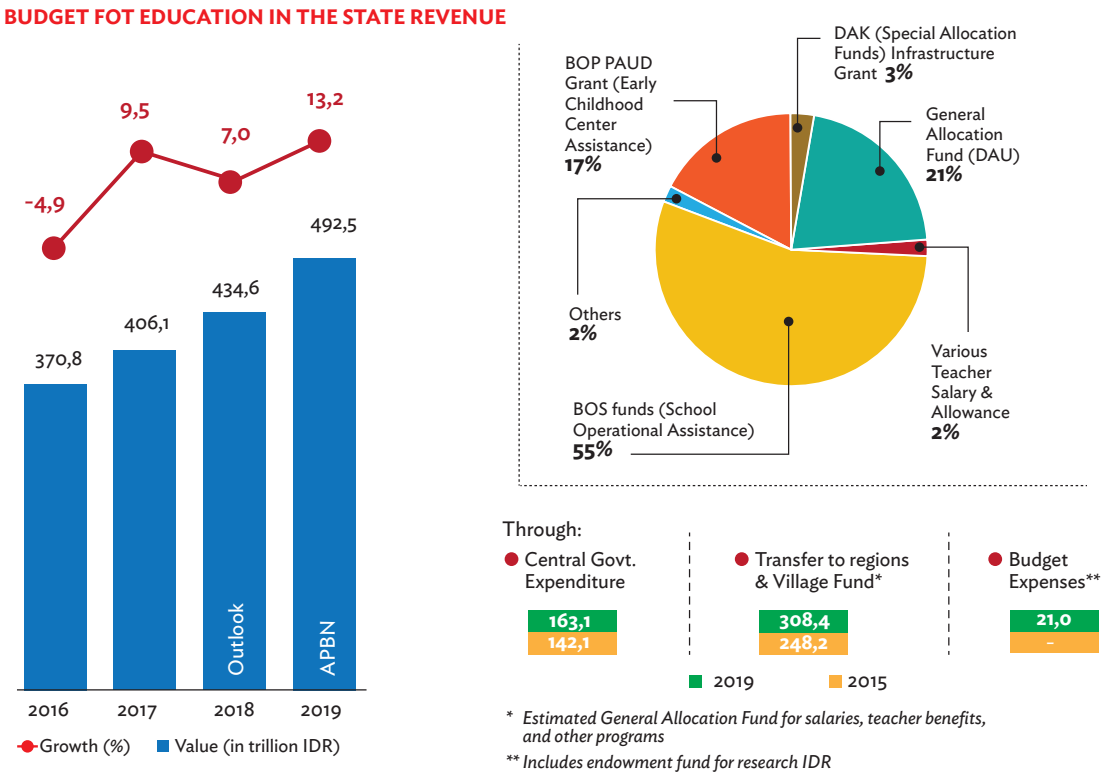


the government's ability to both increase awareness of and produce tangible outputs from its education policies.

However, improving education quality and equality at the same time is an uphill battle in Indonesia, considering the complexity of the country's administrative challenges: 66 million students and 3.3 million teachers spread across 17,000 islands and 34 provinces, divided further into 514 districts and municipalities.

After the political reform movement in 1999, the responsibility of managing most government affairs and public services—including primary and secondary education—was decentralized to local governments. The idea of decentralization gained support because it brings the government closer to the people, gives local governments and local residents more discretion, and shortens the route of accountability so services are delivered quicker and more affordably.[1]

Figure 2. Annual increase in national budget for education, and Allocation of Education Budget Transferred to Districts in 2018 (Ministry of Finance)



* *Estimated General Allocation Fund for salaries, teacher benefits, and other programs*

** *Includes endowment fund for research IDR*

1. World Bank, 2003; Ahmad, Devarajan, Khemani, & Shah, 2006; Bardhan and Mookherjee, 2006; Boasiako and Csanyi, 2014

The Indonesian Constitution requires the government to allocate at least 20% of its annual state budget for education. In the 2018 fiscal year, around 63% of the education allocation from the national budget (APBN), equivalent to Rp279 trillion (roughly $19 billion), was transferred to district governments.[2] In most districts, direct transfers from the central government make up the bulk—if not the entirety—of their annual education budget.

There is an accountability complication in reporting the usage of these direct transfers. The Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC, previously known as Ministry of National Education) is responsible for issuing policies and standards for almost 300,000 public and private schools nationwide, but the overall management and supervision of schools at the basic and secondary levels fall under local governments. District governments and municipal administrations, however, are required to report to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA), which is the main government agency responsible for managing the implementation of decentralization in Indonesia. The Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA), meanwhile, is responsible for some 45,000 Islamic public and private schools (madrasahs), which are not decentralized.

In accordance with decentralization laws, the MOEC does not have the authority to demand accountability from local governments, unlike MOHA, which can impose administrative sanctions on the heads of districts that fail to achieve Minimum Service Standards (MSS). Government Regulation No. 2/2018 empowers MOHA to implement a system of rewards and punishments to regulate local governments' implementation of MSS. Hence, the regulatory power over education MSS—along with other basic services, such as health—lies with MOHA. At the same time, district education offices are also answerable to their respective local legislative branches in terms of the use of their budget allocations.

A.2. MINIMUM SERVICE STANDARDS AS A QUALITY LEVERAGE SCHEME AND EVOLUTION UNTIL 2010

In a decentralized system of government, MSS can be used to guide local governments in delivering public services that were originally part of the central government's functions. The policy instrument outlines what the local government should do and sets out the key indicators for the services to be provided in line with the given resources.

In the education sector, the MSS has changed over time alongside the evolution of Indonesia's decentralization policies (Table 1).

The Ministry of National Education first issued a regulation in 2001 to guide the development of education MSS in the wake of the passage of the first laws on regional autonomy and fiscal decentralization in 1999. Subsequently, the MSS for education was issued in 2004 following the enactment of the 2003 National Education Law and 2004 Regional Government Law.

2. Ministry of Education and Culture (*Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan-Kemendikbud*), 2017

Table 1. Timeline of the Development of Education Standards and the Decentralization Phase

National Education Standards	Decentralization and the Minimum Service Standards
2003: • National Education Law (No. 20/2003) issued • Board of National Education Standards (BSNP) established **2005:** • National Education System established (to implement the 2003 National Education Law), under a government regulation (No. 19/2005, amended in 2013) • Teacher and Lecturer Law (No. 14/2005) issued (governing teacher quality standards, and professionalization and certification of teachers) **2006:** • Content standards issued as a ministry regulation (latest amendment in 2016) • Graduate competency standards issued as a ministry regulation (latest amendment in 2016) • National Board for School and Madrasah Accreditation (BAN-S/M) established **2007:** • Management standards issued as a ministry regulation • Process standards issued (latest amendment in 2016) • Facilities and infrastructure standards issued • Education assessment standards issued (latest amendment in 2016) • Teacher qualification and competency standards issued • Principal and supervisor standards issued	**1999:** Regional Autonomy/Decentralization Law (No. 22/1999) and Fiscal Decentralization Law (No. 25/1999) are issued **2001:** First education MSS issued as a Ministry of National Education decree (No. 053/U/2001) **2004:** • Regional Government Law (No. 32/2004) issued • Education MSS issued as a Ministry of National Education regulation (No. 129a/U/2004) **2005:** Government Regulation on Regional Governments (No. 65/2005) issued to implement Law No. 32/2004 **2007:** Amendment to Government Regulation on Regional Governments (No. 38/2007) **2010:** Basic Education Minimum Service Standards (BE-MSS) issued as a ministry regulation (No. 15/2010) **2013:** Instruments to measure BE-MSS achievement issued as amendment to 2010 ministry regulation (No. 23/2013) **2014:** New Local Government Law (No. 23/2014) issued (latest amendment in 2015) **2018:** • Revised MSS for multiple sectors issued as a government regulation (No. 2/2018) • New education MSS issued as a ministry regulation (No. 32/2018)

