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Creating Learning Communities for Children in Polman District, West Sulawesi Province, Indonesia

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MAKING SERVICES WORK FOR THE POOR IN INDONESIA

CASE STUDY 3:
CREATING LEARNING COMMUNITIES FOR CHILDREN IN POLMAN DISTRICT, WEST SULAWESI PROVINCE

MAY 2005

ABSTRACT

Decentralization paved the way for the Creating Learning Communities for Children (CLCC) program designed by UNICEF, UNESCO, and the Indonesian Department of Education in 1999, which aims to improve primary school education quality. CLCC's school-based management (SBM) component targets increased community, and especially parents', support for children's education, while its active, joyful, effective learning (AJEL) component aims to strengthen children's critical and creative thinking. This case study examined CLCC's impact in two schools of Polman district, West Sulawesi province: one poor, rural school targeted by CLCC, and one better-off, urban school which adopted CLCC on its own. Accountability of school management improved at the better-off school, due largely to the school's democratically-inclined headmaster, but SBM was a failure at the poorer school largely due to an autocratic headmaster and parents' and School Committee members' passivity. In both schools, AJEL dramatically changed teaching methods and increased student and parent participation, due to both headmaster support and the effectiveness of AJEL tools. For poor parents, reliance not just on formal communication via the School Committee but on informal communication (including an innovative school radio program) were key. At neither school have national exam scores or drop-out rates improved *relative to those of neighboring non-CLCC schools*. School attendance, however, improved, teaching methods improved, and students and parents both became more involved in school, so perhaps there is a mismatch between AJEL tools and exam subjects, or the national exam does not reflect the type of knowledge gained from AJEL. Since 2001, the district has expanded CLCC to 70 new schools using its own funding; local innovators have spread it to about 30 more schools. UNICEF financial support for CLCC ends in December 2005, and the program's long-term sustainability is an open question. Greater community support is crucial for financial sustainability, particularly at the poorer school. The introduction of AJEL to secondary schools may be key to ensuring sustainability of impact. Finally, for institutional sustainability, the District Bureau of Education, ostensibly in charge of the program but unenthusiastic about it, must be convinced. Better monitoring of program impact might help to bring this reluctant agency on board.

This case study was written by Stefan Nachuk, World Bank (Indonesia), Susannah Hopkins Leisher, consultant (Australia), and Arya B. Gaduh, World Bank (Indonesia).

Research was based on a field visit to Polman in March 2005. Reference is made to *Creating Learning Communities for Children: Improving Primary Schools through School-Based Management and Community Participation,* UNICEF-UNESCO-Government of Indonesia (2000) and *Menciptakan Masyarakat Yang Peduli Pendidikan Anak,* UNICEF-UNESCO-Government of Indonesia (2005). Research team members included Arya B. Gaduh, World Bank (Indonesia), Nunik Yunarti and Maulina Cahyaningrum, consultants (Indonesia), Lina Marliani, World Bank (Indonesia), and Luis Fujiwara, Ford Foundation International Innovations Liaison Program (Brazil). Managerial, analytical, and editorial support was provided by Menno Prasad Pradhan and Sachiko Miyata of the World Bank (Indonesia) and Winthrop Carty, Ash Institute of Democratic Governance, Harvard University (U.S.A.).

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INTRODUCTION

As part of its mandate to alleviate poverty in Indonesia, the World Bank is undertaking a series of case studies to promote better services, especially for poor and disadvantaged people. The case studies were chosen from the many innovative practices seen in Indonesian local government in recent years, through a competitive outreach process managed by the World Bank. Donors, non-governmental organizations, and local government staff were contacted and encouraged to submit proposals regarding innovative pro-poor service delivery work that they either were undertaking or knew about. The Creating Learning Communities for Children (CLCC) program being implemented in Polman district, West Sulawesi province, touches upon a theme that is central to making services more pro-poor: improved performance and accountability of local government service providers. Hence its selection as one of the case studies.

THE STUDY SITE: POLMAN DISTRICT

Polewali Mandar (Polman) is one of five districts (*kabupaten*) in the recently-formed province of West Sulawesi.[1] The district borders Mandar Bay where Sulawesi Island meets the Java Sea. It is the second-largest district in the province with a population of nearly 500,000, the majority of whom work in agriculture. Most residents are Muslim and belong to the Bugis-Mandar culture (indigenous to South and West Sulawesi provinces). Other residents are of Javanese and Torajan origin. The 2000 poverty rate in the district was about 26 percent, significantly higher than the 2000 national rate of 19 percent.[2]

The study site comprised two sub-districts (*kecamatan*). Polewali, the district capital, is primarily urban and relatively well-off (its poverty rate in 2000 was 21 percent). Tinambung sub-district, in the southeast coastal region, is rural and rather poor (with a 2000 poverty rate of 27 percent) populated mostly by fishermen and farmers.

PRIMARY EDUCATION IN POLMAN DISTRICT

Polman district has 374 primary schools employing about 3,100 teachers and serving about 53,000 pupils. As in much of Indonesia, there are both Islamic schools (*madrasah)*, managed by the Religious Affairs Bureau, and non-Islamic schools, managed by the District Bureau of Education. In each category, there are both public and private schools. Primary education in Polewali and Tinambung sub-districts is representative of Polman district. As in the district at large, over 80 percent of the sub-districts' primary schools are public and non-Islamic, serving nearly 90 percent of the sub-districts' students and employing over 80 percent of their teachers.

