

Parahyangan Catholic University
Faculty of Social and Political Sciences
Department of International Relations



The Impact of Indonesia Mengajar on Remote Communities through the eyes of Pengajar Muda

West Java Field Study

Emma Ford
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HALAMAN PENGESAHAN

Nama (*Name*) :
NIM (*Student ID*) :
Judul (*Research Title*):

Penulis

(*Author's Name*)

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Tim Penguji

(*Supervisor Name with Credentials Title*)
Ketua sidang merangkap anggota

(*Examiner I Name with Credentials Title*)
Anggota Penguji I

(*Examiner II Name with Credentials Title*)
Anggota Penguji II

Adrian M. Budiman, Ph.D.
Deputy Resident Director ACICIS

Mengesahkan,

Dr. Pius Sugeng Prasetyo, M.Si.
Dekan Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik

Abstract

The report explores the experiences and attitudes of the Pengajar Muda in remote communities within Indonesia. The research explores the history of education within Indonesia, as well as examining some of the current problems that the system faces. In recent times an NGO called Indonesia Mengajar emerged to address specific deficits within the Education system, namely teacher quality and teacher distribution. This programs seeks to develop the future leaders of Indonesia through their deployment in regional communities, where they provide education and civic engagement opportunities for local people. Criticisms have emerged that this NGO is embedded with a neoliberal ideology of cosmopolitan colonialism. This paper explores the Pengajar Muda's general attitudes towards education, and experiences gathered in their engagement with these communities as a way of assessing how legitimately Indonesia Mengajar is able to address education concerns within Indonesia.

Key Words: Indonesia, education, teaching, access, Indonesia Mengajar, non-government organisations.

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Problem Identification

The Indonesian Education system is the fourth largest education system in the world. Indonesia is an archipelago country that arguably consist of 17 thousand islands stretching over 1, 900 000 square kilometres and hosting over 255 million people. The 6,000 inhabited islands host over 50 million students, taught by 2.6 million teachers within 250, 000 schools. Unsurprisingly the staggering volume of vastly situated people means that Indonesia has challenges in providing equitable education to their student-age population. The qualitative experiences of students, teachers and stakeholders, and the quantitative scores that Indonesia produces in International standardised testing both conclude that Indonesia has not yet managed to provide an equitable and quality education for all. The two largest problems the Indonesian Education system faces today is the lack of Educational quality and effective distribution of qualified teachers across the archipelago (Chang 2014, 22).

Historical Positioning

In the early years of Independence, Indonesia's cultural perception of teachers was that they were 'nation-builders' and worthy of respect (Bjork 2015, 43). However at this time there were reportedly fewer than 100 high schools in a country that consisted of 72 million people (Schonhardt 2012). This meant access to education was severely deficient. When Suharto gained power he took significant measures to improve educational access across the archipelago. His method was to quickly create a large body of teachers ready to educate the population. However the move was rapid, the education provided for the future-teachers was shallow, and the certification poor quality. The consequences of this move has resulted in many describing teachers as little more than 'civil servants,' trained to 'indoctrinate,' rather than educate and empower citizens (Bjork 2014, 190). Teachers were trained to impart content rather than create critical thinkers. Now Indonesia has 1000's of high schools and 300 universities, and a large body of certified teachers, but this increased access to education has not translated into positive educational outcomes for the country's students.

Current Climate

The World Bank released a report in 2014 that outlined several immediate realities of the education experience in Indonesia. In 2014 it was reported that in low-income areas primary school enrolment sat at 60%, contrasted against the universal enrolment in more developed, higher-income areas. Junior high enrolments sat at 66% across all demographic, and Senior high enrolments sat at 45%. Given that the Indonesian government has mandated 9 years of free education for all Indonesian citizens, these figures would imply that Indonesia currently faces issues of equity in accessing Education.

Internationally Indonesia consistently performs well below other countries. In 2006 Indonesians participated in the PISA assessment, which tests how prepared 15-year-olds are for real-world situations through math, science and reading testing. Indonesia ranked 48th out of 56 countries in reading, 52nd in science and 51st in mathematics (Chang 2014, 44) In 2007 Indonesia ranked 36th out of 49 countries in the The International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS).

In 2004 the Ministry of National Education completed a study investigation the content-knowledge of their employed teachers. A significant portion of the one million teachers tested poorly. A general knowledge test produced a national average of 34/90, and in the subject specific tests (of which there are 14 distinguishable content areas) only four subjects produced an average score of 50% (Chang 2014, 20). It is possible that a contributing factor in these poor results is that there has historically been a lack of communication and accountability between the higher-education institutions and the education department. Previously the certification process was determined by the higher-learning institutions, and the Department of Education trusted that their assessment was valid and fair. Those who hired and placed teachers did not require any clarification in the prospective teachers capabilities.

Current Solutions

In more recent history the Indonesian government has made substantial steps to improving the quality of education within Indonesia. In partnership with advisory and funding bodies like the World Bank, Indonesia has made legislative and constitutional changes in order to competitively improve Indonesia's education climate. Between 2000 and 2006 education spending doubled. In 2007 the Government spent more on education than in any other sector (the equivalent of US \$14 Billion). In 2003 The Law on National Education was introduced, and the constitutional amendment III was introduced, which emphasised that all Indonesian citizens receive 9 years of free education. They also introduced a financial mandate to ensure that 20% of the budget is allocated to education. In 2005 further adjustments were made and the Government introduced an improvement to salaries and employment conditions for teachers, also increasing the certification requires for future teachers. The World Bank also began a partnership with 3 main goals: (1) an increase in Junior secondary enrolment, (2) an increase in student learning achievements, and (3) improvements in the allocation of spending (Chang 2014, 60).

Indonesia Mengajar was developed to address some of the "quality" sized holes in the system. Anies Baswedan, the founder of this program, describes it as a 'grass roots social movement,' and since its inception in 2009 it has quickly become a highly competitive program. Anies explains that only the 'creme de la creme' are accepted, ensuring that only the most educated and aspirational students-come-educators are chosen (Baswedan 2012a). This program utilises high-achieving, freshly graduated students from a wide array of disciplines and deploys them to remote communities to teach for a year. The idea is that these graduates will inspire students and community members to value education, acting as a role model for younger members of the community and developing personal leadership skills throughout the process.