The 2004 education MSS detailed the responsibilities of provincial and district governments in delivering basic, secondary, non-formal, youth, and sports education. It outlined the coverage and outcome indicators for each of the services. For example, in basic education, the district government had to ensure that 95% of children aged 7–12 years should be in school or a madrasah, and the drop-out rate should be less than 1 percent.

However, the regulation did not provide clear guidance on how to achieve these targets. There were also no significant efforts to improve the capacity of local governments to implement the standards, nor systematic attempt to monitor its progress nationwide. Consequently, after the decree was issued in 2004, not much progress was achieved in achieving the MSS.

In 2008, the Government sought support from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the European Union (EU) to review and assess the implementation of MSS through a technical assistance (TA) on Basic Education Sector Capacity Support Program (2008-2010).[3] The review concluded that the MSS needed to be adjusted to align with the functions and responsibilities of local governments.

The review recommended that the education MSS be redefined as "the minimum quality and quantity of education services that should be delivered by the district government to ensure that in every school and madrasah, at least the minimum conditions were provided for quality teaching and learning to occur". In other words, the education MSS should

Table 2. Summary of 2010 BE-MSS Indicator Clusters for Districts and Schools

Districts		Schools	
	14 indicators		13 indicators
Access and infrastructure	4	Provision of resources for learning	4
Provision of adequate numbers of teachers	2	Teaching process	6
Qualifications of teachers	6	School quality assurance and management	3
District quality assurance and management	2		

3. The TA commenced in 2008 and was designed to develop the capacity of the Indonesian education sector to deliver basic education services in accordance with the MSS and decentralization provisions. The TA was funded by the European Union for a total of $5.4 million.

provide information on: (a) what every school and madrasah must have, and must do, at a minimum level, to ensure that learning can take place; (b) what the minimum levels of services are that the public can expect from their local government and their schools and madrasahs; and (c) what the status is of the quality of services towards implementing the national education standards.

The Ministry of National Education then issued a new regulation in 2010 (No. 10/2010) to define MSS for only for basic education (BE-MSS). This covers grades 1 to 9, or the primary and junior secondary levels. The 2010 BE-MSS clearly differentiates the responsibilities of schools and district governments in meeting the MSS indicators. This is also to align with the funding mechanism. The district government has to finance the fulfilment of MSS at the district level, using funds received from the central government through the general allocation and special allocation schemes. Meanwhile, schools are accountable for achieving MSS indicators at the school level, with funding support from the school operational assistance fund (Dana BOS) from the central government. The district-level MSS has four clusters comprising 14 indicators while the school-level MSS has three clusters of 13 indicators (see Table 2).

Table 3 lists the specific BE-MSS indicators that local governments and schools are responsible for. These indicators were derived from hundreds of national education standards (NES) through an analytical and consultative process, taking into consideration factors such as the ability to leverage quality improvement, practicality, and affordability. This means the selected indicators should be relatively easy to measure, can be achieved given resource constraints, and would significantly improve education quality if met.

During the reformulation of BE-MSS in 2010, it was agreed among stakeholders that MSS was a subset of NES, and that it contained the most essential elements that could be met by the districts and schools. It was also understood that MSS indicators would be evaluated periodically, and that they can be upgraded once most schools or districts achieve them.

For example, each primary school is required to have at least six teachers and at least one teacher for every 32 students. For special regions, such as those in remote and isolated areas, there should be at least four teachers per school, at least two of which have a bachelor's degree. If resources are available, the requirement can be exceeded. This means the minimum number of bachelor's degree holders can be increased to four per school, and eventually all teachers can be required to have at minimum a bachelor's degree as stipulated by the NES. ■

Table 3. BE-MSS Indicators for Districts and Schools

District and Municipal Governments (14 indicators)	
Access and infrastructure (4 indicators)	An education unit is available within walking distance at a maximum of 3 km away for primary schools (SD/MI) and 6 km away for junior secondary schools (SMP/MTs) from permanent residential settlements in a remote region (IP-1).
	The number of students in each class does not exceed 32 for primary schools (SD/MI) and 36 for junior secondary schools (SMP/MTs). One classroom is made available for each class, furnished with sufficient desks and chairs for students and teachers, and a whiteboard (IP-2).
Access and infrastructure (4 indicators)	Each junior secondary school (SMP/MTs) has a natural science lab furnished with desks and chairs for 36 students and a minimum of one set of natural science lab tools for students' demonstration and experiments is available (IP-3).
	Each primary school (SD/MI) and junior secondary school (SMP/MTs) has a teachers' room that is furnished with desks and chairs for teachers, the principal and other education staff; and each junior secondary school (SMP/MTs) has a principal's room that is separate from the teachers' room (IP-4).
Provision of adequate numbers of teachers (2 indicators)	Each primary school (SD/MI) has at least six teachers per school and at least one teacher for every 32 students; and for special districts, at least four teachers per school (IP-5).
	Each junior secondary school (SMP/MTs) has at least one teacher for each subject matter; and for special districts, at least one teacher for each cluster of subjects (IP-6).
Qualifications of teachers (6 indicators)	Each primary school (SD/MI) has at least two teachers with academic qualifications of a bachelor's degree (S1) or a 4-year diploma (D-IV), and at least two teachers with educator certificates (IP-7).
	At each junior secondary school (SMP/MTs), 70% of teachers have academic qualifications of S1 or D-IV, and half of them (35% of total teachers) have certifications; for schools in special districts, 40% of teachers have S1 or D-IV qualifications and 20% of teachers have certifications (IP-8).

Qualifications of teachers (6 indicators)	Each junior secondary school (SMP/MTs) has teachers with academic qualifications of S1 or D-IV and has at least one certified teacher each for mathematics, natural sciences, Indonesian language, English language and civics (IP-9).
	All primary school (SD/MI) principals within the district/ municipality have academic qualifications of S1 or D-IV and hold educator certificates (IP-10).
	All junior secondary school (SMP/MTs) principals within the district/municipality have academic qualifications of S1 or D-IV and hold educator certificates (IP-11).
	All school and madrasah supervisors within the district/ municipality have academic qualifications of S1 or D-IV and hold educator certificates (IP-12).
District quality assurance and management (2 indicators)	District/municipality governments have a plan and carry out activities to assist schools in developing their curriculum and effective learning processes (IP-13).
	Supervisors conduct school visits at least once a month, where each visit is 3 hours long and is used for supervision and providing guidance (IP-14).
Schools and Madrasahs (13 indicators)	
Provision of resources for learning (4 indicators)	Each primary school provides each student with a set of textbooks declared eligible by the government for the subjects of Indonesian language, mathematics, natural sciences, social sciences, and civics (IP-15).
	Each junior secondary school provides each student with a set of textbooks declared eligible by the government for all subjects (IP-16).
	Each primary school provides a set of natural science visual aids and materials, including a human skeleton model, a human anatomy model, a globe, an optical equipment sample, natural science kit for basic experiments, and science posters/charts (IP-17).
	Each primary school has at least 100 titles of supplementary books and 10 titles of reference books, and each junior secondary school has 200 titles of supplementary books and 20 titles of reference books (IP-18).