Primary Education in Polman District

School type	# Primary schools (% of total)	# Students (% of total)	# Teachers (% of total)
Public non-Islamic	311 (83%)	47,811 (90%)	2,718 (87%)
Private non-Islamic	1 (<1%)	53 (<1%)	8 (<1%)
Public Islamic	2 (<1%)	86 (<1%)	9 (<1%)
Private Islamic	60 (16%)	5,253 (10%)	374 (12%)
Total	374 (100%)	53,203 (100%)	3,109 (100%)

Source: Polman District Bureau of Education 2004

Primary schools in Indonesia are organized in clusters, each with one "core school" and a number of "spillover schools". The core school is the model, and has the most complete facilities, and usually, relatively greater power over hiring of teachers and admission of new students. There are roughly 60 clusters in Polman of 5 to 9 schools each; Polewali and Tinambung sub-districts each have three clusters. A cluster is the responsibility of one school inspector, whose job it is to assess teachers in the classroom and facilitate solutions

[1] Until end-2004, all districts in West Sulawesi were part of South Sulawesi province.
[2] Central Board of Statistics 2000 data on Polewali Mamasa district which split into Polman and Mamasa districts in 2004.

to school problems. There are 44 inspectors in the district, including three in Polewali and two in Tinambung.

CLCC: WHERE DID IT COME FROM, AND WHAT IS IT?

GENESIS OF CLCC

Decentralization, legislated in 1999 and begun in 2001, spurred a change in the central government's education policy. In 2000, the government began an experiment in the decentralization of education by conducting school-based management (SBM) pilot projects in several districts. The essence of SBM is that schools are given greater responsibility for, and authority over, planning, development and management of education. Previously, school managers would wait for instructions from the central government before implementing centrally-decided education policies in their schools. After nearly three years of pilot project implementation, the concept of SBM had been widely disseminated, and in 2003 it was legalized with the National Education Law (No. 20/2003).

The government focused on two policies it deemed crucial to the success of SBM: establishment of more representative and accountable School Committees (SCs), and the relaxing of the rigid centrally-set curriculum. Accordingly, in 2002 the Minister of National Education issued Decree No. 044/U/2002 which replaced the old Parents' Associations (*Badan Pembantu Penyelenggara Pendidikan* or BP3) with SCs in all schools, both religious and secular. The end goal was to improve teaching quality, and the decree aimed to do this by greatly increasing community input into, and oversight of, school affairs, making the SCs a potentially key player in education throughout Indonesia. SCs were given responsibility for and authority over ensuring additional funding for schools, managing school year plans, and monitoring school quality.[3]

The second policy, which has not yet been formalized, is the Competency-Based Curriculum. Under this experiment, the rigid curriculum mandated by the national government was relaxed, and individual schools were allowed to offer courses as they see fit. The government conducted pilot projects on CBC in selected regions starting in 2002, expanding in 2004 to the entire country.

SC formation in practice. Though SCs are supposed to be elected, in practice they are formed in several ways: election of all members, election of executive members (head, secretary, and treasurer) and appointment of the remainder, a simple renaming of the old Parents' Association, or appointment of all members by community leaders and/or the headmaster. Parents and others with particular concern about education may become SC members, and in the schools visited, included parents, teachers, and community and religious leaders.

In 1999, the Indonesian Department of Education, UNESCO and UNICEF pioneered the Creating Learning Communities for Children (CLCC) program. The idea was to develop a model of high-quality primary education in support of the decentralization process that was about to begin. CLCC's aim is to improve the quality of education services through improving school management accountability, strengthening parents' participation in their children's learning, and establishing a more active learning environment for children.[4] CLCC pilot projects were first implemented in 124 schools of 7 districts in 4 provinces, and by 2004, had expanded nearly twelve-fold to 1,479 primary schools in 40 districts of 9 provinces.[5]

[3] The decree also introduced the Education Council, a district-level agency to facilitate community input into district-level education policies.
[4] Indonesian version of the CLCC program document (*Menciptakan Masyarakat Yang Peduli Pendidikan Anak*).
[5] UNICEF-UNESCO-Government of Indonesia (2005).

THE CLCC PROGRAM

Officially, CLCC has three components: school-based management (SBM), community participation, and active, joyful, effective learning (AJEL).

School-Based Management

Though active SCs are now mandated by national law, in reality they function at varying levels of competence throughout the school system. CLCC's school-based management (SBM) component aims to increase the involvement of communities, especially parents, in school management, especially by enabling SCs to function as they are supposed to under the law: as democratically-elected, engaged, and accountable community bodies which collaborate on and monitor the budgets, plans, and teaching activities of school staff.

Under the SBM component, CLCC program funding is provided for training sessions for headmasters, teachers, and SC members.[6] Topics include school-based development planning, collaborating with the community to design school budgets, and clarifying the roles of headmasters and SCs in plan implementation. First, training sessions are held at the cluster level, attended by the headmaster, one teacher and the SC head from each cluster school. In Polman, 98 headmasters (over one-fourth of all headmasters in the district) and 110 teachers (nearly 4 percent of all district primary school teachers) have attended these sessions to date. Then, workshops are given by cluster-level trainees for all teachers at their respective schools.

The Community Participation Component. Though program documents list community participation as a separate component, in practice, no activities have been planned or funded under it. In effect, it has been subsumed within SBM. Indeed, community participation is integral to effective SBM.

Schools must successfully complete training sessions and workshops in order to be eligible for CLCC funding. They are then allocated annual grants (about USD 200 per school in Polman) to pay for improved teaching materials and other items. Additional funding is provided to each cluster to support regular meetings of teachers, headmasters, and the SC.

Active, Joyful, Effective Learning

Traditional teaching in Indonesia is one-way, with little participation of children and an emphasis on memorization. The main activity under the Active, Joyful, Effective Learning (AJEL) component is the provision of training sessions for teachers in a brand-new methodology in which teachers initiate just 30 percent, rather than 100 percent, of classroom activities. Sessions demonstrate the AJEL method in action, including how to evaluate the curriculum, make lesson plans, worksheets, and visual aids, and improve question-asking skills. The focus is on increasing student participation. 110 Polman primary school teachers have attended AJEL training sessions to date.

