

Teacher Reform in Indonesia: The Role of Politics and Evidence-Based Policymaking

A Preview



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Teacher Reform in Indonesia: The Role of Politics and Evidence-Based Policymaking

A Preview

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Introduction

This document previews a forthcoming World Bank book to be published in early 2013, entitled *Teacher Reform in Indonesia: The Role of Politics and Evidence-Based Policymaking*.

The book tells the story of Indonesia's efforts to reform and enhance the quality of one of the largest and most complex education systems in the world.

BOX 1. Special features of the book

Teacher Reform in Indonesia: The Role of Politics and Evidence-Based Policymaking will feature:

- a description of the nature of Indonesia's teaching profession – and the structures and mechanisms which supported it - before and after the Teacher Law of 2005
- the triggers for the comprehensive reform of this profession and the political economy context in which the reform was developed and implemented
- an analysis of a unique component of this reform – the automatic and unconditional doubling of teachers' income upon certification
- a detailed description of two pioneering research activities which explored the impact of the reform both on teacher knowledge, skills, and behaviours and on student outcomes; these include a randomized control trial with data representative of approximately 50 percent of the country's primary and junior secondary schools and a classroom-based, time-on-task analysis of 8th grade mathematics teaching practices linked to student achievement in the TIMSS studies of 2007 and 2011
- an analysis of the (in)efficiencies derived from – and not yet resolved by – the reform in terms of the system's financing and the distribution of its teachers, especially in terms of the trade-offs policy-makers face when a decision is made to significantly increase investment in education

This book will examine the following questions:

- What was the pre-reform status of Indonesia's education system and its teachers, the triggers for the reform, the main components of the reform (as embodied in the 2005 Teacher and Lecturer Law and subsequent regulations designed to implement it), and the political economy context in which the Law originated and has been implemented?
- What were the pre- and post-reform structures, strategies, and processes of the Indonesian teacher management and development system?
- What was the impact of these efforts both on teacher status, motivation, subject knowledge, and pedagogical skills and on student outcomes?
- What have been the implications of the reform for the efficiency of Indonesia's education system – both financial and in terms of teacher distribution and student-teacher ratios – and what is still needed to ensure that the current reforms are, in fact, sustainable?

The Audience

Teacher Reform in Indonesia: The Role of Politics and Evidence-Based Policymaking will include information relevant to the needs of:

- government policy-makers, at all levels of the system, concerned with educational quality, especially those linked to teacher reform
- researchers involved in large-scale education reform, especially in regard to teacher management and development
- education finance specialists
- politicians and parliamentarians with special interest in, and responsibility for, education
- providers of both pre-service teacher education and continuing, in-service professional development
- advocates of attempts to raise the professional status and performance of teachers, including teacher associations and non-government/civil society organisations.