Teaching process (6 indicators)	Each permanent teacher works 37.5 hours per week in school, including for lesson-planning, teaching, conducting learning assessment, provide guidance and training for students, and carrying out additional tasks (IP-19).
	Schools hold instructions for at least 34 weeks per year with the following minimum face-to-face instructional hours: a) Grade 1-2: 18 hours per week; b) Grade 3: 24 hours per week; c) Grade 4-6: 27 hours per week; d) Grade 7-9: 27 hours per week (IP-20).
	Schools implement a school-based curriculum in accordance with the effective regulations (IP-21).
	Each teacher implements a learning plan developed based on the syllabus for the subject taught (IP-22).
	Each teacher develops and conducts assessments for the purpose of improving students' learning (IP-23).
	School/madrasah principals carry out class supervision and provide feedback to teachers twice each semester (IP-24).
School quality assurance and management (3 indicators)	Each teacher submits a subject evaluation report and a student's assessment report to the principal at the end of each semester, in the form of a student learning achievement report (IP-25).
	The school or madrasah principal shares students' year-end examination and grade-promotion test results to parents, and submits a summarized report to the District/Municipality Education Office or Religious Ministry Office at the end of each semester (IP-26).
	Each school implements school-based management principles (IP-27).


VERSACE

B. THE MINIMUM SERVICE STANDARDS CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

B.1. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAM FROM 2013 TO 2017

Following the success of the implementation of the Basic Education Sector Capacity Support Program (2008-2010), which includes the reformulation of BE-MSS and pilot testing in five districts, the EU confirmed its commitment to support the scaling-up of capacity development in implementing MSS at the district level. ADB and the EU then designed a TA called Minimum Service Standards Capacity Development Program (MSS-CDP), which was approved in April 2013 (See Box 1).

The MSS-CDP supported the MOEC in scaling-up the program to boost capacity to implement the BE-MSS, and aimed to reduce regional disparities in the provision of basic education services. The TA had three outputs: (i) improved district education administration and school management capacity to achieve the MSS; (ii) enhanced awareness of the education MSS among the public and education decision-makers; and (iii) effective MSS integration into related education sector functions and policies.

Box 1: Continued MSS Efforts

The TA for the Minimum Service Standards Capacity Development Program (MSS-CDP) was prepared by ADB following the second phase of the EU's Education Sector Support Program (ESSP). The TA aimed to support the Government of Indonesia in implementing the BE-MSS, which was reformulated during the earlier TA for Basic Education Capacity Support Program.

The TA was fully financed by the EU for a total of €37.3 million, equivalent to $47.03 million at the time of approval. It was part of the EU's budget support program called the Education Sector Support Program II. The TA allocated $27.739 million as a grant, which was directly transferred from the Ministry of Finance to district governments to finance capacity development programs, and $19.291 million to finance consulting services, studies, surveys, operational and administration costs, and contingencies. The TA was approved by the ADB Board in April 2013 and completed in December 2018.

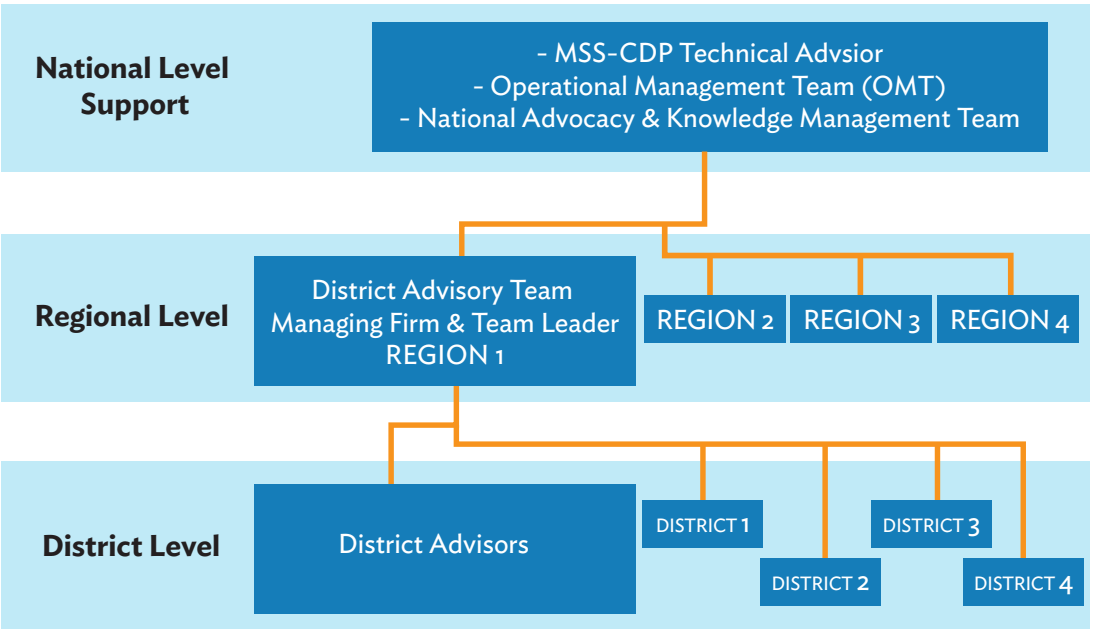
MOEC was the executing agency of the program, with the Director General of Basic and Secondary Education as the program director.

The program aimed to get 110 districts and municipalities to participate, selected based on their fiscal capacity and enrolment rate in basic education. Districts with lower fiscal capacity but higher enrolment rates were more likely to be selected. However, to keep implementation manageable, the program selected districts located within 16 provinces, divided into four regions. Region 1 covered provinces in Sumatra and Kalimantan; region 2 covered Java, East Nusa Tenggara, and West Nusa Tenggara; region 3 covered Sulawesi and Maluku; and region 4 covered Papua.

ADB supported the MOEC by providing technical advisors, an operational management team, and an advocacy/communications team. ADB also helped establish four district advisory teams to support the participating districts based on geographical proximity. Each advisory team assigned one advisor to serve 3–4 districts or municipalities within the region. The district advisors engaged directly with district governments—especially the District Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) and the District Office of Education (Dinas Pendidikan)—the local MORA office, local parliaments, civil society organizations, community and religious leaders, and school communities, including school supervisors, principals, and teachers.

Figure 3 illustrates the implementation organization of MSS-CDP.