Under the AJEL component, support is also provided for on-the-job training sessions held at cluster schools and monthly Teacher Working Group (*Kelompok Kerja Guru* or KKG) meetings for cluster teachers.

THE CLCC PROGRAM IN POLMAN DISTRICT

In 2001 UNICEF began CLCC pilot projects in Polman district as part of a major UNICEF intervention there which included other education programs such as the Educational Database Collection Program, health programs on mother and child health, nutrition, and environmental health, and a project to increase birth registrations.[7] Because UNICEF was already partnering with the District Planning Agency (*Bappeda* or *Badan Perencanaan*

[6] CLCC program implementation is ongoing in Polman district as of May 2005.
[7] Former CLCC Taskforce manager in Polman.

Pembangunan Daerah) on its other work, the District Planning Agency, rather than the perhaps more obvious District Bureau of Education, became its partner for CLCC as well. In 2002, the district's CLCC Taskforce (under District Planning Agency management but composed of District Bureau of Education staff) began CLCC implementation at the school level. UNICEF and the taskforce focused on a total of 14 schools in two sub-districts in 2002, expanding to 14 new schools from the same sub-districts in 2003. UNICEF support to these 28 schools is planned to end by December 2005.

2002 CLCC Program Costs in Polman District, US$

Item	Unit		Unit cost	Total cost
Grants	14	schools	210	$2,940
Information dissemination, training of trainers & school-level training	14	schools	412	$5,768
Teacher Working Groups	2	sub-districts	315	$630
Headmaster Working Groups	2	sub-districts	210	$420
School Committee Forums	2	clusters	300	$600
Training for district and sub-district officials	1		474	$474
Program review	1		530	$530
Total				$11,362

The total cost to UNICEF of program implementation in Polman district in 2002 was nearly USD 11,500 (Rp. 109 million). In 2003, UNICEF continued to pay for training sessions, meetings, and annual grants in the original 14 schools. However, in the 14 new schools, UNICEF only paid for training sessions; the district had to cover grants.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

The research team sought to test six hypotheses:

1. CLCC produced more active teaching methods.
2. CLCC made school management more accountable.
3. CLCC resulted in greater parental involvement in children's education.
4. CLCC increased children's participation in and outside the classroom.
5. Exam scores and drop-out rates in CLCC schools have improved relative to those of neighboring non-CLCC schools.
6. CLCC methods were adopted throughout the district.

The research team spent nine days in Polman district visiting two primary schools: one urban school, *Sekolah Dasar Negeri* or SDN 028 Pekkabata in Polewali sub-district, and one rural school, SDN 012 Karama in Tinambung sub-district. The schools were chosen because they represent very different educational situations. The first is relatively well-off, adopted the CLCC program on its own (in 2003), and has a very active School Committee. The second is poor, was targeted by the CLCC program directly (CLCC began there in 2002), and has a less active School Committee. SDN 028 is a "spillover school" in a cluster of nine. SDN 012 is a core school in a cluster of seven**.** Both are public and non-Islamic, as are 80 percent of the district's schools.

Focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews were carried out with over 45 people including seven teachers, two headmasters, two school inspectors, eight parents, twelve School Committee members, the presenter of the radio program at SDN 012, seven members of the District Bureau of Education, two staff of the Sub-district Bureaus of Education, three CLCC Taskforce members, two ex-CLCC Taskforce managers, and one District Planning Agency staff.

Due to the short time available for fieldwork, only two schools could be visited out of the 59 in the two sub-districts—a sample size of just 3 percent of local schools, or less than 2

percent of all district schools which have adopted CLCC to date.[8] Moreover, it is uncertain how representative the two schools are. The findings of this case study should therefore only be taken as suggestive of CLCC impact elsewhere; extrapolation from such a limited sample is risky.

CLCC IMPACT

DID CLCC PRODUCE MORE ACTIVE TEACHING METHODS?

Yes. There was a consensus among respondents that CLCC has had an immediate and visible impact upon the way teachers in both the poorer SDN 012 and the better-off SDN 028 engage with pupils. Teachers now use a more interactive style emphasizing group work, student questions, and new learning aids such as visual tools, essays, and games. For example, the use of a paper clock recording each child's time of arrival at school discourages lateness. Many teachers, encouraged by their successes with the CLCC-provided tools, have begun to design, use and share their own. One teacher uses the melody of a well-known song to help his students remember mathematical formulas. This innovation has been spread widely via the Teachers' Working Group (KKG).

The creative AJEL environment opened the door to innovations. It is not only teachers who have been inspired by AJEL. The SDN 028 school inspector designed a plan whereby cluster headmasters and teachers are invited to assess each others' schools during regular Headmaster Working Group meetings, in part on the basis of their implementation of AJEL. The anticipation of peer assessment has motivated school staff to keep their schools cleaner and decorate classrooms with AJEL tools. At SDN 012, the headmaster launched a school radio program broadcasting information for students and parents such as homework assignments and quizzes.

Teachers and headmasters at both school clusters have enjoyed a big increase in mutual support, which has likely contributed to the success of AJEL. With funding support from the CLCC program, teachers from all cluster schools attend meetings once a month to compare teaching techniques and help each other with problem-solving. Teachers reported that these meetings help them both improve their teaching practice and feel more confident about their abilities. While Teacher Working Groups (KKG) existed before the advent of CLCC, they met less frequently and covered issues in less depth. With CLCC support, headmasters also meet monthly in Headmaster Working Groups (*Kelompok Kerja Kepala Sekolah* or K3S) to discuss school management issues, whereas prior to CLCC, headmaster meetings were rare and irregular.

