

EDUCATION QUALITY IMPROVEMENTS IN INDONESIA

Learning to Better Manage Education Services

A national call for democracy spurred Indonesia to begin the process of decentralizing its education system in 2001. Despite the promise of a revised system, key barriers to the provision of education still existed: teachers and parents needed greater input on how schools operated; and more effective management and accounting mechanisms were required to support schools and community initiatives.

In April 2005, RTI International began implementing the More Effective Decentralized Education Management and Governance (DBE1) program, a 5-year project funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). DBE1 is one of three integrated components that form USAID's Decentralized Basic Education program in Indonesia.

As prime contractor, RTI works with local governments in 50 districts across seven provinces—East Java, Central Java, West Java/Banten (combined), South Sulawesi, North Sumatra, and Aceh—to develop models of education management and governance that can be replicated in the remaining 400 districts over time.

DBE1 helps local governments improve their education management and finance systems, develop community participation in education governance, and strengthen private-sector support for education.

Community-Driven Education Sector Improvement

Building community support for education can help improve quality and increase financial resources for schools. However, in Indonesia, parents and other community members were shielded from school budgeting and planning decisions before decentralization. RTI now works to foster community participation and improve school management. The project has trained more than 13,000 school committee members and principals to become active, effective contributors to school planning, management, and oversight.



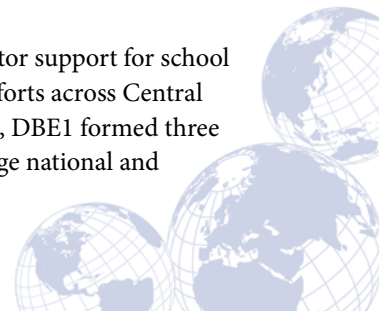
At nearly 1,100 schools, including state and community madrasahs—schools run by Islamic foundations—RTI has helped principals, school committees, and parents collaborate to create School Development Plans, which help guide school priorities, activities, and budgeting. More than 3,000 additional schools are implementing this DBE1 methodology using local funding. To increase transparency, DBE1 encourages schools to start posting their budgets not only to limit the possibility of corruption, but also to instill a sense of community ownership of the schools.

DBE1 is improving school-level planning and systems through

- Thorough capacity assessments
- Participatory data collection and analysis
- Training in and the creation of multiyear school development plans
- Training in school management techniques
- Building demand for improvement in other project districts
- Using Information for Accountability tools and approaches
- Institutionalizing school-level participatory monitoring and evaluation

Engaging the Private Sector

DBE1 has also leveraged private sector support for school reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts across Central Java, Aceh, and Yogyakarta. In 2007, DBE1 formed three public-private partnerships with large national and



international oil companies to finance the rebuilding of 38 schools and community learning centers. The project also trained more than 900 principals and school committee members to identify other school needs and develop approaches to encourage private sector participation.

As part of this effort, RTI created an Information Communications and Technology grants program to further spur private sector social investments in education. Thirteen Information Communications and Technology grants, totaling nearly \$300,000, have been approved by USAID. A unique feature of the program is that grantees are consortia of private sector and government institutions, including public libraries.

Planning for Good Measure

DBE1 also helps strengthen district planning and budgeting by shifting districts away from using highly aggregate sums toward using more targeted data for planning. With technical assistance from RTI, 29 districts can now strategically tailor their limited budgets to focus on the most essential and effective areas.

While many newly elected officials have adopted the political platform that education should be free, the method of financial analysis RTI has introduced has revealed in many districts that government subsidies alone would not cover basic operational costs of schools. Now more districts and the Province of Aceh are requesting financial analysis help from the project to determine whether they could realistically offer free education.

Collaborations Yield Greater Impact

DBE1 collaboration with another RTI-led project in Indonesia is adding significant value to both projects' outreach. DBE1 works with USAID's Local Governance Support Program (<http://www.lgsp.or.id>) in Aceh and areas of Java. The projects share geographic scope and have been able to share materials and methods for planning and implementation, especially in Aceh, where DBE1 began work after the 2004 tsunami.

RTI also supports the implementation of DBE2, another component of USAID's integrated education program in Indonesia. DBE2 employs local facilitators to train teachers in effective teaching strategies, such as joyful active learning. This approach promotes peer collaboration and student-teacher interaction, injecting energy and efficiency into classrooms.



DBE1 hosts a training of trainers event for producing School Development Plans, September 2007. [Photo: DBE1 East Java Team]

Looking Ahead

By the end of the program, DBE1 will have worked in more than 50 districts to increase the capacity of local governments to plan for and manage education services, increase community participation in providing education, and replicate best practices throughout the country. The project will have reached more than 1,000 schools and 150,000 students through direct interventions, while local governments, schools, and private institutions have pledged \$1.7 million to replicate DBE interventions in an additional 4,000 schools. In addition, DBE1 has worked to ensure sustainability by training 334 government officials, particularly school inspectors, to improve and apply their planning and budgeting skills. The project is also identifying and building the capacity of local institutions, such as universities, to assist local governments in school-related financial analysis, database use, and planning.



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