Figure 3. The MSS-CDP Team Structure



After the potential participating districts were identified in 2013, they were asked to confirm their participation and to commit counterpart funds equivalent to 5% of the total grant for operational costs and district staff allowance. Two districts declined to participate due to internal management issues, and 108 districts signed an on-granting agreement to join the program by mid-2015.

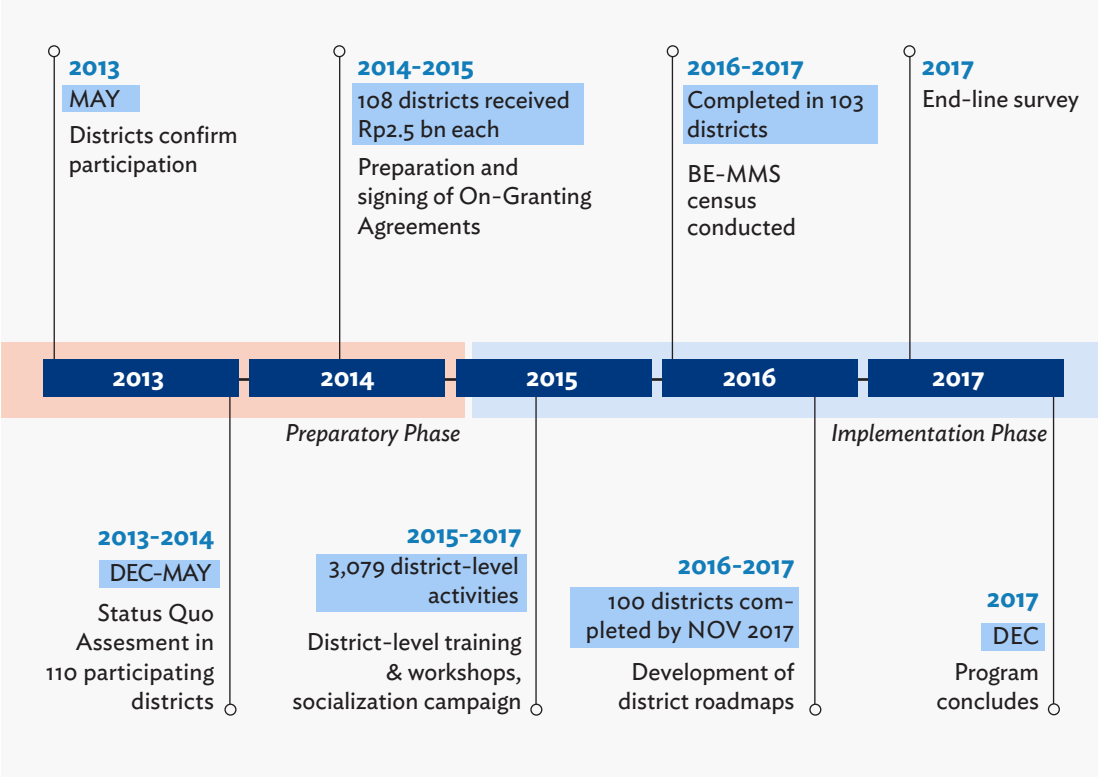
From a total grant commitment of Rp270 billion, each district was allocated Rp2.5 billion (about $175,000) for the 2015–2016 period. When the program was extended in 2017, good performing districts received an additional Rp300–400 million, "average" ones did not receive additional funds, and those with weak performances had their allocations revised and received less funds.

These 108 participating districts or municipalities represent over 20% of all districts or municipalities in Indonesia, which meant their experience would provide valuable data that can inform the replication of MSS capacity building initiatives across Indonesia. The distribution of districts across regions and provinces are as follows:

Table 4. The distribution of 108 participating districts or municipalities

Western Indonesia		Eastern Indonesia	
Yogyakarta	4	Gorontalo	4
Central Java	8	Maluku	6
East Java	10	NTB	6
West Kalimantan	6	NTT	9
South Kalimantan	7	Papua	8
Lampung	7	West Papua	7
South Sumatra	8	West Sulawesi	3
North Sumatra	9	Central Sulawesi	6
Total districts	**59**	**Total districts**	**49**

Figure 4. MSS-CDP Implementation Timeline



One of the program's first key activities was a status quo assessment (SQA) covering 12,980 schools and madrasahs in the 110 nominated districts to obtain baseline data on BE-MSS indicators. After this was completed in May 2014, the program supported MOEC in implementing a national online database for MSS achievement covering 185,000 schools nationwide using the same questionnaire as the SQA.

With the baseline established, the program proceeded to develop training modules for both schools and district offices. The program transitioned from the preparatory phase of 2014 to activity implementation in early 2015.

Over the next three years, district teams were trained on how to analyze data, prepare workplans and budgets to close the MSS gaps, and to negotiate with key decision makers such as local lawmakers. School supervisors, principals, and teachers were trained on how to meet the MSS in line with their respective responsibilities. MOEC and MORA regularly acted as 'national resource persons' for district-level training, and this support also provides feedback to the program on quality issues in the districts.

A timeline of the program's activities is presented in Figure 4. In total, it implemented

3,079 activities involving around 350,000 participants—including teachers, principals, supervisors, district staff, and local "champions"—of which 31.5% was female.

Each district was then required to develop medium-term planning and budgeting documents to achieve the MSS known as a roadmap. Typically, these roadmaps will cover the next 3 to 5 years, in line with the MSS achievement of individual districts, and will be included into the districts' annual plans.

The first step in producing these roadmaps is to conduct a census of all schools and madrasahs in order to provide the data needed for the allocation of the specific resources needed to meet MSS in specific institutions. From 2016-2017, the MSS-CDP enabled school supervisors and district advisors to conduct censuses of schools in 103 participating districts. This represents an achievement of the program, because many of these districts are among the country's most remote and poorest districts, without a strong tradition of data collection for evidence-based policymaking.

The census also used the same instruments as the 2014 SQA. Thus, the program was able to compare the SQA and census results for the 103 districts, revealing unique insights regarding the usefulness or—at the very least—the attainability of the standards. Particularly interesting insights emerged by looking at which BE-MSS indicators showed higher rates of achievement between 2014 and 2017. It is also useful to look closely at the indicators that a significant number or proportion of schools consistently failed to achieve.

For the program's second key output—raising awareness of MSS—a total of 606 information campaigns were funded, targeting around 70,000 participants comprising district leaders, business and NGO communities, school committees, and school and madrasah personnel.

B.2. THE RESULTS: ACHIEVEMENTS AND UNDERACHIEVEMENT

The results show not only the attainability of the standards, but most importantly the improved awareness and capacity of education stakeholders at the district and school levels in meeting MSS.

Schools and madrasahs showed overall improvements in 33 of the 50 sub-indicators between 2014 and 2017. Indicators related to the supervisory and administrative roles of principals displayed the largest improvement, with around a 30-percentage point increase. In terms of the percent of principals exercising supervision and providing feedback to teachers, the comparison showed a 43–44 percentage point increase. The indicator on the percent of junior high principals who send learning assessment reports to the district/municipality education office or the district/municipality MORA representative office, the program showed a 29-percentage point increase.