Mathematical Formulas
(sung to the tune of Lihat Kebunku)[9]

Let's all get together and learn the math
Don't get bored so quickly, let's learn the math
Let's keep learning 2-D formulas
Let's study together with all our friends

Circle's area is pi-R squared
Rectangle's area is length times width
Triangle's area is half-base times height
Square's area is side times side

Volume of the tube: base area times its height
Volume of the cube: sides to the power of three
Length, width, and height, together make a block
When multiplied together we get a block's volume

[8] The single CLCC-targeted school visited by the team represents 4 percent of CLCC-targeted schools in the district, and the single CLCC spontaneous-adopter school visited represents roughly 3 percent of such schools in the district.
[9] Informal translation by team members.

DID CLCC MAKE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT MORE ACCOUNTABLE?

CLCC only improved school management accountability significantly at SDN 028—the better-off school with a headmaster who was already so inclined, and, ironically, the school that adopted CLCC on its own with no outside support.

A Polman district primary school teacher, Ms. K., attended a CLCC training session in 2002 and emerged converted. The following year, promoted to headmaster, she immediately began to implement CLCC in her new school. Her first step was to call a meeting of all teachers to draft the school budget plan jointly. Next, she began to build the SC. She took great care to ensure a transparent process, and the nine SC members (including eight with children or grandchildren in the school) were all democratically elected. They now play an active role in planning, budgeting, and oversight of school affairs, meeting formally three times a year to discuss and agree with the headmaster on the school budget, evaluate student exam scores, and review expenditures. These meetings are a discipline the headmaster has imposed on herself. Ms. K. also ensures that school budgets and accountability reports (year-end reports in which she accounts for the previous year's spending) are sent to the homes of all parents, and posts a large copy of the school budget at school—all recommended SBM tools. SC members and teachers greatly appreciate her openness and find it easy to communicate with her.

At SDN 012, however, school management accountability has not improved, despite direct targeting by CLCC. Like the SDN 028 headmaster, SDN 012's headmaster, Mr. S., is a strong advocate of improving education quality. According to both teachers and the school inspector, he is creative and committed. However, people find it difficult to work with him. He is seen as being stubborn and short-tempered and tends to disregard rules. At heart he does not seem to believe that SBM is important to education quality. Thus, he has done nothing to empower the SC, which consequently plays a very minor role in school affairs. Only a few SC members have children at school, limiting parents' ability to influence school affairs via the SC. There are no regular SC meetings, and when members do meet, it is usually to respond to a fundraising request from the headmaster. The draft budget is discussed, but as one parent noted, "If only the core SC members are present for this process, it cannot be said to be transparent."[10] The head, Mr. K., sees the SC's main role as "waiting for the report from the school about the school's physical needs. Once there is a need, the SC moves to find the funding for such needs." The headmaster continues to control school budgets, planning, and monitoring of pupil outcomes. Twice he has misused financial reports to divert CLCC funds, once to the purchase of guidebooks, and once to the construction of a sanitation system—both reasonable purchases but not in line with CLCC spending guidelines. In neither case did the headmaster consult with the SC.[11]

DID CLCC RESULT IN GREATER PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN CHILDREN'S EDUCATION?

Yes. Parents in both schools were reported to be much more involved in their children's education than before CLCC was introduced. However, the level of parental participation is greater in SDN 028, the better-off school with the more active SC.

[10] Source: focus group discussion and interviews with parents.
[11] In neither case did people feel the headmaster was corrupt, only that he had made decisions without consulting others.

SDN 028 parents are more involved both directly, by helping children more with their homework, and indirectly. They participate more in SC elections, attend more school meetings, and are more likely to collect money for and pay school fees: 70 percent of parents now pay, as opposed to 50 percent before CLCC.[12] They are also more likely to contribute their time and money to school infrastructure improvement.

SDN 028 parents flex their muscles. Since CLCC was introduced, parents have assisted in constructing washbasins for students, only asking the school for materials, and in painting the school—a task that in the past was only done when the District Bureau of Education decided to do it. Parents made their voices heard during scholarship allocation as well. Normally the headmaster makes scholarship recommendations, but both the SC and parents are consulted. In one case, parents vetoed the headmaster's recommendation because they knew the child in question was not as poor as the headmaster thought. The scholarship was reallocated.

The poorer SDN 012 parents are also more involved in their children's education than before CLCC was implemented. They are inspired by seeing their children get excited about studying, and they know more about what goes on at school through letters which are copied to them that relate to key SC and other school activities. A key innovation, of the headmaster's, has been the local school radio program.[13] Parents reported that the radio show has increased their awareness of their children's education, and there are cases when parents have taken their children to school to pick up paper copies of quizzes that were to have been broadcast, following the temporary interruption of radio signals.

SDN 012 live! The school radio program provides basic information on cluster schools, announces homework assignments, delivers school lessons and quizzes, and showcases students' good work, as well as providing entertainment for children.

However, SDN 012 parents remain relatively passive players in school management. Parents play at best a marginal role in planning the annual budget and monitoring expenditures: it is usually only the four core SC members who discuss the draft budget. Parents appear to have taken no action to upgrade school facilities on their own.

DID CLCC INCREASE CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION IN AND OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM?

Yes. Students from both schools have become more active and are now more likely to take the initiative in learning and in questioning their teachers. They are reported to be more enthusiastic about learning, not only at school but at home, where they do their homework more often and for longer periods of time. In SDN 012, students now meet more often in study groups, and in some cases demand that teachers be available for extra meetings to answer their questions. Students are also more in charge of study groups, choosing study topics themselves rather than leaving the decision to teachers. The school radio program is credited with a change in children's behavior at home—they now spend more time doing homework and studying together around the radio, instead of playing outside in the evening. In SDN 028, pupil absenteeism dropped from 10 percent in 2003 to 4 percent in 2004 after CLCC was implemented. There are also reports of an increase in children's self-esteem outside the classroom. One parent explained that normally, children of his culture (Mandar) would not even dare to look their parents in the eye, but now, his children can point out his mistakes.

