

IMPROVING SCHOOL READINESS THROUGH EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN RURAL AREAS OF INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

In accordance to the international commitment to the Millennium Development Goals and to actualize A World Fit for Children, the Indonesian Government has developed a holistic model – the community based Early Childhood Development. This model is suitable to Indonesia due to its geographic and demographic characteristics. Despite the economic growth, based on the last census (2010, Statistics Indonesia), there were more than 30 millions Indonesian citizens who lived with less than US\$1 per day. Therefore to provide ECD program as accessible as possible is the only answer to prepare the children to be ready and competent to compete with their peers while pursuing their basic education, regardless their background. The research aims to evaluate the ECD programs through analyzed the impacts of ECD activities on the school readiness, to explore the contribution of family to the school readiness and to contribute scientifically for related policy and program. The quantitative and qualitative methods applied through instruments which cover scholastic and non scholastics competencies. The research areas are across islands of Indonesia, in the districts of Aceh Besar, Pandeglang, Sukabumi, Wonosobo, Banyumas, Probolinggo, Bone, Lombok Tengah, Sikka, Belu, and Jayapura. The results have proven that children with exposure to ECD programs (regardless profit-centered or non-profit-centered programs) for at least 1.5 years are having higher school readiness. However, results show that the school readiness is not the exclusive responsibility of the academic institutions or the teachers. It comprises from the family, the community and the local Government officials. It also relates to health and nutrition factors and language proficiency to national language. As recommendation, the researchers suggest that all ECD programs need to be completed with health and nutrition programs, improve language proficiency programs, modify the tendency to make scientific knowledge as the center attention, improve the capacities of the non-formal teachers and supportive government laws and regulations.

Keywords: Early childhood education, school readiness, education for all, Indonesia