INNOVATIONS IN EDUCATION:
PROVIDING COMMUNITY-BASED EDUCATION IN RURAL INDONESIA
Asep Sapa’at
Sekolah Guru Indonesia - Dompet Dhuafa
Jl. Raya Parung-Bogor KM 42 Bogor 16310 Indonesia
syafaat_makmalian@yahoo.com

Abstract
In order to harmonize education system with the community dynamics and needs, the national education system is no longer adopting the old patterns which rely on centralized curriculum. This is the answer to the demand for the synergy of decentralization policy in an autonomous education package. There is no longer a general curriculum set up by the central government. In Indonesia, curriculum is now the authority of each region down to the individual educational unit. This is the philosophy that becomes the basic of Educational Unit Curriculum (KTSP) or known as the Curriculum 2006.

In practice, Curriculum 2006 demanded active participation from community members in the education activities. This means, every progress in education no longer depends on the central government. In contrary, it depends a lot on the education management at the level of region and school. Based on the principles in the curriculum, each region is expected to implement community-based education.

Ciracap is one of the subdistricts in Sukabumi Regency (West Java Province) that is categorized as less-educated. One of the social problems that occur in Ciracap is the low transition rate from primary to junior secondary education because of the weakness of the economic community to educate their children. The Five-Kilo Coconut Sugar Cake Scheme is one implementation of the model community-based educational program in Ciracap that focuses on achieving two main objectives, including: (1) the achievement of nine-years basic education program, (2) the development system of family business groups (the parents) that contribute to the establishment of school autonomy. This paper will describe the implementation of community-based education model in Ciracap, especially empowerment efforts to increase quality of education.

Keywords: rural community, community-based education, decentralization policy

1. Introduction
In the effort to optimize regions’ potentials to ensure success of national development in the educational sector, the government has put in place a nationwide policy for the implementation of a decentralized system in managing schools. This is manifested in the adoption of a modified model of School-Based Management which has long been implemented in advanced countries such as the United States, Canada and Australia.

School-based management is the systematic decentralization to the school level of authority and responsibility to make decisions on significant matters related to school operations within a centrally determined framework of goals, policies, curriculum, standards, and accountability (Caldwell, 2005). From other perspective, Malen et al. (1990) say,
"School-based management can be viewed conceptually as a formal alternation of governance structures, as a form of decentralization that identifies the individual school as the primary unit of improvement and relies on the redistribution of decision-making authority as the primary means through which improvement might be stimulated and sustained".

In the context of SBM in developing countries, SBM implementation is aimed at encouraging greater participation from the community in order to help create better quality schools. The main focus is to invoke role and participation of the community and parents in the process of decision making and management control which will eventually determine the directions of the development of the respective school.

There are model cases in countries like Papua New Guinea, India, and Nicaragua, in which improved participation of the parents helped reduced rate of absenteeism of teachers in schools (Patrinos and Kagia, 2007; Karim et al., 2004). Other sample case is in cambodia where 3 rural schools have prompted a reform toward resolving educational gap in the country by adopting the SBM principle (Shoraku, 2005; 2008b). In fact, in every country where SBM is being implemented, the parents play the role of first-instance educator for their children and they assume responsibility for the early socialization of their children (Center for Educational research and Innovation, 1997). However, there is one thing worth noting that in order for the SBM to be effective, one shall consider the critical success factors as well as the character and culture prevailing at the respective localities where the school is situated. As so suggested by Fullan (1992), field innovations in education must be supported with the various factors which will facilitate the implementation of such innovations in the daily activities.

The social-economic statistics of 2006 (Munipah et al., 2010), particularly for the Sukabumi Regency, school dropouts among 13-15 years age group (Junior High School Pupils) stays at 32.42%, and the figure among 7-12 years age group (Elementary) is at 2.67%, and the portion of elementary school graduates failing to enroll to junior high is at 42.27%. The high prevalence of dropouts is attributable to the inability of the parents, economically, to support and maintain their children to remain at schools. In addition, there is culture problem such that parents never viewed education as an important investment for their kinds and as the result many of the children did not continue their education to higher levels. Such as the case prevailing at SD Cigebang (elementary school) and SD Jaringao (elementary school) which are located in the Subdistrict of Ciracap – Sukabumi Regency.

Now, in consideration of the above matter, some questions arise. What is to be done in order to make schools convincing enough to make the parents realize of the importance of education for their children? What SBM strategy is most suitable to be adopted and implemented considering the culture that exist in the targeted community, namely the Ciracap Subdistrict? What kind of people-empowerment program, which creates a synergy between economic empowerment and education, is to be implemented in order to resolve the high dropout rate prevailing at SD Jaringao and SD Cigebang?