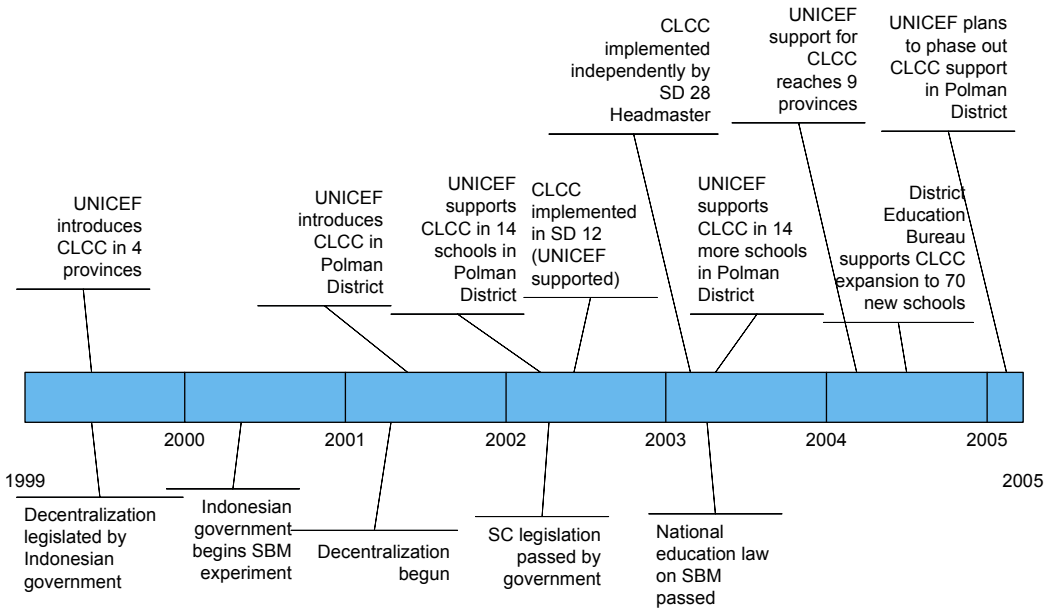
[12] Source: semi-structured interview with headmaster and parents.
[13] *Ibid*.

DID PUPIL EXAM SCORES AND DROP-OUT RATES IN CLCC SCHOOLS IMPROVE RELATIVE TO THOSE OF NEIGHBORING NON-CLCC SCHOOLS?

No. CLCC has not resulted in improved exam scores *relative to neighboring non-CLCC schools* or reduced drop-out rates in either school to date. Both SDN 012 and SDN 028 headmasters did report increases in exam scores since the introduction of CLCC. Specifically, the SDN 028 headmaster reported an increase from 6.2 to 6.7 (out of 10) in grade 6 scores for all subjects between 2002 and 2004 (since CLCC was implemented). However, there is no statistical difference between CLCC and non-CLCC exam results in adjacent areas. Similarly, there is no statistical difference in drop-out rates between CLCC and non-CLCC schools between 2002 and 2004.[14] However, CLCC is only four years old in Polman; with time, it may still have an impact on exam scores.

WERE CLCC METHODS ADOPTED THROUGHOUT THE DISTRICT?

CLCC has spread both formally, through expansion by district government, and informally, by word of mouth. The formal expansion of the program to 70 new schools in 13 clusters in 2004—reaching nearly 20 percent of all district primary schools—demonstrates the depth of the District Planning Agency's support for CLCC: all expansion is funded entirely by the district. The District Bureau of Education, still primarily an implementing agency, has only lukewarm support for the CLCC program, however (see page 10).



The second method, adoption of CLCC by local innovators at non-target schools, has been one of the best, and least anticipated, impacts of CLCC. "Spontaneous" replication of the CLCC program has been led by inspectors, teachers, and others exposed to CLCC methods and successes. Following SDN 028's successful experiment with CLCC, that school's inspector brought CLCC to the eight other schools in SDN 028's cluster.[15] There are reports of about 30 other schools, mostly in the district capital, that have "spontaneously" adopted CLCC methods.[16] The extraordinary thing about this development is that these schools have funded CLCC activities entirely from their own budgets. Counting spontaneous adopters,

[14] Econometric analysis by the research team using the difference-in-difference model on a complete set of data for 13 out of Polman's 15 sub-districts. Data was obtained from the District Bureau of Education.
[15] Source: interview with SDN 028 school inspector.
[16] Source: semi-structured interview with CLCC Taskforce manager.

CLCC now reaches nearly 35 percent of district primary schools, and nearly one-third of these schools pay for CLCC activities entirely from their own school budgets.

BUILDING ON CLCC SUCCESS

WHAT MADE CLCC WORK?

Changes in national government policy. The CLCC program would not have happened had it not been for Indonesia's decentralization reforms beginning in 1999. These led directly to the decentralization of education, including one of the centerpiece education reform policies, school-based management (SBM). CLCC was designed to maintain and improve education quality during decentralization, in particular through support for SBM implementation at the school level. SBM legislation loosened the political reins on SCs by transferring the bulk of the responsibility for school planning, funding and management to them, and created a climate encouraging change and the adoption of new teaching methods such as AJEL**.**

Headmaster leadership. There is no question that the headmaster is key to CLCC impact—indeed, it is hard to imagine how CLCC-promoted changes in teaching practices and community engagement could be implemented otherwise. In this case study, the changes supported by the headmaster were the changes which took hold—AJEL in both schools, and SBM in one.