Research Methodology

Research Questions

- What are the solutions currently being explored to tackle educational deficits within Indonesia
- How effective is Indonesia Mengajar at addressing educational deficits within Indonesia

Research Aim

Analyse Indonesia Mengajar as a potential solution to Indonesia's Educational issues of teacher quality and teacher distribution through the frame of the Pengajar Muda's experiences during their remote placement.

Research Methods

I combined methods of qualitative and quantitative research to inform my study. The overall focus of the research was to explore the lived experiences of the Pengajar Muda in the regional communities, harnessing their perspectives of the impact and sustainability of the Indonesia Mengajar Program and how effective it is at addressing wider educational concerns. I also utilised quantitative data collected in the surveys to inform and guide the qualitative interviews which were conducted later.

I chose to engage in qualitative research as its focus is more on the experiences and understandings of individuals. There have already been a number of quantitative studies conducted by international NGOs that seek to analyse Indonesia's educational limitations and opportunities.

Due to a number of linguistic, physical and financial limitations I decided that the Pengajar Muda would be the most effective focus of the study. Their highly educated background, and "snapshot" experience in these regional communities might offer them a more succinct perspective. They have not been trained as educators through the normal training avenues offered by Indonesian higher learning institutions, allowing their perspectives to be removed and unbiased, as they do not have a personal connection to teacher training within Indonesia.

The interviews were shaped by these primary questions:

- What motivated these individuals to apply for Indonesia Mengajar?
- What were their attitude towards the Indonesian Education System?
- How did the community and schools interpret their arrival?
- How sustainable an impact do they believe Indonesia Mengajar provides the regional communities?

Defining Education

Education is about forming the whole human person to realise her or his potential and live a fulfilling life. It is about socialising individuals to the ethical values and cultural norms of the community in which they live and liberating them from their backgrounds by widening their mental horizons and aspirations, and opening options to pursue opportunities beyond those available locally. (OECD 2015, 226).

How we learn is essentially determined by our culture. The culture's purposes for learning will determine how parents and teachers conceive of and guide learning for their students. There is wide consensus that learning is understood in three general ways. The first is for digesting information and absorbing knowledge. The second is for learning practical skills necessary for completing tasks and the third is to become a socially conscious individual. (Hargreaves 2015, 617). Delores explains this a little differently claiming that there are four distinct purposes; learning to know, learning to do learning to live together and learning to be (UNESCO 1989). A central criticism of contemporary classrooms is that they emphasise the former two and neglect the final two purposes of learning.

The reason and the content of what we learn determines the learning process. If we are learning to know, and to gain information then the skills required is memory and listening skills and visual processing, repetition and recording information. However if we want to learn to *do* something the primary way is to "apprentice" with a qualified person, while also memorising and learning information about that skill. But if the aim is learning to live together and to become critical compassionate people then we need to be exposed to other critical, compassionate speakers and given the opportunity to act on what we discover and reflect on our actions.

We have seen that the history of education in Indonesia that as time has progressed education became increasingly isolated from the culturally specific needs of the students individual and immediate communities. Education became the responsibility of the Hierarchical structure, where the educators were understood more as "deliverers of Knowledge". Furthermore Indonesia is a somewhat recently consolidated democracy. The educative needs of a population should be markedly different under authoritarian rule, than under democratic governance. Recent attempts have been made to rectify this consequence, with decentralising believed to be the method of empowering regional and remote communities, and significant portions of the curriculum to local knowledge, language and skills "Local Curriculum Content," pedagogically speaking Education has been primarily content and objective driven, where 'curriculum' was taught with the specific purpose to create a national identity, culture and pride across the diversity. These local curriculum content learning subjects were designed to enhance the students connection to their unique place in Indonesia. We can see that there are attempts to place emphasis on the latter focusses of education that Delores highlighted; learning to live together and learning to be. However it has also been observed that the potential for this to eventuate has been hindered by how teachers have been socialised to conceive themselves as civil servants.

History of Indonesian Education

Pre-Colonisation

Religious teaching is likely to be the first semi-formal educational opportunity offered to children living the archipelago in the past. In the fifth century Buddhist and Hindu scholars visited the islands on their parth to India. While the schooling was never formal, the children (and likely many adults) would have received lessons in theology, literature and science (Bjork 2015). As the Hindu-Buddhist pilgrimages declined Islam began to disseminate their religious beliefs through trade merchants. By the end of the sixteenth century Islam was a dominant religion in the archipelago. Peacock asserts that the first system of mass education was the *pesantren*, designed to teach the language, texts and doctrine of Islam (1973). This education was a holistic experience where students would engage in both manual labour and portions of the day studying sacred texts. The students who attended these schools would become the future leaders and members of the ruling classes (Luckens-Bull 2001, 368). Other forms of religious education emerged when the Portuguese spice traders came to the Maluku Islands. Roman Catholic education emerged as priests established seminaries in the islands to serve both the children of the traders and the local citizens. These schools taught religion as well as reading, writing and mathematics. This influence remains today (Bjork 2015).

Dutch Occupation

When the Dutch emerged at the end of the 16th century the landscape began to change (Bjork 2015,103). The Europeans made no effort to educate native children although they did allow small numbers of people to continue their *pesantren* education. Under the Dutch two distinct social social classes emerged. The lower class comprised of labourers and the upper class included the civil servants who worked in support of the colonial administration (Bjork 2015, 105). Ethnic Chinese people were not included in either of these classes. Separate school systems emerged to serve the distinct groups (Europeans, Indonesians and Chinese), but the majority of children in Indonesia were not schooled.

In 1893, after international criticism the King decreed that the quality and quantity of education offered to native children would need to improve. This was implemented as 'first class' primary schools for children of aristocrats, and 'second class' schools for the general population. Shortly after this decree they also initiated "Village Schools," which were a western-style elementary school for the general population (Bjork 2015, 108). All school systems lacked funding and qualified teachers. The quality of schools were dependent on the support of the local communities. A common complained expressed by the communities was that the schools introduced by the Dutch "lacked the ultimate significance and meaning of the *pesantren*" (Bjork 2015, 108). This is not surprising as the schooling system was directly modelled off the Dutch, which had an aim to produce intellectual proletariat (Bjork 2015, 110). Djojenegoro (1997) explains that At the end of the 19th century school access for children was universal, but less than 10% of the native children had completed three years of primary education (cited in Bjork 2015, 110).