The Book's Organizing Framework

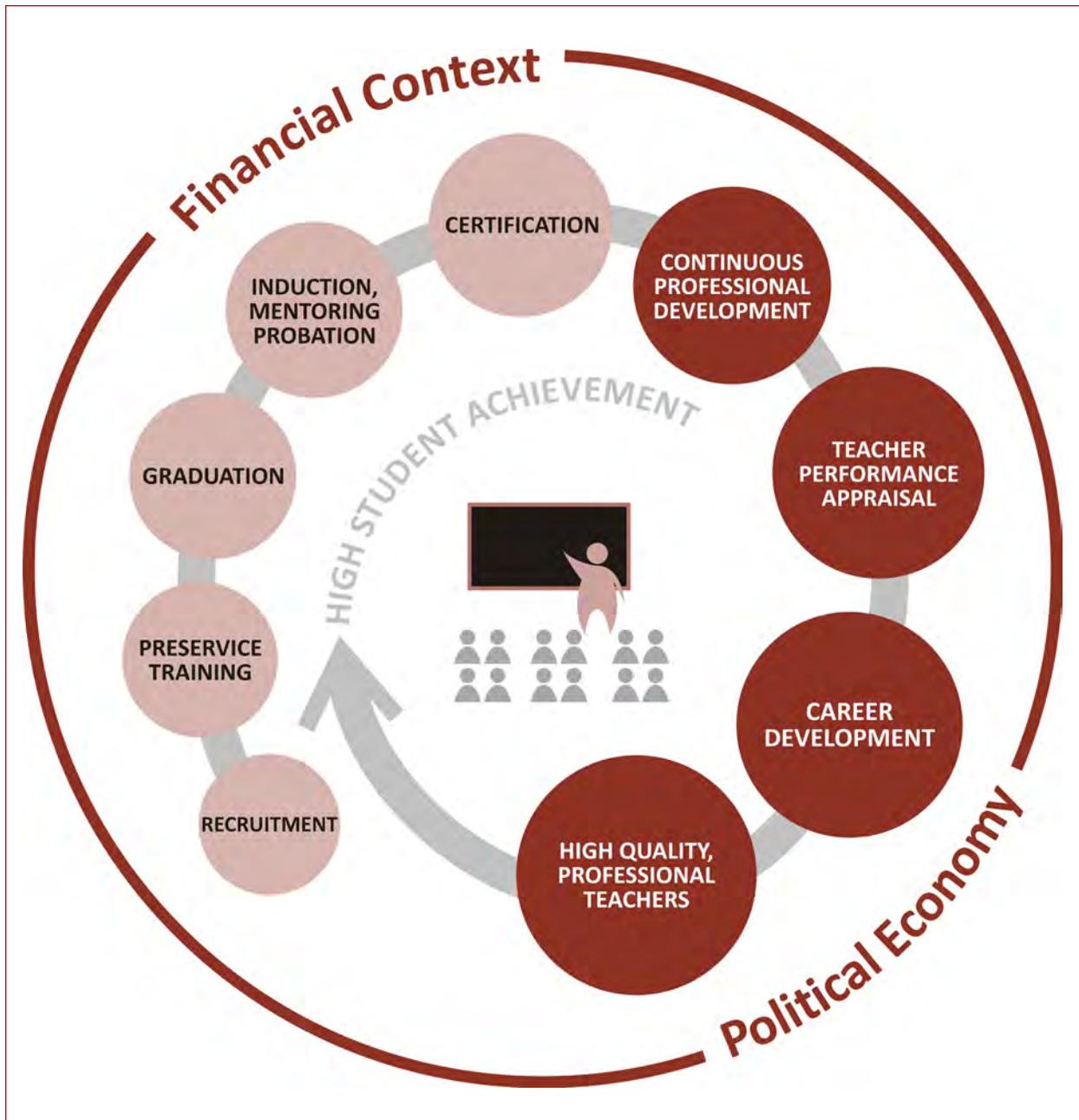
Managing teachers – individually, both in a classroom and throughout a career, and collectively, as an entire cadre – is a difficult enough task. Ensuring that they progressively develop in their profession, from first recruitment to final retirement, only adds to the complexity of the challenge facing ministries of education around the world. Meeting this challenge successfully requires a comprehensive framework of teacher reform. This reform must be based on essential teacher standards and competencies and result in the structures, strategies, and processes required to ensure that these competencies are achieved, assessed, continuously improved on, and ultimately rewarded. It must also be supported by a political economy context which provides the financial and political support required for it to succeed. Figure 1 reflects the teacher management and development framework used in this book.

Most attempts to enhance the quality of teaching are piecemeal in fashion – a new recruitment policy, a new pre-service education curriculum, a formal process of certification, or often rather random in-service training. The framework used in this book makes clear the need to develop a comprehensive approach to this process by assessing and improving the following components of a systematic teacher management and development system:

1. **Recruitment**, identifying ways to attract and retain more and better quality candidates to teacher education faculties, including opportunities for mid-career movements into teaching; this requires greater attention to selection based on competence, aptitude, motivation, and values
2. **Pre-service education**, ensuring the mastery of the subject knowledge, pedagogic knowledge, and professional skills required of a teacher, with a large percentage of this training taking place in a variety of school contexts
3. **Induction, mentoring, and probation**, managed by skilled principals, senior teachers, and supervisors and focused on structured guidance and effective teacher practice
4. **Certification**, preferably based on proof of mastery of the knowledge and skills required to gain the status of a “professional” in teaching
5. **Continuous professional development**, through a range of school- and cluster-based activities and training by teacher professional associations and local district offices and universities

6. **Teacher performance appraisal**, tied to annual assessments and goal setting, the identification of and support to underperforming teachers, and additional salary increments and other incentives
7. **Career development**, identifying potential school leaders and supervisors based on merit and providing them necessary leadership training

FIGURE 1. Teacher Management and Development Framework



The Indonesian Environment for Teacher Management and Development

The critical role played by teachers in enhancing the quality of education is especially salient in a populous, geographically large, and culturally diverse country such as Indonesia. The evolving nature of its education system and the increasing – and increasingly complex – challenges facing individual teachers and the teaching profession as a whole are of immense importance in Indonesia. With close to three million teachers – from kindergarten through academic and vocational secondary education; in public, private, and Islamic schools; and with both civil service and temporary, school-based contract status – Indonesia has one of the largest and most diverse cadres of teachers in the world. How it is attempting to reform its teacher management and development system and the teacher education institutions and processes which produce its teachers – and the kind of impact this is having on the quality of education and on the outcomes of its learners – are therefore of great importance to the future development of the nation.