Rapid and visible changes in teacher, student and parent behavior as a result of AJEL. Some teachers found AJEL difficult to do at first, as they were used to the old lecturing style and had never before been required to prepare visual or other tools to make learning more joyful for students. AJEL requires that teachers spend time being creative. Clearly, teaching preparation pre-AJEL was much simpler. Yet as the more flexible teachers went ahead with the new method, more reticent teachers became convinced of its importance, and themselves became willing to change. In the end, teachers were converted to AJEL because it works. Both teachers and students from the better-off and the poor school now genuinely like AJEL, while parents are more supportive of their children's schooling as they see the enthusiasm that the new method has created. Clearly, the AJEL tools provided by CLCC are the right ones, at least for these two schools.

Institutionalized mutual support. At both schools, support for the frontline—teachers to teachers and headmasters to headmasters—has been part of the CLCC program from the start, complete with regular funded meetings at CLCC cluster schools. Both teachers and headmasters find the "new generation" of Teacher Working Groups and Headmaster Working Groups immensely helpful.

Multiple routes to access parents. Parents, CLCC's potential champions on the home front, are reached not just formally via SC meetings and school handouts, but informally via their enthusiastic children and an innovative radio program at SDN 012. For poor parents whose time has a high opportunity cost, the informal route is key. Had SDN 012 been forced to rely only on the SC to reach parents, parental involvement in children's education would likely have been much less.

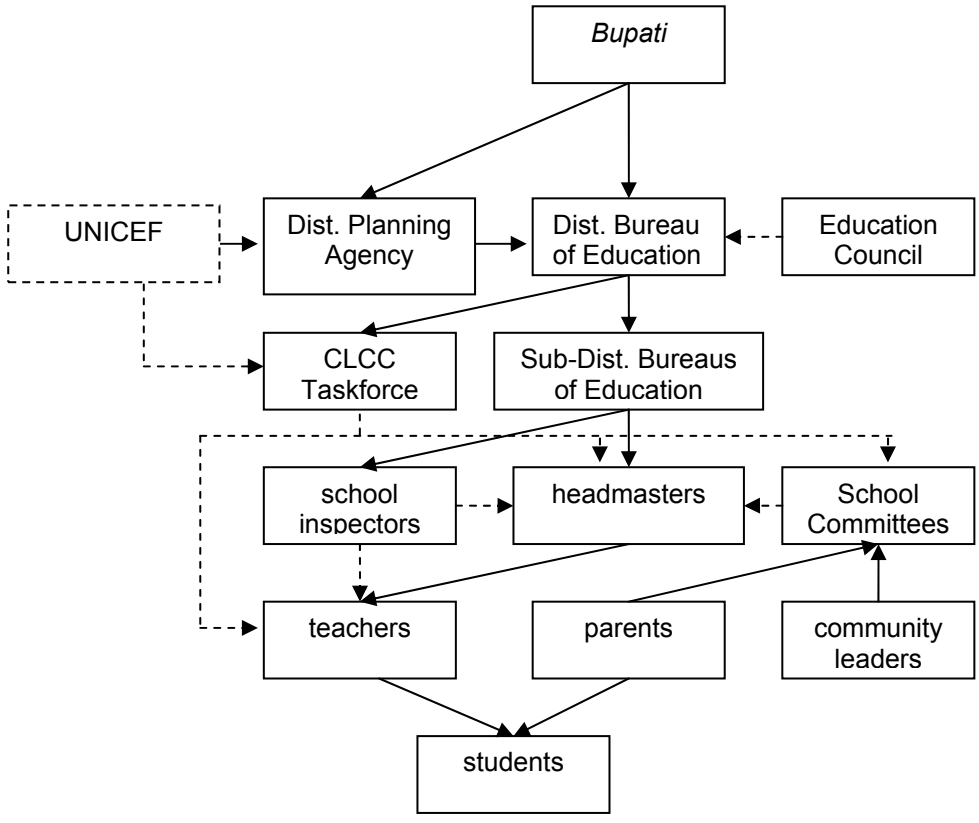
Easy and frank communication among headmaster, School Committee and school inspector. SBM cannot work without good cooperation among school management personnel. Good cooperation in turn depends upon the simple ability to communicate. As a result of the SDN 012 headmaster's inability to work together with the SC and the school inspector, the SDN 012 SC is unable to support its school actively. In contrast, the SDN 028 headmaster meets with her SC head at least once a week, and all SC members are deeply involved in the management of school affairs. The easy and open communication that all

SDN 028 school managers enjoy is key to the success of SBM there, while the autocratic style of the SDN 012 headmaster is key to the failure of SBM at his school.

WHAT HELD CLCC BACK?

The beliefs and leadership style of the headmaster. SBM depends on open debate among SC members, parents, teachers, the school inspector, and the headmaster about the school's yearly priorities. The autocratic style of the SDN 012 headmaster—possibly stemming in part from his lack of belief in the importance of community participation—has quashed the possibility of such debate, and left SDN 012 with a passive SC and powerless parents.

Bypassing the District Bureau of Education. UNICEF chose the District Planning Agency as its CLCC partner because it was simpler: UNICEF already partnered with the Agency for other work in the district, and preferred to continue dealing with a single partner. UNICEF thus disburses all CLCC money to the Planning Agency. The District Planning Agency may not take on the role of implementor, so it passes the money on to the District Bureau of Education as implementing agency. But the Agency maintains a *de facto* management role over CLCC in two ways. First, as UNICEF partner, it is responsible for ensuring Bureau of Education compliance with UNICEF's strict financial accountability rules for CLCC. Second, though the CLCC Taskforce is nominally under the Bureau's management, it was the Agency which recruited Bureau staff for the Taskforce, and in fact the Taskforce coordinates more with the Agency than the Bureau.