Even though there were schooling options none of them were fully accessible to Indonesians. (Djojenegoro 1997) explains that groups of Indonesian leaders attempted to develop an independent education system. The Dutch called these schools 'wild schools,' and in 1882 the colonial powers declared that these independent schools could not be established without their permission. The wild schools were required to follow the curriculum designed by the Europeans. In 1935 a regulation passed that meant any government worker who enrolled their children in a non-approved school would not receive financial subsidies (cited in Bjork 2015, 111).

By the 1930s an estimate 2,200 independent schools operated in Indonesia with roughly 142, 000 students. The aim was to develop cohesion among Indonesian youth and cultivate a spirit of independence from the Europeans (Bjork 2015, 112).

Second World War

During WWII the Japanese replaced the Dutch as Indonesia's controlling power. They completely overthrew the education system. Schools were organised to support the Japanese war effort and create a greater asian synthesis. Lessons included physical drills, military training, indoctrination into Japanese culture. The classist nature of the education system diminished under the Japanese, but the quality and quantity also diminished. By the time Indonesia gained independence in 1945 the system that remained was scattered.

Independence

Sukarno saw education as a key mechanism for breaking down social class barriers and reducing disparities between the rich and poor. Increasing the accessibility of schools was written into the 1945 constitution stating that "every citizen has the right to obtain an education." In 1945 a Ministry of Education, Instruction and Culture was formed.

"Architects of the first Indonesian public schools system sought to create institutions that were anti-elitist, anti-discriminatory, and anti-capitalist" (Bjork 2015, 112). To promote national cohesion a single model of schooling was to be provided to all citizens, regardless of wealth or status. However the reality was that this new republic was creating a system from scratch, by people who had little to no experience managing and operating and creating schools.

Djojenegoro (1997) explains that the objective of all education during this period was cultivating a spirit of patriotism. Bahasa Indonesia was to be used as the primary language of instruction. Schools were designed to provide academic skills, but also creating morally upright citizens. A report prepared by the Ministry of Education Investigation concluded that the system needed three main aims:

1. Reduce the education of thought
2. Increase character-building education
3. Increase national and social awareness

Sukarno and his government made significant measures to providing universal primary school access for Indonesians. The first public school system they devised included primary, lower, upper schools as well as technical schools and a small number of tertiary institutions. Between 1945 and 1950 the number of students enrolled in these schools doubled. Unfortunately these schools did not have enough human resources to deliver quality education. Individuals who had worked as educators prior to independence had left the field to work in the armed forces or in government institutions. In 1951 they estimated that 140,000 individuals would need to be trained as teachers to meet schooling demands and 50,000 of currently employed teachers would need to be retrained to fit the new system. The growth of the bureaucracy in Indonesia was so immense there seemed to be social consensus that the political system as it was could not last. When Sukarno was forced out of power in September 1965 the state was in chaos.

New Order Period

The aim of the New Order was to create stability in a fragmented state. Hooker(1999) explains that in the late 1970s soldiers, teachers, politicians, doctors and college students were required to attend training seminars that emphasises the importance of acting as loyal Pancasila citizens. New Order Leaders conceptualised education as a way of developing a body of citizens that would support the nation, rather than encouraging individuals to acquire skills and knowledge that would reap personal rewards (cited in Bjork 2015, 113).

The lack of respect for the quality of teacher education meant that the MOEC attempted to make the schools as 'teacher-proof' as possible. Because they were not able to closely monitor the performance of the growing body of educators, the MOEC depended on curriculum as a tool for controlling the actions of teachers. Educators were valued for their ability to loyally follow directives, not their capacity for independent thought.

Current Climate: Limitations and Opportunities.

The current structure of Indonesian education contains a series of interdependent cycles, accommodating the needs of a culturally diverse, geographical dispersed population with wide socio-economic disparities (UNESCO 2015, 72). Despite many educational reforms, including the various grants and strategic plans from the ministry of education there are still huge educational deficits in Indonesia.

• Curriculum and Decentralisation

Curriculum reform efforts reflect the desires for regional provinces to experience autonomy in meeting the immediate contextual needs of their community. The curriculum development centre authorised and delegated 20% authority at each provincial level for the communities to develop curriculum to suit their regions respective needs. The objectives of the LCC are that the students (1) gain a better knowledge of their immediate natural and social environment (2) acquire basic skills, life skills and income producing skills to become useful members of their communities (Yeom et al 2002, 63).

Irrespective of Indonesia's diversity and size they have one of the world's most centralised social, political and economic systems (Yeom et al 2002, 63). The weak links between the needs of local community and the

decisions made about their access to services have created weak mechanisms for local accountability. Bjork explains that Decentralisation is driven by the desire to increase democracy and public participation throughout the government (Bjork 2015).

- **Teaching**

Unfortunately the efforts made to increase power to regional communities and schools through curriculum reform and an increased allocation in spending has created problems in its implementation. Teachers have been socialised to conceptualise themselves as civil service. Bjork explains that in spite of curriculum reform and the increase allocation of funding, teachers still understand themselves within the norms that have historically shaped the public schooling system. 'Indonesian teachers have been socialised to accept a set of values and to display behaviours that clash with the philosophical underpinnings of educational decentralisation' (Bjork 2015).

During the New Order period schools were understood to be facilities that shaped individuals as patriotic citizens, and instruction was not considered a priority. Discussion of politics, or teachers that expressed independent thought could have their positions terminated. Teachers came to understand that how they behave inside the classroom walls was not considered of interest to higher authorities, as long as they did not threaten state authority (Bjork 2015). Teachers also were not trained to prepare for classrooms outside of school hours or gain content knowledge and information from anything other than state-issued textbooks. Due to the largely didactic teaching methods employed by teachers, the lack of textbooks to guide teachers in LCC subject areas mean teachers feel disempowered (Yeom et al 2002, 65). Additionally, in the implementation of the LCC, the total number of instructional hours remained consistent, and no additional teachers were required to implement the program. Schools were advised to weave lessons that reflected the local needs and cultures into existing courses in the national curriculum (Bjork 2015).

Current Solutions: Indonesia Mengajar

Indonesia Mengajar is an educational NGO that was launched in Indonesia in late 2009 by Anies Baswedan, who was at that time the rectorate of Paramadina University. The organisation was designed as an *educational movement*, attracting all interested stakeholders within Indonesia to participate and collaborate to solve educational problems specific to Indonesia. Their ultimate goal is to eventually include all of Indonesian society, with the purpose of fulfilling one of the goals of independence; *educating the nation*. Indonesia Mengajar claims that through this program the nations needs will be met. First by selecting the nations future leaders (from varied graduate fields), and offering them in service to remote communities within Indonesia, Hereby inspiring remote communities, and equipping Indonesia's future leaders with empathy and a 'grassroots' understanding of Indonesia more broadly.