2. Theoretical Analysis

School-Based Management (SBM) is an educational innovation in school management which is school-based. SBM is a decentralized system for school management under which a school shall have widest possible authority to stipulate their educational vision and mission, as well as to design suitable work programs which will directly accommodate for the future development of the respective school.
The SBM model has in fact been long implemented in advanced countries. Surveys conducted on the implementation of SBM in such countries indicate that this model has effectively and comprehensively support the improvement of educational quality at schools and encouraged greater participation from the community as well as parents in realizing the agreed programs of schools (Calwell and Spinks, 1988). In support of this finding, Solkov-Brecher (Sa’ud, 2005) says that in advanced countries, SBM helps improve education quality significantly and optimizes uses of resources available at schools and community to contribute to the success of national education system.

However, there are cases where schools are confronted with obstacles and failure in the implementation of SBM. Take for instance in the Netherlands, SBM was implemented well because parents and stakeholders were given the authority to design and put in place policies which will govern the schools. But in the case of Argentina and Chile, SBM failed to optimize its potential because stakeholders were not given wider authority to make decisions for the schools, although the system has been decentralized (Education Human Development Network, 2007).

Suparlan et al. (2010) offers its own analysis relating to SBM implementation in Indonesia. One of the efforts undertaken by the Indonesian Government in improving the quality of its education system is to encourage for greater role and participation by the community in all the educational processes down to the technical operation of schools. This is evident in the introduction of Ministerial Decree No. 004/U/2002 which seeks for the establishment of educational council and school committee which replace the old school council known as BP3. A school committee shall be composed of at least 9 members representing the community, teachers and principal and this committee undertakes 2 strategic roles, namely (1) to provide advice and supports for the operation of school, to act as mediator between school and the community, facilitates for increased role by community and parents for the school; (2) to provide recommendations on school’s teaching programs, budgets, teacher qualifications and school facility. But unfortunately, this ideal role of school committee has not been implemented sufficiently. Field observation indicates that there are obstacles such as (1) there are members of school committee whose only work is to collect moneys from parents; (2) the role played by school committee does not actually work for the sufficient representation of the community not for the good implementation of SBM ideals; (3) lack of sufficient knowledge and experience on the part of school committee regarding SBM; (4) there are indications that school committee does not actually represent the community because its members are selected by school principal; (5) too much intervention by school principal in decision making.

SBM will work only if there are sufficient participation from all the stakeholders of the school. In fact, participation will be ensured only when school leaders such as principal and head of school committee are able to implement transparency and accountability principles in consistent manner in all decision making relating to their school. The ‘Education Human Development Network (2007)’ describes the accountability principle of school committee, in connection with the SBM, in the following manner:
3. Findings & Discussions

3.1 School committee Empowerment

School committee empowerment program seeks to increase participation of the public in the improvement of elementary education at SD Cigebang and SD Jaringao. School committee empowerment is focused on efforts to improve quality of education service and work toward the self-sufficiency of schools. As so indicated by Suparlan et al. (2010), the empowerment of school committee, in the SBM implementation, shall hypothetically improve the quality of the educational service through the fulfillment of pupil’s right for education. This is described in the following figure.
School committee’s primary role is to offer advice, provide supports, control and to act as mediator for the school. School committee and principal should be able to build a positive synergy for the improvement of learning quality at school through the implementation of the SBM. Initially, the role of the school committee at SD Cigebang and SD Jaringao is limited only to supervising the uses of the BOS fund (government’s school assistance fund program).

School committee’s empowerment program is conducted by assigning an independent advisor to play the role of educator, facilitator and mediator at the said SD Cigebang and SD Jaringao schools. This field advisor will become the front instrument toward the process of change during the 2 year facilitation program. During the program period, the independent advisor will intensify efforts for the creation of school committee and put in place their role and function for the sake of educational improvements at the two elementary schools. Other strategy to be implemented in the empowerment of school committee is by arranging monthly meeting which shall be attended by all the stakeholders of the school. This forum will openly and casually discuss all matters relating to the operation of the schools.

Through this school committee empowerment, we shall see gradual improvement in the people’s view regarding the importance of education for their children. Parents used to think that education is not so important for the future of their children, but now they are committed to ensure that their children should at least complete their education at junior high school level. In the past, parents tend to persuade their daughters to marry right after completing elementary school rather than to enroll them for a junior high school education. In fact, after completion of the school committee empowerment program, schools now have improved view on the importance of education as evident in the application of sanctions to parents who chose to cause their children to marry prior to completion elementary education.
The key to ensuring the change of the people’s view toward the understanding on the importance of education for their children is when all the processes conducted in school committee empowerment resulted in solutions to the problems faced by the community. All the aspirations and initiatives from the community are heard and facilitated during the monthly meetings. To place school stakeholders as the subject of the program proved to be the correct strategy in order to bring reforms for both SD Cigeban & SD Jaringao schools.