These achievements may be a direct result of expanded knowledge basis of district governments and school personnel on MSS mandates and requirements through the program's socialization activities and trainings. A shared understanding of the standards contributed to a change in

Table 5. Key Improvements in MSS Indicators

Indicators	2014 SQA	2017 Census
Primary Schools		
Percent of SD/MI where the principal exercises supervision and gives feedback to teachers at least twice each semester.	34%	78%
Percent of SD/MI where all classes meet the operational standards for face-to-face learning activities.	42%	66%
Percent of SD/MI that are visited by school supervisors at least IP14n1 once every month and where at least 3 hours of the visit are used for school supervision and guidance.	23%	46%
Junior Secondary Schools		
Percent of SMP/MTs where the principal exercises supervision and gives feedback to teachers at least twice each semester.	32%	75%
Percent of SMP/MTs where all principals send recapitulation of semester examination results to the Regency/City Education Office or the MORA office at the end of each semester.	62%	91%
Percent of SMP/MTs where all teachers have developed and implemented an assessment program to help improve learning capacity of students.	58%	83%
Percent of SMP/MTs where all teachers have and implement a learning plan based on syllabus for the subject(s) they teach.	55%	80%

Table 6. Indicators with Consistent Achievements Among Large Proportion of Schools and Madrasahs

Indicators	2014 SQA	2017 Census
Primary schools with adequate number of teachers (Indicator 5)		
At least 1 teacher for every 32 students	97%	90%
At least 6 teachers per school (or at least 4 teachers for special regions)	96%	91%
Adoption of an education unit curriculum in accordance with effective regulations (Indicator 21)		
Primary schools	95%	94%
Junior secondary schools	95%	90%
Schools that produce an annual work plan (Indicator 27)	94%	90%

perceptions and attitudes of key decision-makers and leaders at both the district government and school level.

In addition, the increased district MSS achievements may be due to an immediate increase of organizational capacity through the forming of a specialized task force—the district BE MSS technical team—in each of the 103 participating districts, also facilitated by MSS-CDP.

There were also indicators that were consistently achieved by a significantly large proportion of schools. Those on the adoption of the national curriculum, having adequate numbers of teachers, and producing an annual work plan had achievement levels exceeding 90% in the SQA and a change of less than 5 percentage points when compared to the 2017 census. This means they may already be a part of schools' general practices and operations, and could suggest they may no longer serve as a useful guidance for school improvements.

Aside from the success stories, the MSS-CDP program also produced important insights on failures, underperformance, and stagnation. In eight out of 50 sub-indicators, a significant number of districts and schools consistently underperformed, with achievement rates of less than 30% in the 2017 census. These include indicators related to school facilities, classroom resources, and number of qualified teachers

Table 7. Indicators with Consistent Underachievement Among Large Proportion of Schools and Madrasahs

Indicators	2014 SQA	2017 Census
Adequate facilities for effective teaching and learning		
Primary schools that have a complete set of natural science visual aids and materials (Indicator 17)	8%	12%
Junior secondary schools with a complete set of science equipment for demonstration and experiments (Indicator 3)	8%	4%
Junior secondary schools with a science lab with desks and chairs for 36 students (Indicator 3)	19%	11%
Adequate textbooks for students		
Primary schools with a complete set of textbooks for each student on the Indonesian language, mathematics, natural sciences, social sciences, and civics (Indicator 15)	18%	17%
Junior secondary schools with a complete set of textbooks for each student (Indicator 16)	2%	9%
Junior secondary schools with at least 200 titles of enrichment books and 20 titles for reference books (Indicator 18)	17%	29%
Qualified teachers		
Junior secondary schools with at least one teacher for each subject, or one per cluster of subjects in special regions (Indicator 6)	25%	18%
Junior secondary schools with at least one teacher with an S1 or D-IV degree, and who also holds an education certificate for each subject taught—mathematics, natural sciences, Indonesian language, English language and civics.	22%	19%

(Table 6). Consistent underachievement shows that these indicators are particularly difficult for schools and districts to fulfil.

There are also indicators where little-to-no change was observed in terms of the number or proportion of districts and schools that achieved them, with a difference of less than 10 percentage points between 2014 and 2017. These include the indicators for standards for classroom resources, such as science visual aids and teaching equipment, and minimum qualifications for teachers.

During a national meeting to assess the MSS-CDP outcomes, the District Advisory Team members discussed possible explanations for the consistent underachievement in some of the indicators. Two types of difficulties were observed:

- First, some of the standards had a high degree of technical specificity.
- Second, some standards are measured in absolute terms, with indicators that must be 100% met, some of which include a listing of materials or resources that schools must have for them to be considered as having achieved the standard.

Consistent underachievement was also attributed to limited agency to institute changes, which is rooted in unconducive larger political and policy contexts. For example, certification is one of the indicators for the standard for teacher quality. However, the

Training for MSS facilitators on how to prepare budget estimate to meet MSS gaps.

Box 2. MSS-CDP Outputs Raise Optimism

At MSS-CDP completion, most of the targeted outputs were achieved. Under Output 1, the TA (i) completed the MSS census in over 45,000 primary and junior secondary schools in 108 districts, (ii) completed the roadmaps in 100 districts, and (iii) conducted capacity building for over 204,000 education personnel (34.6% female) comprising school principals, supervisors, district officers and school committees. Over 80% of the schools in the 108 districts were trained in school planning and budgeting to meet the MSS gap. A total of 259 regional resource persons were trained in the MSS modules to become cadre in the districts to champion the MSS both during and after the program. The roadmap guided the districts in developing annual plans and budgets to meet the MSS gaps. Out of 100 districts that had completed the roadmaps, 66 have integrated them into the district annual work plans and district midterm development plans, and earmarked budget for it in the plans for the next 3-4 fiscal years. The remaining districts needed more time to integrate the roadmaps due to various factors, such as local elections and internal discussions among stakeholders.

Under Output 2, the MSS-CDP promoted the MSS by (i) establishing a website that links MOEC's MSS information with online MSS district reporting, (ii) publishing 3,000 MSS handbooks and 26,000 brochures for stakeholders at the national and district levels, (iii) publishing quarterly electronic newsletter *RINGKAS* for a mailing-list of around 470 stakeholders, (iv) conducting 13 radio and TV talk shows, creating TV commercials, producing 17 episodes of mini movies named MURID5 broadcasted through YouTube, (v) conducting Facebook and Twitter campaigns, and (vi) convening media brownbag sessions to discuss MSS. By the end of the program, the MSS Facebook page had received 26,452 likes, the *MURID5* mini-series received over 205,000 views, and the Twitter followers reached 384. The program generated more than 700 articles in both online and printed media at the national and local levels.

Public awareness of MSS improved from 9% during the baseline to a peak of 27% during the midterm, before declining to 15% after program completion, since no more advertisements were posted then.

Under Output 3, the MSS-CDP successfully integrated MSS funding with *Dana BOS*—the regular budget support for schools from the government—to enable schools to use BOS funds to finance six MSS sub-indicators. However, integration of MSS into the school accreditation system was not achieved, as it requires the amendment of laws and regulations that could not be completed during the TA implementation period.

supply of certified teachers is affected by the central government's authority to determine the quota for the number of teachers who can gain civil servant status, which in turn is a prerequisite to be prioritized for certification.