The Indonesian experience with teacher reform is particularly relevant for other nations implementing or considering similar actions for a number of reasons. The first is simply that it was designed – and is being implemented – as a genuinely comprehensive program – not piecemeal, as many teacher improvement efforts often are. From its beginning, it has therefore considered and responded to all of the components of reform described in the framework above.

Furthermore, the seriousness of this effort is underlined by two important facts:

- First, the reform is embedded in law – the pioneering Teacher and Lecturer Law of 2005 – which was both built upon an even more comprehensive Education Law of 2003 and extensively discussed by a wide range of stakeholders (ministry officials, parliamentarians, civil society representatives, and teacher associations) and ultimately adopted by the Indonesian Parliament.
- Second, the financing of the reform has been made possible through funds derived from a constitutional mandate which requires the government to spend 20 percent of its budget for education; this has had serious implications for the percentage of that budget spent on teacher salaries and professional allowances. The reform calls for the provision of an allowance equivalent to the base salary of all certified teachers – in essence, doubling (and in some cases tripling) the income of literally millions of teachers in Indonesia.

The increasing complexity of the education system in Indonesia and an increasingly sophisticated understanding of the challenges faced by its teachers in comparison with their relatively low status and income convinced policy-makers of the need for a major reform of the country's teacher management and development system. Originally, the key trigger for the reform was the relatively low pay and low status of the teaching profession, leading both to the prevalence of second jobs and high absenteeism rates and to the generally small number and poor quality of candidates applying from secondary education to teacher education institutes. This situation created a general consensus around the need to improve teacher "welfare" (greater income) but to do this not through a routine increase in their base salary (which would have led to demands for similar increases from other civil servants) but rather through a "professional allowance"; such an allowance would also reinforce the sentiment, strongly endorsed by Indonesia's teacher associations, that teaching had to be seen as a "profession" closed to those not adequately qualified and not officially certified.

This focus on income and status was linked to the realisation that a large percentage of the teachers in 2005 had been hired during the large expansion of the system in the 1970s-80s, with a relatively low level of initial education, little pre-service education, and few opportunities for later systematic in-service upgrading. Many of these teachers still had

another decade or more to work with little incentive and few opportunities for further professional development (in 2005 some 77 percent of Indonesia's teachers were 41 years or age or older, with a retirement age of 60), all at a time when they were faced with many changes occurring in the education system -- a more diversified and accelerated competency-based curriculum, a more child-centred pedagogy, a more varied student body, and more empowered school committees.

The realization by the (then) Ministry of National Education that the teacher cohort of the time was not only failing to respond adequately to these changes but also producing disappointing student outcomes led it to insist that any increase in the status, welfare, and income for teachers as "professionals" would need to be accompanied by an increase in quality. It therefore saw both the need to condition the granting of the professional allowance to active teachers on some system of certification. Also, the opportunity presented by the retirement of such a large cohort of teachers in a relatively short period of time lent itself to the recruitment and education of new generations of higher quality teachers. This marriage of the "status trigger" with the "quality trigger" produced a rare consensus among the major actors around the need for a comprehensive new law on teachers.

The Teacher and Lecturer Law of 2005

The result of these various triggers led to the pioneering Teacher and Lecturer Law No. 14 of 2005 which laid out the roles and responsibilities of teachers as well as the strategies needed to improve their quality and welfare in support of the earlier Education Law of 2003. The Teacher Law, as it is known, defined (i) the competencies required of teachers in four areas (pedagogic, personal, social, and professional), (ii) their incorporation into national teacher standards, (iii) the role of various Ministry units and agencies in supporting teachers to reach these competencies, (iv) the teacher certification process and the qualifications required for such certification, and (v) the conditions under which teachers could receive special and professional allowances. It also raised important issues concerning teacher management and development which required further consideration: continuous professional development and its link to promotion and salary increments, teacher performance appraisal, and the role of principals in instructional leadership. In other words, the Teacher Law provided a comprehensive, clearly defined package of reforms that established an ambitious agenda for improving the national education system.