Their mission is three-fold:

1. That these Pengajar Muda (Young Teachers) will establish a sustainable educational impact in the selected villages and districts
2. that these Young Teachers will develop a grassroots understanding of Indonesia, equipping them to be more empathetic leaders of the future
3. That the program will inspire Indonesia more broadly with the social desire for education; where all citizens will begin to value, and desire education for themselves as individuals and for their families and communities. Indonesia Mengajar's website articulates that their main goal is to deliver young, rural Indonesians with exceptional teachers, who act as an inspiration to them and their communities.

Indonesia Mengajar's focus is specifically on elementary schools. This is driven from their ideological stance that education is an escalator for a individual's life. With this understanding, the first and most crucial entrance to this escalator is basic education. Furthermore, data collection and reports on Indonesia's education system indicate that the quality of elementary school teachers is far worse than at all other levels of Education. The reports indicate that up to 72.5% of elementary school teachers do not meet the basic qualification requirements.

Baswedan explains that Indonesia Mengajar was based directly on *Pengerahan Tenaga Mahasiswa*, a student mobilisation program that operated during the 1960s in the newly Independent Indonesia. After Independence education was a huge concern within Indonesia. The Dutch and Japanese occupation had left Indonesia with a fragmented and poorly designed education system, and poorly qualified education practitioners. Prof Dr Koesdadi Hardjasoemantri (Pak Koes) designed PTM, a program which utilised university students as volunteers teachers, often in remote areas. The program began with 8 teaches, but in the space of a decade they had expanded to 1,418 volunteer teachers and covered 161 districts.

Baswedan believes that this program produced huge qualitative and quantitative benefits for Indonesian society. As a result of this program, by the 1970s students from any background were able to enter University. Previously university had only been accessible to those who were members of the upper classes.

He claims that this access to University, and later the Job Market resulted in the emergence of the middle class in the 1980s (Baswedan 2012b, 2).

Why did Indonesia Mengajar emerge?

Baswedan noticed specific educational issues in Indonesia during his time undertaking Fieldwork Study. He observed Sukarno's Promise of Independence was not being received evenly throughout the country. Specific areas of Java experienced a high quantity and concentration of quality educational opportunities, whereas more remote areas did not receive this access. There was an unequal distribution of teachers across Indonesia, with 66% of rural schools not having enough access Educational opportunities.

Baswedan claims that improving educational quality and access was no longer a concern for the middle class, because they were not the recipients of public health and educational services, choosing instead to send their children to private institutions (Baswedan 2012b, 2). Baswedan also argues that the polls measuring the populations satisfaction with their services were misleading. He claims that polls that demonstrate high levels of satisfaction with services were skewed, because general expectations are low (Baswedan 201b2, 4).

Indonesia Mengajar additionally emphasises that the rural experience for these Young Teachers will offer them unique skills and experiences that will equip them to become more effective future-leaders. He explains that traditional student exchange programs offer students opportunities to gain new perspectives of one's native country. The Indonesia Mengajar program also allows this, in regards to the diversity of lifestyles and experiences within Indonesia.

The additional aim is that the Young Teachers will bring to the communities their philosophies and skills to inspire the wider community. Baswedan gives the example that the record of Teacher absence in rural communities is exceptionally high. This occurs because rural schools are less accessible due to their remote nature. Additionally, and understandably, Teacher remuneration is considerably lower than similar countries. Every day teachers need to make the decision to attend schools, or, if given the opportunity, make the decision to take more profitable work. This is understandable, considering the salary that Teachers receive is often not sustainable for supporting a single-salary household. However, Baswedan argues, that if these rural Teachers begin to see their role as more of a life of service, and witness the example of the Young Teachers, they may be inspired to change their attitudes towards their role.

How is the Program run and implemented?

Indonesia Mengajar is funded entirely by private actors. Baswedan stresses that the program needs to be entirely sustainable, without assistance from the government, who haven their own educational objectives and programs to fund. Additionally it is important to be funded privately, because they feel it demonstrates and encourages a democratic spirit within Indonesia. Private, personal investment, illustrates to the community that the civil society of Indonesia has the capacity to achieve something. The program explores creative ways of gathering resources and funds. An example of this is the model they created to fund Young

Teacher's travel throughout Indonesia. Indonesia Mengajar established a mutual Garuda frequent flier program that allows members of the public to donate unused or undesired Frequent flier miles for program use.

To become a Pengajar Muda, prospective students undergo a strict selection process. The process includes exceptional academic performance throughout their undergraduate degrees, as well as a demonstration of motivations and passions that align with the spirit and philosophy of the IM program. They must be successful through a series of interviews and health tests that ensure they will be capable of completing the full duration of the program. The successful applicants then undergo a 7 week training intensive that provides them with appropriate teaching theory and skills, as well as wider 'survival skills,' essential for success in an unusual environment to them.

During their period in the village the Young Teachers are issued with a four-task mission. Their first is to design and implement curricular activities and assessments for the students. These activities are related to the learning, planning and evaluation of the students in the village. They are also required to plan extra-curricular activities for the students to engage in, as well as more broad community-based learning activities that engage parents and the wider community. Finally, the teachers are required to create networks and advocate for Education in their district, establishing, building and maintaining communication with stakeholders in their district.

The teachers are deployed to the villages for a period of 1-2 years, and the program stipulates that Indonesia Mengajar will have a presence in chosen districts for a period of 5 years. Young Teachers are encouraged above all to be creative, with Baswedan claiming that he tells them that their over-arching objective is to impress them (Indonesia Mengajar), and show them what they are capable of. Young Teachers are told not to focus, or worry about meeting specific Key Performance Indicators, or meeting specific learning objectives, but to be concerned primarily with inspiring the students and community (Baswedan 2012a).

Indonesia Mengajar currently operates in 20 distinct districts across the width of Indonesia. The western-most point being the Northern District of Aceh, to the Eastern most point in Bintang, the Mountain District of East Papua.