Fulfilling this standard would therefore require reforming the teacher recruitment, professional development, certification, and teacher distribution systems within the district and beyond. The requirements are entangled with a set of complex issues caused by limitations in financial resources. Moreover, the national policies and local political priorities on this issue are sometimes at odds with each other, and loopholes in the teacher recruitment system have resulted in the hiring of less-than-qualified teachers.

In terms of the achievement of the program's second key output on raising awareness of the MSS, an important feature was the inclusion of a nationwide advocacy campaign. This resulted in wide media coverage of good practices under the project, helping build public interest in education MSS, creating a high level of accountability among schools and districts. Publicizing successful MSS achievements and highlighting the large number of districts or municipalities effectively implementing the standards also send a strong message that these successes are systemic rather than isolated, and can be achieved nationwide. The program received wide media coverage, with more than 700 articles published in both national and local media, and achieved substantial reach on social media platforms such as Facebook (see Box 2).

B.3. THE ROLE OF INTERRELATIONSHIPS AMONG POLICY ACTORS

One of the most important features of MSS-CDP was its engagement with key education stakeholders. These include relevant institutions within the central government, such as the MOEC, MORA, National Development Planning Agency (BAPPENAS), Ministry of Finance (MOF), and the National Accreditation Board for Schools and Madrasah, as well as international development institutions. At the district/municipality level, the program also engaged various stakeholders such as the local parliament, district education office, district planning office, district finance and resource office, MORA's district representative office, practitioners and educators, members of community-based organizations, and even the private sector. The participation of various stakeholders is a key factor behind successful project implementation, ensuring synchronized efforts with wide-ranging support.

This section explores three cases where such engagement and interrelationships helped advance the MSS-CDP agenda and determine the program's effectiveness. The following analysis is based on interviews with ADB and MSS-CDP team members, as well as project documentation, such as archived experience, reflections, lessons learned, and anecdotal accounts from the field.

B.3.1. CASE 1: THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT, MSS-CDP, AND ADB

Leveraging established policies and precedents is a key component of the effective implementation of a decentralization policy on quality standards.

First, the BE-MSS standards build upon and therefore reinforce the implementation of a set of existing policies. The most pertinent among these are the school grants policy (School Operational Assistance Fund, or Dana BOS, and Special Allocation Funds, or DAK grants) and the pre-financing grant mechanism.

Second, parallel to this, the BE-MSS implementation and capacity development efforts were built on the foundation of a set of well-established working relationships and knowledge based on previous work on similar policies. The existing relationships and relevant experience, which resulted in accrued knowledge on national policy implementation, facilitated the path forward for the program's work.

In addition, there were the MSS-CDP Technical Oversight and Technical Working groups, which consisted of representatives from key ministries, such as BAPPENAS, MOF, MOEC, MORA, and MOHA, as well as the EU and ADB. The two groups served not only to maintain the central government's continued involvement in BE-MSS implementation, but also to assist the program in securing and maintaining the political commitment of local governments.

An interesting initiative in the MSS-CDP includes a collaboration with the MOF on a pre-financing mechanism. The TA grant awarded Rp2.5 billion (about $175,000) to each participating district in 2015, channelled through the district government budgeting system as reimbursements. One of the conditions for a district to participate in MSS-CDP and receive funding and capacity development support was "their readiness and commitment to conduct and pre-finance a list of pre-determined set of activities from the district budget." These activities included socialization and trainings, implementation of the SQA to establish a district-wide baseline, a district-wide school census for evaluating improvements in BE-MSS, advocacy activities towards mainstreaming BE-MSS fulfilment plans in each district, development planning and budgeting, and engagement with local stakeholders.

The MSS-CDP is the first to pioneer the pre-financing mechanism in Indonesia for the entirety of the program's implementation. Previously, it was partially implemented for the Basic Education Capacity Trust Fund (BEC-TF), a capacity development grant from the Dutch government (€22 million) and the European Commission (€17 million) managed by the World Bank that was implemented in 50 districts/municipalities in nine provinces from 2008 to 2012. The pre-financing modality requires the district to spend the money in a more transparent and accountable way, because it is monitored more closely in line with the agreed plan and outputs. The government appears to now be applying this kind of approach.

In the MSS-CDP, the MOF arranged on-granting agreements directly with district governments as a warranty for the pre-financing mechanism. The binding agreements, which were signed by the district heads or city mayors and the MOF, represented the central government's political capacity to signal to the districts the

importance of implementing and achieving BE-MSS. They also symbolize MOF's commitment to support the districts in fully carrying out the responsibilities that come with receiving funding from the EU and ADB, and capacity development support through MSS-CDP.

B.3.2. CASE 2: COLLABORATION AND SYNERGIES AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL

In order to achieve the MSS-CDP goals, various stakeholders at the district level had to be able to collaborate effectively. The relationships and interactions between individuals and institutional policy actors play a significant role in contributing to the effectiveness of any advocacy or capacity development effort.

Two factors contributed to the success of MSS-CDP at the district level. First, there was the sociocultural capital that facilitated partnerships between the MSS-CDP district advisors and the district government. We witnessed the advisors go back and forth tirelessly between the district leadership and other stakeholders in order to properly implement the program. The advisors' sociocultural sensibilities often determined

The best 10 performing districts in implementing MSS-CDP programs received appreciation from MOEC, ADB and EU.

whether they would be able to gain the trust of their district counterparts, gain or maintain the district's commitment to the program, and—most importantly—build the local government's awareness and understanding of their mandate to ensure that all schools and madrasahs within their jurisdiction eventually meet the BE-MSS. In this case, the impact of the advisors' BE-MSS knowledge and technical expertise—for example, to help districts develop a direct priority action plan and determine resource allocation to close gaps—was facilitated by their cultural capital.

The second factor relates to the effective internal synergies within governmental and nongovernmental bodies. Effective districts made progress in terms of key program milestones, such as the SQA, the census, the BE-MSS roadmap development, socialization activities, and training workshops. In all these activities, the districts had the full support and guidance of their district advisors. These activities, however, required effective internal synergy and collaboration among the various technical offices within the district government. This highlights the treatment of a district government not as single entity, but as a network of different offices with unique mandates, authorities, and priorities. A lack of collaboration and communication among its different units would impede the program's progress. In the context of MSS-CDP, effective districts had responsive education offices and proactive BE-MSS district advisory and technical teams.

B.3.3. CASE 3: MSS-CDP, THE DISTRICT GOVERNMENT, AND THE PUBLIC

A capacity development program must not overlook the public's role. The collaboration between the MSS-CDP team and the district government involved the public—including the business community—to ensure the program successfully achieved its goals.

One crucial partnership is between the district government and the private sector—the business, industrial, and professional community—which falls under the category of nongovernmental policy partner to the ADB and MSS-CDP. The community has become one of district's most valued partners, as businesses directly contributed toward the schools' achievement of the standards. Some schools were able to achieve the MSS through considerable contributions from the private sector.