Dotted arrows indicate input relationship only. Solid arrows indicate supervisory relationship.[17]

[17] The solid line from the District Planning Agency to the District Bureau of Education represents their relationship within the CLCC program only.

Through its informal relationship with the Taskforce, the Agency has been the driving force behind CLCC expansion, frustrated with the Bureau's slow pace of change. The Bureau, meanwhile, gets no financial incentive for implementing CLCC, and plays only a minor role in monitoring and evaluation. With its old-style hierarchical structure, it is institutionally difficult for the Bureau to adopt new ideas. The Bureau is not particularly happy about the Agency's *de facto* managerial role over CLCC. It may be that the Agency—UNICEF's partner for a host of other activities both in the district and throughout the country—was the best choice for CLCC partner at the outset; however, CLCC will need the active support of the District Bureau of Education—the agency charged with responsibility for children's education—to be sustainable.

Status quo on exam scores. The key failure of CLCC to date is its inability to raise exam scores relative to non-CLCC schools. Without adequate data,[18] it is only possible to guess at the reasons. Perhaps the lack of a direct link between AJEL tools (designed to stimulate children's creativity, critical ability, and love for learning) and exam subjects (designed to check children's knowledge of mathematics and languages) is a problem. Perhaps children's knowledge has simply not increased as a result of CLCC. Or perhaps it *has* increased from the new methods, but exam scores—after all, designed to test knowledge gleaned from "old methods"—are not an accurate reflection of that knowledge. If so, exam scores are an inappropriate indicator for the CLCC program. The lack of movement on exam scores has had no apparent damping effect on the enthusiasm of Polman schools for CLCC—the district has funded substantial expansion and many other schools have paid to adopt CLCC on their own. However, for the District Bureau of Education, an unenthusiastic stakeholder but the partner CLCC really needs to convince, exam scores remain a key CLCC indicator. It is likely its already weak support for CLCC will diminish further if there are no quantitative improvements in student learning outcomes.

Poor and less-educated parents. The research team hypothesizes that SDN 012 parents' relative poverty and low education levels contributed to the failure of SBM there. Such parents may be less interested in or able to demand a voice in SC meetings or to insist on holding the headmaster accountable for key school management decisions, perhaps because of the high opportunity cost of their time, or their traditions of behavior in relation to figures of authority.[19] SDN 028's better-educated and richer parents have helped make communication among all stakeholders easier there, thus increasing the level of parent participation in school management.

Does poverty matter? It is notable that in this case study family poverty did not appear to make a difference in parents' involvement in their children's education, nor in children's positive response to the novel AJEL methodology.

Cookie cutter implementation. CLCC, perhaps not surprisingly, is doing better in the school where local capacity is higher, parents have more money and time to devote to their children's education, and a champion headmaster is driving the process forward. To date the CLCC program has not provided any support such as additional training to SDN 012, a school that is clearly not well-equipped to implement SBM.

MAKING IT REPLICABLE

Cultivate the right kind of leadership. Headmaster leadership is a key factor in CLCC impact. To help ensure a positive impact, leadership training for headmasters could become part of the CLCC model. Alternatively, CLCC could target other potential leaders such as school inspectors, School Committee heads, older teachers, or District Bureau of Education staff who already have the "right" characteristics—conviction of the importance of and need

[18] UNICEF monitoring has not included data collection and analysis for non-CLCC schools.
[19] A view also held by the SC head.

for SBM, an inclusive leadership style, and the power to effect change or influence the headmaster. One criteria for CLCC expansion could be the presence of committed individuals within schools or clusters who demonstrate an "active demand" for CLCC, perhaps by attending meetings or raising initial funds on their own.

Leadership is key to the success of SBM. The SDN 028 headmaster, Ms. K., can be characterized as a driven but inclusive leader. While she had a clear vision of how and why she wanted to implement CLCC, she moved cautiously. At every step in CLCC implementation she took care to get support from teachers, SC members, and parents. In particular, she recognized the importance of a democratically elected SC with real parent representation, organizing an election in which over 80 percent of parents participated. Notably, she left the SC meeting room when votes were cast. Parents and SC members are now deeply involved in budgeting, planning and monitoring through frequent meetings and the dissemination of budgets to all parents.

The SDN 012 headmaster, Mr. S., is a visionary but exclusionary leader. His approach to CLCC implementation has often been to do what he thinks is right without bothering to consult teachers, SC members, or parents—hindering SBM from the outset. This had the advantage of moving implementation along quickly, but has also alienated stakeholders.[20] At his school, less than a third of parents participated in SC elections, which were only for the core positions of chair, secretary, treasurer, and assistant. When a majority of parents finally showed up for a follow-up meeting, they were asked to "approve" the SC elections. The SC then took it upon itself to appoint seventeen additional "advisory members." As for activities, even the headmaster agrees that the SC is not very involved in planning and monitoring in his school.

According to a member of the CLCC Taskforce, urban parents like CLCC, and some urban schools have responded to this by adopting CLCC as a way to attract more high-performing students. In such a climate, less-motivated headmasters might still be successfully pressured by intent parents to implement SBM.

Focus on AJEL. In this case study, even when SBM failed, AJEL still had a dramatic impact on the behavior of teachers and students. The ultimate goal of CLCC is to improve education quality. A provocative question is how necessary SBM is to this goal. Even if successful SBM fuels stronger AJEL impact, an initial focus entirely on AJEL in schools with a low chance of SBM success would yield immediate cost savings (from SBM training activities) without *reducing* teaching methodology outcomes.[21] Schools already interested in SBM could pursue it on their own, and poorer schools with less organized parents could push increased community involvement in school affairs to the longer term. That said, by increasing community (and especially parental) interest in schools, SBM will likely play an important role in ensuring the financial sustainability of CLCC.