Criticisms

Paul K Gellert believes that programs like Indonesia Mengajar are guilty of spreading an optimistic ideology of development that can be best described as cosmopolitan colonialism. He argues that the allocation of funding to education shows that elites assume that education is the key to identity in twenty-first century Indonesia (2015, 373). "This organisation-cum social movement is built on a foundation of neoliberal ideology with considerable continuities from the New Order period" (2015, 373). He argues that this program is based on modernist assumptions that assume education from the "best" will bring enlightenment to the poor and unenlightened (2015, 385). He explains that the program assumes that the personal integrity of these educated individuals will somehow address the systemic corruption without any acknowledgement of the 'deep cultural and historical reasons for the corruption's persistence'(2015, 388). He also draws upon Munro's assessment of education in Papua, where the inflated possibilities of education could be considered

a form of violence. Where educational possibilities are placed on a pedestal that may be unrealistic to many of these students. He also argues that describing Indonesia Mengajar as a “grassroots” organisation is misleading, as the program is initiated from a place of privilege in Jakarta, and funded by removed private investors (389, 2015).

Research Findings

Survey Results

A group of 8 Pengajar Muda were surveyed to obtain a snapshot of their experiences and understandings around Education in Indonesia and the Indonesia Mengajar program. The following reflects the results of the survey. This was done prior to the selection of Interview Participants as a way of gaining a general understanding, and also to inform the line of questioning taken in the later Interviews.

1. Prior to being placed as a Pengajar Muda 62 % of the participants described the Indonesian Education system as *unsatisfactory*, and 38% had expressed *neutral* opinions.

2. 50 % of the Pengajar Muda described their preparation and training provided by Indonesia Mengajar above expectations, while 38% said that it met their expectations and 12 % expressed neutral opinions.

3. 88% of Pengajar Muda said that their support from Indonesia Mengajar during their placement met their expectations, while 12% expressed neutral feelings.

4. 63% of the Pengajar Muda surveyed felt that their reception by the community exceeded their expectations, while 25% described their reception as above expectations 12% were unsatisfied by their reception.

5. 50% of the Pengajar Muda surveyed felt that their community involvement in their program was above their expectations, while 38 % described community involvement as meeting their expectations, and 12% expressed neutral opinions.

6. 38% of Pengajar Muda surveyed felt that their school and classroom reception met their expectations, while 25% described their reception as above their expectations. 12% described their reception as neutral, and 12% were unsatisfied by the way the classroom welcomed them.

7. 63% of the Pengajar Muda described student engagement in classroom activities as exceeding their expectations, while 12% felt that they met expectations and 24% felt no strong opinions.

8. 88% of Pengajar Muda surveyed felt that they were successful in providing long term inspiration in their communities and 12% indicated no.

9. 100 % of the Pengajar Muda said that they would recommend this program to other undergraduates.

10. 100% of the Pengajar Muda felt that Indonesia Mengajar as it currently operates is successful in creating a sustainable social education movement.

Participant D

The final participant was a 25 year old female who was raised in Java. She completed an undergraduate degree in communications and described herself as a creative but not overly 'academic' student. She heard of Indonesia Mengajar through friends who had completed the program and worked for the organisation. She completed her placement in 2015 in the Banggai regency in Central Sulawesi. The district has roughly 332 872 inhabitants and the primary occupation of the residents are fisherman. The population is primarily Muslim but there are residents of many faiths like Hinduism and Christianity.



Interview Results

- *What motivated you to participate in the Indonesia Mengajar program?*

Participant A

- Wanted to answer personal questions about educational equity in Indonesia. Her experiences overseas gave her a comparative lens through which to view her own education. In Europe she noticed that all children had access to education regardless of how remotely they lived. She had been raised and educated in West Java and understood that her experience was not the same for all Indonesians. S
- Felt that her European community was significantly different because of their education. She felt that they were more open, friendly and had “better ethics.”
- Observed that children in kindergarten and elementary schools in Europe had significantly less performative pressure, allowing them to engage and enjoy education in a more meaningful way.
- When she returned to Indonesia she had many complaints about the Indonesian Education system. The rhetoric of education being the responsibility of all who are educated compelled her, and she applied for the program.

Participant B

- Motivated by predominantly personal desires. He wanted to experience Indonesia’s “diversity.”
- He was also a curious person with an interest in media and communications, and this is partly what had alerted him to Indonesia’s educational deficits in the past.

Participant C

- Wanted to address the inequity of the Indonesian Education system in whatever measures available to her. She had been privy to a demographic study that revealed 60% of the Indonesia population was in the economically productive age bracket, but only 4% of these were University educated. She felt uneasy pursuing personal wealth outside of Indonesia when her own country was experiencing a huge loss of human resources.

Participant D

- Motivated to apply for Indonesia Mengajar because she desired a career change. She had enjoyed her experiences in the creative industry but was looking for something more socially focussed.
- Initially she felt that she wasn’t equipped to navigate a career change in Education, which she expressed that she had little understanding of.
- The rhetoric around Indonesia Mengajar, ‘education being the responsibility of the educated,’ made her feel she was capable of contributing.

Analysis

- Almost all individuals were inspired by the rhetoric of education being the responsibility of those who are educated. They identified that they held a privileged position in Indonesian society because of their education.
 - The first two participants appeared to strongly believe that they had the capacity to create positive change in Indonesia, which is a contrast to the latter who are less sure of their capacities and are more curious about what they will discover, learn and potentially contribute to Indonesia more broadly.
 - None of the individuals expressed a desire to become ‘future leaders’ within Indonesia, although they did clearly express a desire to *make a difference*.
- *What were your perceptions of Education in Indonesia?*

Participant A

- Had not questioned her education experiences within Indonesia until she had been overseas, she believes that the education offered in European countries created more “ethical” people, and that they had more overall equitable access to education.
- She described the Indonesian classroom culture as one of bribery, coercion and pressure, where grades were modified to suit the Teacher’s personal interests, or better grades offered for a small fee. This was her experience from elementary through to high school.
- In Aceh she felt the students were unable to learn because the primary instructional language was Bahasa. They spoke and used their local language every day, which meant that the classroom excluded them. Students could recite texts in Bahasa, but they were unable to communicate or explain the meaning of the passages.
- She was surprised that the students moved through the grade levels when they couldn’t demonstrate the required knowledge from previous years.
- Teachers would arrive at school at the beginning of the day, dictate tasks and leave. Student development appeared to be irrelevant.