Specifically, the 2005 Law and the many presidential and ministerial regulations which govern its implementation have major components covering virtually all aspects of teacher management and development. These include the following:

- The core principle that teaching is a "profession". Teachers who fulfil certain established academic qualifications and demonstrate essential pedagogic, personal, social, and professional competencies must be considered "professional" and therefore worthy of a professional allowance equal to their basic salary.
- Establishment of the National Education Standards Board. This Board provided a sound basis for developing a standards framework for courses, tests, role definitions and other education elements needed to underpin the reform; it centered these standards and subsequent indicators on the four core competencies mandated in the Teacher Law.
- The requirement that all teachers must meet a minimum standard of a four-year degree before being certified.
- A one-year course of professional classroom practice for teacher candidates who have completed a non-education four-year degree.

- The requirement that all teachers must be formally certified after the four-year degree has been gained, through either a portfolio of the teacher's education and teaching achievements or a 90-hour in-service course.
- The reform of pre-service teacher education institutions so that their subject and pedagogical courses were closely linked to the school curriculum competency standards; this would help ensure that all graduates met the new performance standards for the teaching profession and were eligible for certification.
- Reformed practicum experience through improved links with districts and schools. The key feature of this component of the reform is the requirement that students undertake the largest part of their pedagogical training and practice under supervision in the classroom.
- A mandatory 24-period (18-hour) per week workload required to gain and maintain certification.
- A "special" area allowance to be paid to teachers in defined areas – remote, in border regions, etc.
- Improved processes of in-school induction and probation to ensure that a beginning teacher receives close supervision, mentoring, and guidance in the workplace in order to successfully make the transition from university training to the school.
- A system of teacher appraisal and public service salary increases which links the teaching objectives of schools to individual teacher performance appraisal and salary increments.
- A more systematic program of continuous professional development which links backward to the teacher appraisal process and forward to salary increments and career progression in a new career development framework for teachers.
- The strengthening of Teacher Working Groups to bring teachers together in a forum to discuss teaching problems and work cooperatively to undertake common tasks such as curriculum development, creation of teaching aids, and the design of test items.
- The more systematic and merit-based appointment of principals and supervisors based on mastery of the four core competencies for educators; this was meant to be achieved through early identification of promising candidates, pre-service training, careful selection, and then further training prior to promotion to more senior positions.

But these reforms – partly because they are so comprehensive and basic -- have not been easy to put in place. Early political tensions over the nature of competency assessment, the pressure to certify many teachers quickly (rather than carefully) and to focus on the number certified rather than the continuing post-certification support they would require, bureaucratic complexities and delays, battles over responsibilities among different agencies and between levels of the government, the sometimes deleterious effects of the personal and political favoritism that can accompany decentralisation, and even the nature and structure of the donor programs which supported the process – all of these and other political and economic factors have sometimes delayed and temporarily derailed the reform process. But one thing is clear – quality of education requires taking the established teacher competencies seriously (i.e., as is now being done with the movement away from portfolio assessment to competency testing), amending and improving them as the needs of the education system change, ensuring that they underlie all teacher management and development processes, and, over time, setting higher standards for mastery to improve teacher quality and student learning.

Indonesia's Teacher Management and Development Reform – Insights to be Gained from this Book

While many countries have a similar desire to reform their teacher management and development system, two aspects of the Indonesian case described in this book are especially valuable. First, Indonesia has characteristics that make its story of special interest – a country that has begun to emerge into middle-income status, yet with persistent poverty and stark inequalities affecting all aspects of national development. Its budgetary commitment to education and its far-reaching attempt to “re-professionalize” teaching provide useful lessons with considerable relevance for similarly situated countries.

Secondly, rigorous research methods, which yielded unusually rich sets of data, were designed for this book. Both are quantitatively sophisticated, and the result is that the analysis of the impact of the reform at two different levels of detail – a randomized control trial at school level and a classroom-focused, time-on-task study of teaching practices linked to student achievement using mathematics as an example – is both detailed and in-depth.