Then, in order to improve pupil enrollment from elementary school to junior high school, a School Committee Economic Unit (known as UEKS) was launched. This program aims to develop an effective educational system with the support of parents participating in the school committee. The economic improvement endeavor is conducted by adopting and managing a trust fund to finance family-based economic activities. Under the UEKS, the fund offers 2 types of financing, namely loans for commercial business activities and profit-sharing-based loan to help finance enterprise activities conducted by parents. The financing provided under this program is not to be given directly to individual borrowers but through groups. Parents will be assigned to groups after passing through some mandatory training called the 'Latihan Wajib Kelompok (LWK).’ Groups are created based on the business activities already existing. In fact, participating within these groups are volunteering teachers who are also needing the assistance. In general, a volunteer will only be paid an honorarium at IDR 50,000 / month in the case of SD Cigebang and IDR 150,000,-/ month in the case of SD Jaringao.

This program seeks to help the assisted groups to attain better living quality in general, not just in the economy side. Therefore, workshops and training were conducted in order to develop the entrepreneurial skills of the parents of the children attending the Springhill Village (at) Palembang schools. The assisted groups are provided with course on entrepreneurial motivation, small scale business feasibility study and on marketing strategy, on how to formulate a business proposal and to prepare business report.

All empowerment efforts including the empowerment of school committees are meant to creating positive attitude, widen knowledge and advance skills, all conducted in regular meetings. When the parent see that their economic situation is improving, they are now ready to decide wisely on the future of their children and the importance of education.

3.2 The Five-Kilo Coconut Sugar Cake Donation Scheme (GELIPA)

A dominant resources existing within the Subdistrict of Ciracap is the coconut palm trees, of which local strain coconut trees grow in a total of 934 hectares of land and the hybrid coconut trees grow in 697 hectare land. With production output stands at 708.96 tons of local variety and 655.41 tons of hybrid variety, the high prevalence of schooling-age dropouts in the region is unthinkable. However, what we see in the field is not necessarily in line with our reasonings.

In order to resolve the problem, a scheme was designed and implemented which is called the “Five-Kilo Coconut Sugar Cake Donation Scheme (GELIPA)”. This scheme is conducted in conjunction with the decentralized school management program through the utilization of local economic potentials and resources.

The coconut fruits harvested by the local residents are then processed to become coconut sugar cake, also known locally as the red sugar. In addition, there is this local...
wisdom that live in the community in the form of savings for future times in need. Their savings are normally designated for purposes such as to construct houses, purchase jewelry and for other consumptive purchases. But unfortunately none is made for the education of their children.

The GELIPA scheme seeks to exploit this local wisdom by encouraging parents to save their produce, namely the coconut sugar cake or otherwise money for the future benefit of their children’s education. This scheme shall hopefully prevent further dropouts of school age children and encourage them to pursue higher education. The following table provides some illustration of the savings scheme organized by the ISM Maju Bersama cooperatives (at SD Cigebang school) and the ISM Sejahtera Bersama cooperatives (at SD Jaringao school).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Names</th>
<th>Total Members</th>
<th>Total Sugar Collected (Kg)</th>
<th>Total Amount (IDR)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tumbuh Bersama</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>175,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidup Mulia</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>430,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tani Jaya</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>320,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1: Savings by the assisted groups, members of the ISM Maju Bersama Cooperatives, at Cigebang**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Names</th>
<th>Total Members</th>
<th>Total Sugar Collected (Kg)</th>
<th>Total Amount (IDR)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hidup Mandiri</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>1,035,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guru Mandiri</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>130,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandiri Bersama</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>220,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barokah Bersama</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>180,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sejahtera Mandiri</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>120,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tumbuh Mandiri 1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>340,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tumbuh Mandiri 2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>130,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tumbuh Mandiri 3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>75,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2: Savings by the assisted groups, members of the ISM Sejahtera Bersama Cooperatives, at Jaringao**

After 2 years of the GELIPA implementation, this program proved to have reshaped the opinion of the local residents on the importance of education for the better future of their
children while at the same time helped improving the economic condition of the parents. The improving number of school enrollment from elementary school to junior high school provides proofs on the effectiveness of the GELIPA program. Below is some data illustration of the program.

![Graphs showing school enrollment data](image)

**Conclusion**

SBM is a model of innovation in education which needs to be implemented by invoking the participation of all school stakeholders, adopting the principles of transparency, accountability and a sense of belonging among the stakeholders for the future benefits of the school. The implementation of school empowerment program conducted at the SD Cigebang and SD Jaringao schools took into consideration the local resources and wisdom available and living within the local residents. This program must be implemented comprehensively in order to be able to resolve all the problems faced by school education.

The synergy and integration in the implementation of the economic empowerment and education program was able to build the awareness of the residents of Ciracap on the importance of education for the best future of their children, the importance of savings for education, and at the same time facilitating their economic activities in order to enable them to send and maintain their children at schools to the level of junior high school.

Implementation of the SBM program shall involve creativity such that the program approach shall focus on resolving the factual problems faced by the schools, encouraging wide participation from the community and parents in participative decision making, such that this program was able to bring in empowerment to the local residents, and helped fulfill the children’s right for education.
4. Reference