Participant B

- Opinions had been informed by the media and news programs he consumed. Felt the system was unsatisfactory because students did not have access to education infrastructure, or where the facilities where available they were of a poor standard.
- He had found his own schooling difficult, not having excelled in Maths or Science.
- The pedagogical training offered by Indonesia Mengajar allowed hi to consider educational possibilities differently. The creative methods employed allowed him to understand concepts he had previously been unable to grasp in his schooling history.
- He identifies that the teaching profession is not considered respectable in Indonesia, as it does not offer an attractive income, and it also doesn’t carry the “social” prestige that it might once have.

Participant C

- C was schooled at both private and public institutions in Indonesia throughout elementary, junior and high schools, offering her a unique perspective on education within Indonesia. She has personally experienced the discrepancy between the two systems.
- She describes that public schools receive significantly less quality and quantity of teaching and learning and pastoral care for the students. She felt that public schools were less socially safe, and students were bullied for academic achievement by other students. Coercion was also prevalent.

Participant D

- Her personal experiences in schooling were of exclusion. She feels that the conceptualisation of a “good student,” is incredibly narrow within the system. There is an emphasis on science and math as superior subjects meaning that she was never a high achiever in school.
- She feels that her strengths in the arts and languages were not considered of equal merit.
- She compares her experiences then with those of her younger cousins now, and she feels that not much has changed.

Analysis

- All individuals identified significant problems within the current system, both on the ‘main-lands’ and in more remote communities. However they all identified that they received the more ‘privileged education’ compared with other Indonesians.
- It would be beneficial to explore further how they conceptualise ‘education,’ and what they think the purpose of education is.
- They all identify structural issues (such as physical structures, and access to buildings), as well as cultural and bureaucratic issues as major problems within the system.

- *How were you received in the community and in the school?*

Participant A

- A felt that her experiences within the community and school had been relatively positive. She acknowledged that other Pengajar Mudah did not have such positive experiences because community members felt they were bringing dangerous knowledge to their children.
- Many members of her community did not identify as Indonesian and regarded “Indonesia” with hostility.
- On numerous occasions she was called an infidel for not following normative muslim practices of her community.
- Parents complained to her about teaching ‘nationalist,’ ideals to students, and other Pengajar Muda within the community had been threatened with knives for similar practices.

- Irrespective of these experiences A felt her experiences were largely positive and many people within the community expressed a desire for civic engagement. They had desires to contribute to their community, but they did not have the resources or ideas or creative capital to execute such activities.
- The program they created was an organisation that focussed on exploring the talents and strengths of the local students, with the idea that they are inherently clever. Initially this program was implemented nearby at an immigration camp that hosted Burmese refugees, but since there was a lot of international attention in this area they decided to specifically focus on building the strengths and offering educational opportunities to their own community. This organisation is still running and uses social media to market and display their achievements and activities.

Participant B

- B was anticipating a huge cultural shock when he reached the community. He had been raised in a predominantly Muslim community and the location of his placement would mean he was the only Muslim in his town.
- However he found that the community welcomed him warmly and with great ceremony. He felt that the community accommodated and respected his religious beliefs to the best of their ability. He explains that it took him three months to adjust to this community, and this process of adjustment was accelerated because he was unable to maintain consistent communication with his family back home.
- B felt his primary responsibility in the community was to be a friend or a big brother to the students and not a “teacher.” He developed many close relationships with the students and would travel from household to household visiting their families. This was unusual in his community as it is normally the responsibility of the parent to approach the teacher in regards to educational matters. However he as well received and the communities felt honoured by his presence in their community and by the fact he wanted to build relationships with them.
- The community was very removed from the services and facilities many on the mainland take for granted. They would often be without electricity and internet connection. He believes that this reality allowed him to create more meaningful connections with his community.
- B could not offer examples of any community programs he initiated. He felt that his focus was his students, especially as the National Exam was approaching. He mainly developed relationships with students, and he felt that he made a significant contribution by decreasing the level of classroom violence. He also felt a responsibility to renew the students perspectives of themselves and their region.
- He highlighted that he would often explain to them that their access to seafood and fresh put them at an advantage to those on the mainland. He says that one of the reasons Japanese people are so smart is because they eat a lot of fish. He would tell them that they are smart too because of their access to seafood.

Participant C

- C believed that the reception of the Pengajar Muda in the community would largely be determined by the experiences of the previous Pengajar Muda. When C arrived she was in the third year of deployment for

the region and she believed that the previous Pengajar Muda had allowed for a smooth transition. C explained that the first Pengajar Muda did not have a comfortable time as he was seen as harsh.

- She explains that in her community the first year's focus had been establish a culture where children actually attended school. Often they would loiter outside the classrooms but never attend class. The second year's focus had been to have the Teacher's arrive at school in a timely manner, encouraging them to contribute and see the value of their roles. Many teachers have multiple jobs, or can be Mothers who perceive teaching as a secondary responsibility.
- When C arrived in the community attendance from both stakeholders had been achieved. She believed her task was to engage the students in creative learning tasks like those that had been highlighted during her training. The current teachers were resistant to her methods. C would often create learning games for the students, or take them to the ocean to learn about science. C believed these were meaningful learning experiences for the students. The teachers eventually relented after C persisted, she says that she explained to them that the 'government wants you to teach like this now.'
- C believes that community and student engagement is never immediate. She believes it requires the full five years in the community to make significant developments or encourage a change in mindset about education.

Participant D

- The reports given to D by the previous Pengajar Muda warned her that the community would be difficult. D described her reception by the students as 'unnecessary,' explaining that the students were either indifferent to her or raucous and loud and used offensive language. There were instances early on where the behaviour was so bad that the students would physically fight each other until they shed blood. She decided that her focus would need to be addressing class culture and character in order to even begin addressing academic studies.
- She tried numerous methods but eventually discovered storytelling for social change. This is a method where the characters in the story reflect different attributes of the classroom. She believed this was the best way to engage her studies in classroom activities as it was the one activity that captivated everyone. After implementing storytelling she introduced the students to the ship of "sopan bearish jujur' (roughly translated to polite, clean, honest). She explains that their classroom was a ship, and in order for students to move from island 5 to island 6 (representing the progress) they would need to respect the captain of the ship (Pengajar Muda and other teachers) in order to have smooth sailing.
- This method was effective and she managed to address classroom cleanliness, honesty and other behaviour management issues. She also used classroom pairings to address behaviour management issues, such as pairing easily distracted students with focussed ones.