By 2017, four MSS-CDP participating districts in one province had been in the process of issuing regulations on corporate social responsibility (CSR) and the private sector's involvement in local education development. The CSR regulations formalized the partnerships and allowed for the continued flow of resources, which in this case took the form of direct financial contributions to schools from both public enterprises and private business entities. Some districts, for example, established CSR forums to ensure that corporate gifts and contributions were appropriately channeled to assist priority schools and those most in need. While not all districts had a regulatory framework in place for

the CSR contributions, the direct involvement of businesses in achieving BE-MSS was seen in a significant number of participating districts.

In summary, the partnerships among policy actors—an international nongovernmental development agency, individuals contracted as consultants, and government entities—prior to the beginning of MSS-CDP served as an effective launching pad for the implementation of advocacy and capacity development works. The central government can leverage districts' legitimacy and ability to achieve policy and program compliance. ADB's ongoing and good working relationships with policymakers in the central government helped determine the improvement of capacities in the MSS-CDP. Through the district advisors selected, the program also built on the rich knowledge and experience gained from previous projects related to education policy implementation and decentralization in Indonesia. The MSS-CDP provides valuable lessons for future capacity development efforts, in particular on how to manage and raise the minimum service standards in public services. ■

District Facilitators participated in Training of Trainers for MSS Implementation prior to their fielding.


KARYA KELOMPOK


SMP NEGERI
1
INDRALAYA UTARA

C. LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In a decentralized system of governance, MSS have proven effective at ensuring that every region and every school meets the minimum conditions for learning. To ensure that the policy is implemented effectively, the MSS-CDP offers a number of lessons, such as:

(i) Effective engagement with key stakeholders at both the central and local government levels is critical to the successful implementation of a program;

(ii) It is important to consider the variability, capacity, and cultural background of local governments, while maintaining consistent standards and policies;

(iii) A transparent reward-and-punishment system could give positive results in the decentralization context; and

(iv) An effort to improve education quality across regions requires consistent policies that should be implemented over the longer term with continuous monitoring and improvements over time.

The MSS-CDP shows that if an opportunity exists to improve the MSS, the following principles should be considered:

(1) The standards should hold districts and schools accountable only for matters over which they have control.

(2) The standards should have clearly defined outputs or targets that can be interpreted with relative ease by local governments. In the case of Indonesia's BE-MSS policy, it was crucial to include implementation guidelines that lay out:

- A pre-determined set of domains and components of quality improvement;
- A pre-determined set of targets, and ways to assess and measure gaps between current and ideal conditions related to each component;
- Ways to phase improvements through milestones to help encourage progress over a period of time;
- Ways to analyze costs, identify existing and needed programs and policy support, and map out responsibilities across groups, units, and offices (whether at the level of government, school, or community).

(3) The standards should comprise key educational elements which can leverage quality improvement meaningfully.

(4) The standards should provide sufficient practical guidance for schools and local governments.

(5) The standards should not be a stand-alone policy, and instead be connected to the implementation of other existing policies, such as those related to school operational funds.

(6) The standards should reflect an affirmative agenda aiming to help reduce regional and school-to-school disparity.

The six principles above can only be effective in an enabling environment, which can be developed by following these policies:

(1) The government should provide non-punitive incentive schemes.
(2) Capacity development work should be integrated into the implementation of education decentralization policies.
(3) Key capacity development areas include political capacity, knowledge capacity, and fiscal capacity.
(4) Advocacy work should be done in parallel, if not integrated into capacity development efforts, highlighting the strategic importance of general public participation.
(5) Entities involved in policy reform and capacity development work should capitalize on existing or prior established working partnerships among policy actors.

Based on MSS-CDP, the following areas are recommended for MOEC and other stakeholders' consideration.

C.1 MSS NEEDS A BETTER ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

The 2013 ministerial regulation on MSS defines the minimum value that each school or district must meet for each indicator. If a school or district fails to meet a particular target, it will receive a score of zero for that indicator. This means that a school missing only one textbook would fail the indicator for textbooks entirely. This also means that every sub-indicator needed to be achieved by all the schools in the district in order for the indicator to be achieved. Throughout the MSS-CDP implementation, it became apparent that it is very difficult or almost impossible for all schools in a district to meet all the indicators.

Therefore, a different assessment system was suggested, as shown in the following formula:

It is difficult to generalize the reasons for why districts showed major improvements or declines in their MSS scores. An overview of the indicators shows that the performance gap was mainly at the school-level indicators, specifically those related to the performance of principals. In particular, most schools struggled with the indicators requiring principals to send reports on examinations to students' parents, and on adopting school-based management principles (e.g., producing an annual work plan and an annual report, and having a well-functioning school committee).

In other words, the capacity of the principals and the effectiveness of the MOEC/MORA school-based management training program may have an impact on MSS achievement. To gain a real picture of MSS achievement in each school, measuring MSS indicators using a

$$\textbf{\% of MSS Achieved} = \frac{\text{Total Number of Indicators Achieved}}{(\text{Total Number of Schools}) \times (\text{Number of MSS Indicators})}$$

weighted score could be adopted vis-à-vis the current "pass-or-fail" approach. In addition, targets should have been reconsidered once the baseline was established.

C.2. MSS POLICY NEEDS POLITICAL SUPPORT & PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

To make the education MSS achievable, all government stakeholders need to have a clear and common understanding of the policy's objectives and targets. The standards need to be aligned with laws and regulations on regional autonomy (primarily the 2014 Local Government Law and the 2018 government regulation on MSS) on the one hand, but also with laws and regulations on education. A clear understanding and common concept of MSS is critical in order to avoid confusion in the implementation

Box 3. The Problem With 'Pass-or-Fail' Evaluation in Education MSS

The strict methodology employed to measure MSS achievements may understate the actual improvements by the districts. MSS-CDP offers an alternative approach to this evaluation. Instead of assessing at the school level, the program instead measured the percentage of MSS indicators achieved against the total number of MSS indicators.

Using this, the overall MSS score for 103 participating districts improved from 57% in the SQA to 69% in the census. Breaking down by education level, the aggregated district MSS scores for both primary (SD/MI) and junior high school levels (SMP/MTs) also demonstrate significant improvements over the 3-year program period (see table below).

Box 2 Table: District MSS Achievement (Indicator-Level): SQA & MSS Census

	2014 SQA	2016-2017 Census	No. of Districts Improved
Total Districts	57%	69%	91
Primary Schools	58%	70%	89
Junior secondary schools	52%	61%	86

Notes:

- SQA = a sampling of around 20% of the schools in the 110 nominated districts, carried out from December 2013 to May 2014. This involved a sample of more than 12,900 schools, including some of the poorest, most remote districts in the country, and with the lowest fiscal capacity.
- Census = carried out in 2016-2017 covering all the schools in 103 participating districts, amounting to more than 45,000 schools/madrasahs.

by local governments. It is important to continue the dialogue initiated by the TA to come to a consensus on simpler but more meaningful MSS indicators that would trigger improvements in basic education quality and equity.

The MSS-CDP provides important lessons on the role of the MOEC, in particular the Director General of Basic and Secondary Education as the program director. The program was new and relatively uncharted territory for the government, as previous efforts to improve the education MSS did not alter the implementation process. The MOEC's initiative to take charge of the MSS-CDP was appreciated. The program received extensive political support from all levels of the bureaucracy, resulting in effective coordination among education stakeholders throughout its implementation process.
Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning two lessons learned in terms of outreach and the strategy to engage the public. First, the public communications strategy should be developed and clearly articulated at the preparatory stage. Second, sufficient time and resources should be devoted to support the implementation of this public communication strategy to achieve greater impacts.