Measuring success: get it right. Two things are key to measuring success, and thus being able to replicate it: getting the indicators right (which requires an unambiguous goal statement), and measuring them right. The CLCC program aims to improve education quality. But what *is* high-quality education? To get the indicators right, the major stakeholder groups—notably including the students themselves, but also teachers, parents, and school management—should be canvassed for their own definitions of education quality. Success in education "process" elements such as AJEL may turn out to be as important to education quality as success in "outcome" elements such as exam scores.

Are exam scores a valid way to measure improvements in education quality? Certainly not always. Exams can test the "wrong" topics, or in the "wrong" ways, failing to bring out the new knowledge students *do* have as a result of education reforms such as AJEL. Or, exams can test the right things in the right ways, but be falsified by students, teachers, or

[20] For example, one teacher appointed as school treasurer felt his position carries no weight, as the headmaster spends money without consulting him.
[21] This assumes that AJEL improves education quality, which has not been proven.

examiners. There are indications that cheating on the national exams was a problem in Polman district.

Has replication reduced quality? Spontaneous and district-led CLCC replication has brought CLCC to 100 more primary schools in Polman district—but has this led to any decrease in CLCC quality? Given the difficulties in measuring quality to begin with, it will likely be some time before this question can be answered.

Are exam scores the best way to measure improvements in education quality? The answer, of course, is no. There are several alternative quantitative indicators that can be used as proxies for improved education quality, including student absenteeism, drop-out rates, teacher absenteeism, and the percent of the school budget devoted to the purchase of learning materials as opposed to infrastructure.

Though higher exam scores may still be the ultimate outcome for key decision-makers such as the Ministry of Education, an essentially qualitative program such as CLCC cannot be—and is not being—judged solely on quantitative grounds. Indeed, CLCC has already been replicated both formally and informally by the District Planning Agency, and by headmasters, teachers, students and parents at many schools *without* demonstrable success in exam scores. There are many possible qualitative measures of education quality. For instance, how able are students to be critical now, compared with before AJEL was introduced? How responsive are teachers to students' new ideas now? To some extent, the qualitative can be represented by quantitative proxies. For example, the percentage of students who ask a question during a class can serve as a proxy for students' critical ability.

To measure indicators right, a much-improved monitoring system is necessary.[22] With Indonesia's decentralization, data collection has suffered, but improvement is possible. Data collection must not only be in CLCC schools, clusters and districts, but in socio-economically comparative non-CLCC schools, clusters and districts throughout the country (perhaps even the region). Data collectors must be well trained. Ideally, data will be accessible and regularly analyzed, with key findings feeding back into periodic "tweaking" of the CLCC program at the cluster level.

Cast a wide net. According to one ex-CLCC Taskforce manager, the district government's selection of 70 schools for CLCC replication *at random* was a mistake—they should have ensured that the schools belong to the same clusters. However, the motivated SDN 028 headmaster got her CLCC start from a CLCC training she attended while a teacher in another school. The lesson: district-level training can have a major ripple effect, so it should be provided to as many people in as many clusters as possible.

Tailor CLCC to the community. There is some evidence that poorer, less-educated communities have less chance of success in implementing CLCC: most spontaneous replication has been in urban areas which are better-off and better-educated. However, in this case study even the poorer, less-educated community still successfully implemented AJEL as well as increasing parental involvement in children's education. A large part of the reason had to do with the highly effective school radio program. It was not, then, the less-educated and poorer group of parents *per se* that has reduced CLCC impact at SDN 012, but *the way in which those parents are approached*. Poorer, less-educated parents don't have time to attend SC meetings, but they can listen to the radio while working at home. Parents from rural areas without a tradition of community involvement in education may not have the inclination to join the SC or attend its meetings, but in the privacy of their homes and inspired by the radio program they can still become more involved in their children's

[22] Program monitoring is now conducted jointly by district and sub-district inspection teams. Annual program reviews are conducted by UNICEF and involve staff of the District Bureau of Education, District Parliament, District Planning Agency, and Department of Religion, as well as heads of Sub-district Bureaus of Education and SCs.

education. The radio program was a *serendipitous* add-on to CLCC in SDN 012. This study points out the importance of *deliberately* tailoring CLCC to the socio-economic characteristics of each school community. This in turn necessitates identification of potential "problem" schools *before* CLCC implementation in new areas. Given the extent of CLCC implementation to date, there is likely already ample data available for such an exercise.

Plan the phase-out of external support to ensure sustainability. In the case study, external funding was *not necessary* for CLCC replication. The 70 schools to which the district expanded the program are being supported by it, while the roughly 30 schools that have adopted CLCC on their own pay all costs out of their own budgets. At SDN 028, the enthusiastic, trusted, and effective headmaster was able to implement CLCC with no external funding (though her initial training was paid for by CLCC). At SDN 012, which is receiving UNICEF funding, the headmaster stated that he would continue to implement CLCC even without external support. However, the well-off SDN 028 has more financial resources to spend on CLCC with monthly fees of Rp. 10,000 per family, about four times higher than SDN 012 fees. UNICEF support for CLCC in Polman is planned to end in December 2005, though there are rumors that it may be extended by one year. It is possible that SDN 012, with its poor parents and detached headmaster, will not be able to raise sufficient funds for CLCC once UNICEF support ceases. There are several funding options, including increasing community contributions, getting more long-term financial commitments from the District Bureau of Education, and identifying low-cost substitutes for CLCC materials that currently must be purchased. In any case, it is unclear what will happen when UNICEF's support ends. Among the unanswered questions: as students pass from AJEL in primary school back to the old teaching methods in secondary school (where CLCC is not being implemented), what will happen to CLCC impact? With just seven months left as of this writing, there are still many loose ends. The right partner for sustainability—the District Bureau of Education—has not yet bought into CLCC.