Analysis

- All of the Pengajar Muda had diverse experiences, some were welcomed warmly others were treated with disdain or aversion.
- It is not surprising that the Pengajar Muda appear to hold competing ideologies within their person. On one hand they came as the 'bringer of knowledge,' to the communities, and on the other hand they were

resistant to dictate or inform the wider communities on how to execute their programs. They all took their role as facilitator quite seriously, and explained that they rarely over-stepped the mark or dictated how individuals would run the programs and activities.

- The participants who had experienced problems within the communities persevered, which does appear to carry a cosmopolitan colonial ideology, as they seemed to believe they knew what was best for the community, regardless of the communities willingness to cooperate.
- *How sustainable is the impact and influence of Indonesia Mengajar's as a social education movement.*

Participant A

- A believes that any sustainable changes in education needs to be initiated from the top. The Pengajar Muda collectively agreed that there were many students with the capacity to become doctors or engineers but there was not the necessary systems in place to ensure they were educated past lower school.
- She does however feel that some the educational experiences in the community during her time there resulted in long-term change. One of the educational tasks A encouraged her students to participate in was a national storytelling competition. Many of the long term teachers did not want to encourage the students to participate because they felt the task was impossible. Fortunately one of the students was successful and won a trip to Jakarta to share her story to a national audience. This experience was incredibly surprising to the teachers and to the wider community. People in this community can barely dream of reaching their own city's capital, let alone Jakarta. This situation inspired the teachers and reinvigorated their belief in their students' potential to achieve something greater.
- A also believes that the fact that the community organisation she helped initiate is still running is a positive sign that educational awareness is being fostered in their community. She believes that this will continue to develop even after the official Indonesia Mengajar structures have left.

Participant B

- B feels that the long-term impacts of initiatives like Indonesia Mengajar are limited. He explains that the community he resided in already valued education, they simply couldn't produce any local solutions to address their educative concerns. He feels that the government gives a large allocation of funding to their school every month, for them to use on educational resources and teaching tools. However the government hasn't provided a realistic guidance for outlined reasonable expectations. The remote areas have large access to funding, and their region specifically has good facilities.
- He believes that the teachers need a new perspective, and the funding should be allocated to teacher training and professional development. He believes that becoming a teacher in this country is not seen as a glamorous job, but if teaches were decently remunerated this may change the way they are perceived.
- He feels that Indonesia Mengajar's limited placement in the village means we are unable to affect long term change. They are the facilitators for that season, not the teachers. He feels that effective long-term change needs to come from a further overhaul of the system.

Participant C

- C believed that the main focus of Indonesia Mengajar was not to change the educational paradigm of the area but to find people who were concerned with or valued education and empower them to make significant and sustainable changes. C doesn't believe that Indonesia Mengajar could be successful in all areas. She highlights that anecdotes from her colleagues in other areas suggest that the communities can be so resistant to change or investment from external actors that little development can be made.
- C also agrees that there are many challenges to education in Indonesia that Indonesia Mengajar cannot address. She believes that the education system was created in a time quite separate from the realities and concerns of the day. C highlights that the system was designed when Indonesia was a newly independent, fractured country and the methods and systems in place do not meet the technological and cultural needs of today. C also highlights curriculum flaws, she believes that the curriculum is flooded with content that the government has decided is necessary for students to know, but it doesn't correspond to the developmental stages of the students. She feels that the temporary curriculum that was introduced a few years ago (and quickly abandoned) was more developmentally appropriate. She does agree however that the current teaching body in Indonesia is would not be capable of teaching an alternate curriculum as they are ill-prepared to do so.
- Additionally she addresses bureaucratic issues and the corruption culture rife in many communities. She realised that many parents, students and even teachers were not aware of their rights or the services available to them. Casual teachers will often not be paid for 6 months at a time despite the fact that their salary has been deposited to the relevant bodies. Student funds are often redirected or misappropriated for personal gain by those in power. Additionally the distributive chain of scholarships for underprivileged students skim off the surface of these grants, whittling down the scholarship amounts. This aligns with Gellert's criticism of Indonesia Mengajar, that it does little to address 'systemic corruption, without any acknowledgement of the deep cultural and historical reasons for corruption's persistence'(2015, 19).
- However it is especially important to note that C managed to make some significant contributions to her community that will definitely result in a sustainable long-term positive impact. When some of her students were reaching the age of graduation from elementary school C approached their parents encouraging them to consider sending their students to junior high. Unfortunately this was not feasible for many of the parents, either financially or physically. The nearest junior school was located on the main island, making it only accessible by boat. She gathered data from the surrounding communities and discover that despite the fact that 98% of children graduate from elementary school in the region, only 36% of them continue on to junior school. She used this data to speak to various stakeholders and community leaders. She was surprised when they met her with indifference, but as highlighted before education is not usually valued by people who have not received the benefits of education themselves personally. She eventually found a community leader in a neighbouring district who was concerned. Together they formulated a plan to build a dormitory in the district where the junior high was located. This would provide accommodation for the students who were able to attend junior high school. The first dormitory that was built housed 15 students. The dormitory was designed for a community that was only accessible by a 3 day hike, with terrain that

would now allow scooter access. This is clearly a sustainable contribution to the community which will provide students with the physical access to education if they are personally willing.

Participant D

- Addressing the character and social issues in the classroom, as well as how students relate to each other more generally, was the primary achievement and goal of Participant D. She believes that this will have significant long-term benefits. She also believes that because she and the other Pengajar Muda connected frequently education-conscious community members sustainable change has been initiated. These community members eventually eventually organised many tasks that were perceived to be the responsibility of the Pengajar Muda. For example these community stakeholders organised the “Indonesia Mengajar Festival,” inviting other communities and local leaders alone. Participant D believes that because the initiatives came from within the communities themselves they are more likely to be sustained.

Analysis

- The initial survey expressed that almost all Pengajar Muda felt that Indonesia Mengajar was able to deliver sustainable education changes to the direct communities, however once probed with further questions they did begin to challenge this assumption for themselves, looking at some structural and bureaucratic issues that they could not address on an individual level.
- However on an individual level many of these Pengajar Muda offered unique and valuable experiences to these students. One participant adapted the traditional festival to include successful farmers as ‘inspirasi’ for the students, over the more typical engineers and lawyers that were often used. This shows a sensitivity to community practices and history, and respects the “professions” of their area.