Strategy for Next Education MSS

The education MSS will transform over time—over years, decades, and even presidencies—until it finds the right moment to be implemented effectively nationwide. The MSS-CDP has already started a path toward setting up a good MSS framework for education and other basic services. It has successfully improved the capacity of district officers and school personnel in understanding the importance of MSS and improving process-type indicators that relate to school management relatively quickly over a short period of time, due to the program's socialization and capacity-building activities. Data from the field also show that 72% of schools in the targeted districts had an increase in achievement of at least one indicator, which is a considerable achievement despite the large variance among districts.

Evidence gathered through the program and MOEC online monitoring data, however, shows that some of the current MSS indicators are difficult to achieve. These indicators are mostly at the junior high school level and related to infrastructure (particularly science lab and equipment), teacher management and qualification, and textbook/enrichment books. As the 2014 Local Government Law and 2018 government regulation on MSS require that the current MSS be updated, this would be a good opportunity to reformulate the indicators to make them simpler (easier to measure), more affordable, and more meaningful for improving the quality of education delivery.

Empowering local governments in Indonesia requires an understanding of the political entanglements within the institutions in central government, as well as of how strategic and important the fulfilment of basic services is for the president. Government regulations issued by the president serve as a guide for how basic services should be delivered to citizens in general, while MOHA provides operational guidelines for the technical

A talkshow with Madrasah Stakeholders discussing challenges and opportunities on how to implement MSS in MORA's schools.

ministries to issue accompanying regulations on MSS in their respective sectors, including in education. MOHA's involvement is based on the decentralization policy, as stated in the 2014 Local Government Law.

The MSS-CDP provides valuable lessons for Indonesia, particularly in terms of developing a robust strategy for education MSS that involves central and local governments, and inter-ministerial collaboration. The MOEC and MOHA can start developing the new education MSS with emphasis on local government participation, massive socialization, school-parent-community engagement, and private sector contribution to closing the MSS gap in many districts and municipalities.

With lessons from the MSS-CDP and amid the disruptions created by the COVID-19 pandemic to the education sector, the government should now have the momentum to revise the various government regulations regarding the technical guidance for the implementation of education MSS. The new set of regulations could address the efforts to mitigate the negative impacts of COVID-19 on education as well.

Indonesia also needs to consider global dynamics and information and

Local government plays key roles in ensuring the quality of learning at each school by implementing MSS. Mayor of Kulonprogo District, Yogyakarta, launched MSS Roadmap which outline the strategy and funding to achieve MSS.

communication technology (ICT) advancements in setting up the new education MSS. Until recently, most schools were still encouraged to use physical books, notebooks, pencils, stationery, and physical buildings. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, however, computer labs, internet infrastructure, and teachers' computer skills are now necessary for effective virtual teaching and learning. Distance learning sessions are now part of students' daily activities.

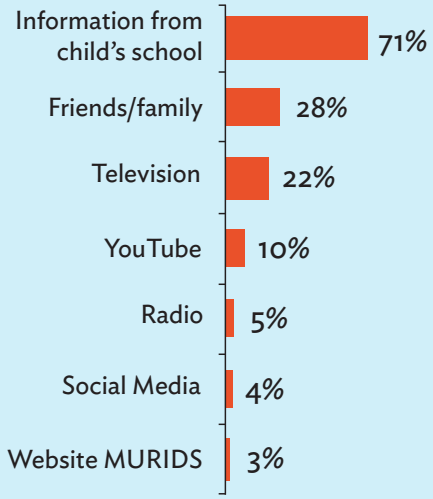
The next education MSS should therefore include requirements and targets that cover the cost of digital materials and internet connection fees.

Supervisors, principals, and teachers also need to master computer skills to keep pace with technological developments. Central and local governments should facilitate the availability of telecommunications, information technology systems, and new media businesses to enable schools to access digital learning contents. Public-private collaborations have already been initiated by several local governments in the MSS-CDP through CSR forums. This type of collaboration will flourish in the future if the

Box 4.
Teachers' Word-of-Mouth Works

By far the main source of information about the MSS was "word of mouth". Some 71% of respondents reported getting information about it from their children's teacher during parent-teacher or school committee meetings. The rest got information from friends, mainly other parents at the same school (see Figure 4 below). This highlights the importance of the role of teachers as an effective medium to increase parents' awareness of MSS. Teachers and school entities are essential sources of information dissemination related to government's programs in education. Therefore, future campaigns should be synchronized with MSS-CDP socialization activities to strengthen the role of teachers.

Box 4 Figure:
MSS Source of Information



Base: All, Random Respondents (N=501)

central government seriously considers and even encourages them.

Indonesia should also consider different approaches to applying MSS in education, such as changing from the one-size-fits-all scheme to a more categorized scheme to assess the performance of districts and schools. Ideally, the central government should develop a matrix of different target indicators for education and health, along with other related ministries and budget allocation, supervision, and governance. This matrix should also categorize the country's 514 districts and 34 provinces based on their previous achievements, existing capacity, and available resources. With this, districts in the lower categories could be encouraged to reach higher standards, while the better-performing districts could be appreciated for achieving higher standards than the national average.

The education quality improvement program through MSS intervention should involve the Office of President and MOHA leadership from day one. This is in addition to the involvement of MOEC, MORA, and MOF at the central government level for the basic education standards. "Follow the money trail" can be a good guide for tracking MSS implementation progress. Indonesia's budget system almost always includes the legislature (DPR in the national level and DPRD in regional and local parliaments), so it is advisable to involve the members of parliament in charge of budget planning and approval.

The MSS-CDP successfully encouraged districts and municipalities to integrate MSS in a Local Government Medium-Term

Development Plan (RPJMD), local government annual workplan, and other regulations that made capacity development program in education MSS sustainable with support from the state budget. Eventually, the MSS will be embedded in routine government activities from the beginning. Digital technology and cloud computing, including the use of Big Data, make it possible for the MSS improvement initiative to be done at once for all 514 districts and 34 provinces in Indonesia. This, however, can also be done in stages over three years.

The pre-financing grant arrangement in MSS-CDP also showed that local governments are able to adopt innovative approaches in conducting their duties. The districts and municipalities that participated in the program may then serve as mentors for other local government units. Hopefully, local governments in general will learn the lessons from the 2012-2017 MSS-CDP experience to revise existing regulations and develop helpful technical guidance in the near future. ■

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Using Minimum Service Standards to Support Education Decentralization: Indonesia's Experience

Indonesia's experience is an important case to be observed closely. Following a political reform in 1999, the responsibility of managing most government affairs and public services—including education—was decentralized to local governments. Minimum Service Standards (MSS) is a policy instrument to guide and monitor local governments in delivering public services, which set out the minimum quality and quantity of services a local government has to deliver in a specific sector. This report summarizes lessons from the implementation of Basic Education MSS capacity development program held in 100 local government.

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ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

The Plaza Office Tower 11th Floor
No. 28-30, Jalan M.H. Thamrin
Menteng Jakarta 10350