

POLICY BRIEF

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2007 TEACHER CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

I. Background

In an effort to set standards and increase the quality of teachers, in 2007 the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) and the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA) began to implement a teacher certification program. Teacher certification applies to teachers in public and private schools, across all levels of schooling, and aims to improve the quality of teachers, learning, and education in Indonesia in a holistic and ongoing manner.

Participants in the certification program are teachers that have, as a minimum, an undergraduate degree (S1) or four-year diploma (D4) who are selected based on a set of ordered criteria. They are required to compile and submit portfolios for assessment against set standards. Teachers deemed to pass, either directly through portfolio assessment or after undertaking a remedial training course, receive a certificate, a teacher registration number, and a professional allowance to the value of one month's basic salary. In 2008 The SMERU Research Institute undertook a study of the 2007 certification program in Jambi, West Java, and West Kalimantan to understand its implementation process and perceptions of the parties involved on whether there was any influence on the quality of teachers and learning.

II. Findings

Implementing Organizations

In general, implementing organizations (MoNE, MoRA, and institutions for the education of teaching staff/LPTK) implemented the program in line with the requirements. However, there is also evidence of a lack of coordination between different implementing institutions. This could be seen in situations where teachers were asked to be certified through the wrong ministry, or both ministries.

Socialization

MoNE and MoRA held formal socialization sessions for both implementing institutions and participating teachers. However, as funds were not set aside specifically for socialization, socialization activities by kabupaten (district)/kota (city) level offices varied between study areas and not all implementing institutions provided the certification guidebook for participating teachers. Participants' understanding of certification improved in the second year, but understanding of the details of the professional allowance remained limited. MoNE opened a community services unit to handle complaints, but information about the unit was not available in the guidebook for participants, and participants generally did not know that it existed.

Determination of Quotas

The number of certification participant quotas varied between provinces and kabupaten/kota. Quotas in every study area were unfilled due to inaccurate data, and the fact that quotas were based on the total number of teachers, but participants were determined based on whether they had an undergraduate degree. There were also disproportionate numbers of teachers with S1/D4 across regions. MoRA kabupaten/kota officers and teachers thought that the quota MoRA received was too small.

Determination of Participants

Generally kabupaten/kota education offices chose participants based on a set of ordered criteria, with length of teaching experience the most important criteria. However, in a limited number of cases determination of participants was not transparent, and there were participants who had less work experience than those who were not chosen to become participants.

Implementation of the 2007 Teacher Certification Program

Portfolio Compilation

Although a guidebook for teachers was supplied, many participants did not fully understand the technical aspects of the portfolio compilation. Teachers also experienced difficulty in collecting old documents and certificates, making lesson plans, and compiling the portfolio in the limited time provided. There were reports of falsified training and seminar certificates and plagiarized lesson plans. This was rectified in 2008, when participants were required to provide original documents. Participants spent between Rp100,000 to Rp500,000 on various costs associated with portfolio compilation.

Portfolio Assessment

The percentage of participants who passed directly from portfolio assessment was relatively low and varied between areas. There were no indications of deception or deviations in the portfolio assessment. However, there are indications of high subjectivity from assessors.

Remedial Training and Passing Rates

A large proportion of participants undertook the remedial training course. Participants considered the remedial training course beneficial, with relevant and useful course material and competent instructors. Generally remedial training participants passed the course, so information spread that all certification candidates would pass, and it was only the stage at which they passed that would differ. At the time the study was conducted none of the teachers had received teacher registration numbers, and only a few participants from West Kalimantan had received teaching certificates.

Professional Allowance

The payment of the professional allowance has been delayed. Only 2006 quota participants have received the allowance, and only for the first quarter (October–December 2007), not for the following quarters. At the time this study was conducted, in June 2008, it was not certain when the professional allowance would be paid.

Impacts of the Program

Certification's impact on the quality of teachers is uncertain because it is not designed to identify qualified teachers and is based only on assessments of portfolios which cover pre-existing administrative documents. However, teachers have been encouraged to continue their studies and actively participate in various activities in order to obtain certificates for their portfolios. Certification has also given rise to document and portfolio compilation services. The requirement to teach 24 hours per week has also made many teachers seek additional teaching hours in their schools or in other schools.

III. Recommendations

- Wider distribution of clear and consistent information about the division of authority between MoNE and MoRA, both for implementing organizations as well as teachers. This must be supported by good coordination and the two organizations should use similar standards in implementing the program, especially in determining participants.
- To maintain objectivity in the determination of participants, the selection criteria must be transparent and the ranked list of teachers who fulfill the criteria should be easily accessed by teachers.
- Control mechanisms for certification implementation must be optimized, including by having existing monitoring institutions, implementing institutions, and independent institutions conduct staged monitoring. The existence of a complaints body should be communicated widely and at the various government levels, with a clear complaints resolution mechanism. In addition, there must be strict sanctions for the various forms of deception or deviations which occur.
- To better ensure that the objective of certification, i.e., to increase the quality of teachers and education, is met, the performance of teachers who pass certification should be assessed periodically based on their pedagogical, professional, personal, and social skills.

SMERU is an independent institution for research and policy studies which professionally and proactively provides accurate and timely information as well as objective analysis on various socioeconomic and poverty issues considered most urgent and relevant for the people of Indonesia