Conclusion

A common criticism of educative programs like Indonesia Mengajar is that they are based on modernist assumptions that assert education from the 'best,' will bring enlightenment to the poor and unenlightened (Gellert 2015, 16). Baswedan claims that one of the central motivations of Indonesia Mengajar is that it will bring the 'promise of independence' to parts of the nation where this promise is unfulfilled. Gellert calls this cosmopolitan colonialism. I wanted to gauge how the Pengajar Muda and the Indonesia Mengajar more generally was received in these isolated communities. Was their presence welcome, and the ideas they offered accepted? The questions that guided my research were; What motivated these individuals to apply for Indonesia Mengajar, What were their attitude towards the Indonesian Education System, How did the community and schools interpret their arrival, and How sustainable an impact do they believe Indonesia Mengajar provides the regional communities. My conclusion is that while Indonesia Mengajar offers significant educational experiences and opportunities to both the regional communities and participating Pengajar Muda, it is ineffective in addressing the larger and more immediate educational needs that face Indonesia today. I would argue that Indonesia Mengajar is an excellent mechanism for training future leaders, offering them a diverse and reflective character-building experience, but it is not an effective solution for long-term educational change.

The common trend among all the Pengajar Muda surveyed was that they expressed a personal interest or concern in the mechanics of the education system, and all of them believed their education had placed them in a privileged position within Indonesian society. The universal response of the survey and interview participants was that the Indonesian Education system was unsatisfactory. Their personal experiences as well as the statistics and stories they had consumed via media informed them that access to education and the quality of teachers and teaching methods available to Indonesian students was poor. Participants indicated that the values offered by the system were exceptionally narrow and did not cater for the cultural and individual diversity of the students. All participants highlighted that the bootcamp training offered by Indonesia Mengajar before their deployment was a highlight for them. This experience of teamwork and interdependence allowed them to consider an social-emotional purpose of education that is somewhat overlooked in the system, that they are ultimately dependent on each other for survival.

The direction given to them was to 'inspire' the students to look beyond what they had previously understood as the role and purpose of education, and to see various other employment opportunities and prospects. The communities the Pengajar Muda were placed in all responded differently. Some where welcoming and accepting, others expressed caution and disdain at their arrival. Gellert highlights the 'silence' of the teacher and administrative bodies who received the Pengajar Muda indicating that their voices and perspectives have not been heard in relation to teacher deployment. Experiences from the Pengajar Muda highlight that the responses are varied, but very few are entirely resistant to the change. Some of them resisted pedagogical methods offered by the Pengajar Muda, but eventually conceded. The highly religious and isolated communities were resistant for political reasons, believing that "Indonesians" were coming to indoctrinate their children with false beliefs. In less conservative communities the responses of the teaching

and administrative bodies were of indifference, which the Pengajar Muda highlighted was generally how they approached their positions. There is a potential for this to be addressed by external actors, but asking young undergraduates to inspire potentially weathered and under-educated teachers is a broad over-estimation of their potential. Also the small scope of Indonesia Mengajar means that it is well-run, but can only offer incremental change across such widespread, diverse population.

Gellert criticises that Indonesia Mengajar is embedded with the notion that the personal integrity of these educated individuals will address systemic corruption without any acknowledgement of the 'deep cultural and historical reasons for corruption's persistence' (2015, 388). The Pengajar Muda's experiences certainly support this notion. Participant A shared that an administration official attempted to obstruct the success of a student because he would not gain any personal benefits. Another participant highlighted that her attempts to involve local leaders in constructing a building that would house potential students wishing to engage in further studies was almost impossible. This brings to light the reality that Indonesia Mengajar only addresses elementary education, with little attempt to consider junior-high school access. This brings to mind the criticism that offering inflated possibilities of education could be considered a form of violence. Many families do not have the finances to offer their children transport to junior high-schools, and culturally many do not see the value either. What is the purpose of bringing doctors and engineers to visit these schools if students are not feasibly able to access even junior-high qualifications, let alone high-school or tertiary qualifications.

This relates to my question regarding how sustainable are the benefits of Indonesia Mengajar in these regional communities. It is interesting to observe that 100% of Pengajar Muda stated that they believed that this program as it currently operates was successful in creating a sustainable education movement, and 88% of the participants felt they were successful in providing long term inspiration but when questioned they highlighted many deficits that Indonesia Mengajar was unable to address in any substantial way. In the survey participants indicated that the non-affiliated but similarly designed programs that developed as a consequence of Indonesia Mengajar would provide sustainable development to the communities because they were locally sourced and run. However this is not a given, supported or directly encouraged by Indonesia Mengajar as an organisation.

Finally, the general attitude towards teaching in Indonesia is not productive, and is certainly not improved by programs like Indonesia Mengajar. The underlying belief of such a program is that the teachers in these communities are not of sufficient quality. Programs like Indonesia may *inspire* teachers or students, but are not fundamentally capable of equipping teachers long-term. The program as it currently operates is positive, and it arguably brings many benefits to the affected communities and the Pengajar Muda who participate. However it is not likely that a program like this has the capacity to address the diverse problems of education within Indonesia in a tangible and widespread way.

Recommendations

The Ministry of Education and Culture should devise a program based on the positive attributes of Indonesia Mengajar. They should create a program that attracts high-achieving graduates and professions to become “educators” for a specified period of time, deployed into more areas. However the focus of these individuals should be the “attraction” of interested bodies within communities, who would be interested in becoming Teachers in their communities, encouraging them to consider what education means for their context and offering them pedagogical theories that are relevant and appropriate.

These individuals would ensure that communication links across the Education chain-of-command are more transparent, allowing both students, families and teachers to have an understanding of their rights. This would also minimise corruption. The recommendation would also rectify some of the limitations encountered in the implementation of local curriculum content. Additionally the Ministry of Education and Culture should implement a more consistent Professional Development program for teachers, as well as access to free further-training programs.

Limitations and Opportunities

- Further interrogate the perceptions of Pengajar Muda towards education; how to they conceptualise the role and purpose of education? What are the potential benefits and limitations of education? How do they “frame” education, what is invalid/valid. Can they identify a “hidden curriculum” in their pedagogical approach.
- Bahasa Indonesia language skills would certainly enable the scope and depth of the research to be increased, as well as the sample size.
- Sample Size
- Physically visiting these remote villages would enable greater depth of research, and allow more detailed analysis of findings.

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