



Promoting safe-inclusive schools and empowering girls to ensure equity and quality in education

WHAT IS RTEI AND INDONESIA SCORE

The Rights Education Index (RTEI) is a new global index designed to drive accountability and progress towards realizing the right to education. RTEI works with civil society, research institution and governments to collect data on a wide variety of indicators of the rights to education as well as obstacles to it. RTEI monitors progress, identifies trends, and supports efforts towards the rights to education. In partnership with in-country civil society coalitions and organizations, the project develops and administers a questionnaire to biennially track progress on key national-level right to education indicators in the areas of Governance and the 4 As (Availability, Accessibility, Acceptability, and Adaptability) as well as a number of subthemes and issue areas.

RTEI in Indonesia was carried out by Network for Education Watch (NEW) Indonesia with support by RESULTS Education Fund. NEW Indonesia completed the [RTEI questionnaire](#), which was validated by two independent peer reviewers and made available for government. This country brief was developed in consultation with members of the network and education experts.

Indonesia's overall Right to Education Index score is 72%, lower than RTEI's score in 2018 (86%). The scores for each theme are governance 79%, availability 69%, accessibility 61%, acceptability 49%, and adaptability 62%. In addition, there are subthemes that indicate the low commitment of Indonesian government to the right to education, such as girls 24%, learning environment 25%, and free education 48%.

ISSUE AREA 1: GIRLS ARE BEING LEFT BEHIND

Girls' education goes beyond getting girls into school. It is also about ensuring that girls learn and feel safe while in school; have the opportunity to complete all levels of education, acquiring the knowledge and skills to compete in the labor market; gain socio-emotional and life skills necessary to navigate and adapt to a changing world; make decisions about their own lives; and contribute to their communities and the world.

Indonesia has made considerable progress toward gender equality over the past decade, with improved rates of literacy, school enrollment, and employment, as well as policies to pave the way for a more gender-equitable society. A recent World Bank study examined gender

issues in education and found that while national averages have improved, significant differences exist at the subnational level, both in favor of boys and girls.¹

Both boys and girls face disadvantages in different regions. For example, in Sukamara Regency, Central Kalimantan, 61 percent of boys aged 16 to 18 are enrolled in school, while the percentage of girls enrolled is 95. However, in other regions girls also face disadvantages. For example, in Probolinggo Regency, East Java, the percentage of boys enrolled is about one and a half times more than the percentage of girls enrolled.

Another problem is child marriage (marrying before age 18). Girls continue to be disproportionately impacted, with large variations at the subnational level. Child marriage and schooling are inversely correlated, particularly for girls, as many drop out of school if they get married. Though Indonesia's child marriage rate has been declining in recent years, it is still high. A study found wide variations at the sub-national level.² For example, West Sulawesi had the highest prevalence of early marriage in 2020, with 34.2 percent of ever-married women aged 20-24 married before age 18. In contrast, the Riau Islands had a lower but still significant rate of 11.7 percent.

Therefore, universal secondary education for girls would have many other benefits. It could virtually eliminate child marriage and reduce substantially early childbearing (having a first child before the age of 18). It could also reduce fertility rates in countries with high population growth and increase women's decision-making ability and psychological well-being. Finally, it would have large benefits for young children, including by reducing under-five mortality and malnutrition.

ISSUE AREA 2: BULLYING AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE SCHOOL SETTING

Indonesia's RTEI scores reveal that the learning environment had a lower score than other sub-themes, which is 25%. These indicate that schools are still unsafe places for students. As the Indonesia Children Protection Commission noted in early 2021, 72% of children experience violence school, with 13% being sexually abused by teachers. There is a new trend of sexual abuse which saw girls being the majority of victims in the past, whereas now the data shows that boys are most commonly victims.³

Based on data from the Executive Summary of the National Strategy for the Elimination of Violence Against Children 2016-2020 by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, it can be seen that the trend of violence in education is still quite high, both for teachers and students, perpetuated both by teachers and other students. The data shows that 84 percent of students have experienced violence in school, with 45 percent of male students saying that teachers or school officers are perpetrators of violence. Then, 40 percent of students aged 13-15 years reported having experienced physical violence by peers, and 75

¹ Rythia Afkar, Inclusion in Indonesia's Education Sector: A Subnational Review of Gender Gaps and Children with Disabilities, Education Global Practice: June 2020, Page, 6.

² Rythia Afkar, Inclusion in Indonesia's Education Sector. Page, 17.