Thus, the book offers information on a range of questions including:

- What can be done to raise the status of the teaching profession, especially in countries where teaching is seen as a second-class, last-choice profession?
- What is the impact of the level of remuneration as a result of certification on the number and quality of candidates to the teaching profession?
- How can teacher education institutions be reformed in order to better ensure their graduates (both new students and in-service trainees) have the subject knowledge and pedagogical competencies required of the education system? What is the impact of a more systematic certification process on the number, nature, and programmes of teacher education institutions?
- How and when are teachers best “qualified” and “certified”? How can one guarantee that formal qualification and certification result in better teaching and enhanced learning?
- What are the likely short-term and long-term impacts of a more systematic certification process and higher remuneration on teacher behaviour and attitudes, teaching-learning methods, and student outcomes?
- What is the cost of serious imbalances in the distribution of teachers, especially to remote, isolated, and difficult areas, and the effectiveness of various mechanisms to solve this problem?
- How can in-service training be made both more accessible and of better quality; e.g., through distance learning, formal training in teacher education institutions, in-school, via school clusters?
- What role should processes such as induction and probation play in the certification process?
- What can be said about the ultimate cost – and cost-effectiveness - to a system of a more systematic teacher certification process and a considerably higher level of remuneration for certified teachers?
- What is the potential impact – negative or positive – of decentralisation on an improved teacher development and management process? What tensions around this process might arise between central and decentralised authorities?

The Chapters One by One

This assessment is developed in a series of chapters as follows:

An **Introduction** explains the relevance of the Indonesian teacher reform to other countries, outlines the content of the book, and outlines the research and analysis methods used in the studies upon which the book is based.

Chapter 1 describes the status of the teaching progression and the situation of Indonesian education before the reform, the key triggers for the reform, and the major components of the Teacher and Lecturer Law of 2005.

Chapter 2 explores the premise that teachers are the cornerstone of education quality. It presents a definition of quality and describes conceptual frameworks related to teacher quality and teacher management and development; the latter outlines the various stages of a teacher's career from recruitment through to continuing professional development. The chapter briefly introduces the nature of various components of teacher reform around the world and ends with a detailed analysis of the political economy context in Indonesia which shaped the formulation and implementation of the country's teacher reform.

Chapter 3 presents a comprehensive description of the institutions, mechanisms, strategies, and processes derived from the laws and regulations supporting teacher the reform. This includes the setting of teacher standards, recruitment, training pathways, preservice teacher education, the management of new teachers, continuing professional development, teacher appraisal, and career progression and special programmes in post-graduate professional teacher training, including the recognition of prior learning, are also described.

Chapter 4 looks at the impact of the reform on teacher quality and student outcomes through the lens of an extensive randomised control trial – its impact both on certification, remuneration, and the attractiveness of the teacher profession and on student learning outcomes.

Chapter 5 looks inside the “black box” of teacher practice in a set of 8th grade mathematics classrooms. The analysis, based on extensive video recording of teachers involved in the 2007 and 2011 TIMSS studies, looks at a wide range of practices (e.g., time spent on mathematics, teacher approaches, group and individual work, problem versus non-problem time) and their relationships to student learning. It concludes by looking at the impact of certification and education on student outcomes in mathematics.

Chapter 6 examines the financial and efficiency implications of reshaping the system post-reform especially in terms of the impact on the composition of the teaching force, teacher distribution, teacher supply, and the education budget.

Chapter 7 presents lessons learned and recommendations derived from the first six chapters. These include the following:

- The mere fact of certification and the consequent doubling of teacher income have not achieved what was expected – better teaching and better learning.
- There appears to be no significant difference in the competencies (subject knowledge and pedagogical skills) or the student learning outcomes between certified and non-certified primary school teachers
- The serious financial implications of the current teacher certification/remuneration process need to be more carefully analyzed by the Ministry of Education and Culture in regard not only to the sustainability of this process but also to the implications for financing other aspects of education expansion and quality improvement.

- The attraction of certification has led to an increase in the number of teachers who have achieved the required minimum of a four-year degree.
- It is essential to try to rectify the weaknesses in the implementation process of the Teacher Law by quickly putting in place the essential parts of a quality assurance/professional development framework with a focus on teacher subject knowledge and pedagogical skills.
- A quality assurance framework needs to be put in place from the beginning of any reform process and should include the development of a cadre of principals selected on merit, specifically trained for their work (both administrative and academic), deployed to where they are needed most, and focused on the essential teacher management and development tasks of induction, mentoring, probation, and ongoing teacher appraisal and improvement. Other components of such a framework include a cadre of supervisors likewise chosen on merit and trained for their work; a systematic teacher appraisal process linked not only to ongoing professional development but also to the regular and accelerated progression and/or promotion of teachers through the education system; and a supportive, non-politicized district education office.

Notes