³ <https://www.republika.co.id/berita/nasional/umum/18/03/19/p5tvja1423-aduan-kekerasan-fisik-di-dunia-pendidikan-capai-72-persen>

percent of students admitted to having committed violence in school. This condition is one high factor of student dropout.⁴

Besides, bullying impacts boys and girls differently. The study confirmed findings from earlier studies on bullying in schools. While boys have a higher risk of bullying/physical violence, girls, by comparison, were more likely to experience sexual-based violence and emotional or psychological violence.

Schools that are not child-friendly are still one of the problems of education. This is due to the prevalence of violence in schools, both physical and non-physical. Cases of bullying, physical violence, and also sexual violence are still frequently reported as headlines in the media, such as: teacher abuse of students, student abuse to teachers, student abuse to students, abuse of guardians to teachers, sexual abuse, and brawls between schools. Indonesia has a number of laws and regulations that protect children from acts of violence, such as Law Number 17 of 2016 concerning Child Protection.⁵ However, the application of these legal instruments still faces various obstacles such as ignorance of the community and the lack of commitment of the local government. This lack of implementation has made children in Indonesia not yet fully protected.

ISSUE AREA 3: FREE EDUCATION IS STILL AN ILLUTION

Based on RTEI findings, the score for opportunity and indirect costs only reached 48%. NEW Indonesia has conducted research on 20 cities/regencies in Indonesia related to educational research on equitable education budget orientation in the 12-years compulsory education program in 2020.⁶ The results of the study stated that there were no local government priorities in this program. Most provincial governments only allocate 10-15% of local budget for education. This seems very ironic.

In the practice, the government did not provide enough public schools, so the limitation of public schools has required the community to be involved in providing primary education. However, the government provided insufficient funds for private schools, and as a consequence the students are still required to pay for education. Practically, public schools are free but in private school, the student has to pay for tuition fees, uniforms, textbooks, and so forth. This condition didn't only happen in primary education, but also in secondary education. We strongly believe that state is the duty-bearer for the right to education. The government should remain the duty bearers of public education, and the private sector must reinforce the role of state as an education provider.

Because the 12-years compulsory education program has not been well implemented, most Indonesian workers are elementary school graduates. Among the workers there were children aged 5-17 (around 58.8 million children) categorized as child laborers. From the total of the child worker, about 1,76 million or 43,3% of them are categorized as a full-time child

⁴ <https://mediaindonesia.com/humaniora/1449122/12938-anak-jadi-korban-kpppa-soroti-kasus-kekerasan-di-sekolah>. Read also: <https://www.kemenpppa.go.id/index.php/page/read/29/1756/indonesia-bebas-kekerasan-2030>

⁵ <https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Home/Details/37575/uu-no-17-tahun-2016>

⁶ New Indonesia Team, Strengthening the Education Budget in Local-Government, Lentera Literasi, Jakarta: 2021.

worker. From the total of the child worker at the age of 5-17, there are 48,1 million or 81,8% attend the school and about 24,3 million or 41,2% are involved in domestic work. Also, around 6,7 million or 11,4 % of them categorized as 'idle' which means they are not attending the school, assist the domestic work, and not working.

So, Indonesia is one of the countries with a fairly high number of child workers. Based on Sakernas data in August 2020, it is known that 9 out of 100 children aged 10-17 years (9.34 percent or 3.36 million children) work. The majority of child workers aged 15-17 years are no longer in school, their number reaches 73.72 percent.⁷

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings, there are recommendations that need to be done to improve the quality of education in Indonesia:

1. In many cases, regulations and also government policies related to education are quite good, but this will have no impact if it is not accompanied by good implementation steps and monitoring and evaluation. Therefore, the government needs to improve the effectiveness of implementation and monitoring and evaluation.
2. Tackle discriminatory gender norms and harmful practices that deny girls access to school and quality learning.
3. Strengthening governments perspective to ensure that budgets are gender-responsive and that national education plans and policies prioritize gender equality and also use assessment data to eliminate gender gaps in learning and removes gender stereotypes from learning materials.
4. To create a safe and child-friendly school, the school must make an early warning system and complaint system that is in favor of the victim. Government, parents and the community involvement are also needed to monitor things that happen at school. There are clear and firm sanctions for the perpetrators of acts of violence, both physical and mental.
5. The government must be serious in implementing the 12-years compulsory education program in terms of budget allocation, providing infrastructure, and improving teacher quality. The Ministry of Education should be strong in coordination with local governments to implement it, because the implementor of this policy is local government.

⁷ <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2021/06/24/08230091/angka-pekerja-anak-di-indonesia-makin-mengkhawatirkan?page=all>