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**Indonesia Educational Decentralisation and Regional Autonomy
Provincial Case Studies Ten Years On**

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Indonesian Educational Decentralisation and Regional Autonomy: Provincial Case Studies Ten Years On

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Introduction

This paper is based on the findings of a funded research project of the Australian Indonesian Governance Research Partnership (AIGRP), 2008-2009. The research involved both Australian and Indonesian academics working collaboratively with the Rumah Kamu Foundation, Taduloko University and Gorontalo State University, each representing a different Province on the island of Sulawesi in East Indonesia. The paper provides an overview of this research project and focuses, in particular, on the outcomes from three specific governance sites in north, central and south Sulawesi, located in Eastern Indonesia.

Background to the Study

Wallace et al (2009) note that public policy, as the written and legally documented intent of government, is the public expression of the mandate of a democratically elected government (e.g., Marginson, 1993, p. 55). But what constitutes 'good policy'? How is a public policy's effectiveness to be determined? What is it that could be done to make a difference to the fit-for-purpose and adoption of policy and strategy by its target groups?

Policy is characterised, according to Considine (1994, p. 4), by reciprocity between those affected by the policy, and those who need to develop and implement it. That policy may entail:

- Clarification of public values and intentions;
- Commitments of money and services;
- Granting of rights and entitlements.

In 1999, Indonesian national laws No. 22 and No. 25 were implemented. These two new laws marked the beginning of decentralization in Indonesia and its marked impact on Education (Kristiansen, S and Pratikno, 2006). The districts (kabupaten/kotomadya) were made responsible for several sectors, one of which was education, and, according to Law 25, this included financial responsibility (Kristiansen, S and Pratikno, p.5, 2006). All aspects of these laws are in accordance with Considine's three principles above, containing as they do clarification of public values in pursuit of more power at and for the local level, commitments of money and services and certainly the granting of rights and entitlements.

As with any policy, however, the issue becomes more one of how the policy is enacted and how effective it is judged to be. While Indonesia's policies on decentralization have been in operation for only a decade, their impact at the

grassroots level is constantly under review as remote and rural districts continue to vie for equitable treatment (Kristiansen, S and Pratikno, 2006) and the outcomes at grassroots level that decentralization, often referred to as 'regional autonomy', foreshadowed.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this investigation lies mainly in its emphasis on identifying ways in which the national policy on educational decentralization can work better, with regional and local governance structures, in pursuit of providing expanded educational opportunities for all.

A number of studies have examined the factors that have impeded and facilitated the flow of information about policy between national governments and community level provision of services. As that literature points out, it is insufficient to bring into being a policy document which marks out the three principles Considine outlines above. What is also required is effective communication and implementation of the policy:

Policy is developed by people, for people, and for people who live in a particular place at a particular time. *Effective* policy is always and irretrievably *situated* socio-culturally and historically and is the product not (as sometimes seen) of individual effort, but rather of the interactivity between those individuals at various levels in the bureaucratic hierarchy, and between these personnel as well as more (and less) implicated stakeholders of that policy. (Falk, 2007 p. 30)

In the Indonesian context, there has been some recent research about the governance issue in relation to effective policy (e.g., Knight, 2008; Untung, 2008; Utari & Rustiadi, 2008 & Surata, 2008). Picking up on the need for effective communication and interaction in policy implementation, Surata (2008) examined a number of regionally based governance structures and models. While structures may appear to be uniform across districts, Surata finds that it is the way those structures operate in practice that makes the difference. In one important case, an 'informal' governance body, namely a community leadership group, acted as the clearinghouse for local decision-making. While informal, this body received all decisions from government and community representation, and made 'informal' recommendations to the appropriate body. This resulted in all parties knowing about and having a voice in local autonomy matters.

In regards to the field of education, which is the area of policy for this research, Bjork (2005) provides the most cogent and comprehensive analysis of Indonesian education, from 'teachers, schools and central bureaucracy' perspectives. In this book, Bjork is concerned with the redistribution of power from 'central government offices to local actors and organisations' (p. 1). In general terms, he finds that:

Educational decentralization is embedded in broader notions of participatory democracy and the distribution of power. Indonesia's history of top-down, authoritarian control does not provide a fertile setting for reforms that aim to enlarge the circle of actors involved in the management of public services. (p. 168)

In other words, at the time of research (early 2000s) Bjork found that decentralization had had little impact at the grassroots level. Moreover, and of [particular significance

for this research, he finds that "If the government is indeed committed to decentralization, it is imperative that more attention is paid to the implications for local agencies and actors" (P. 172/3) from upper level officials to teachers and administrators. In other words, all levels and types of governance are implication in the enactment of the policy, and their roles must be clearly articulated if it is to succeed.

Purpose of the Study

In terms of the specific focus for this study, this AIGRP research project built on previous research there including that conducted by Marhum (2005). Kristiansen, S and Pratikno, 2006 explored school based management (SBM), the role of the non-government education sector and educational planning with the purpose of gauging the impact of the decentralization policy in East Indonesia. To this end, the study further investigated the extent to which decentralized educational planning has provided opportunities for serving poor communities in the enhancement of community involvement in decision making.

The views of stakeholders from all levels of governance at three sites in East Indonesia, namely, Kota Palu, Makassar and Gorontalo (see table below) were collated and analyzed.

Site One – Kota Palu	Department of Education (Province, District, Sub-District, School)
Site Two – Non Government Education in Makassar	Students, Families, District and Province (Schools: SD and SMP)
Site Three - Gorontalo	Department of Education (Province, District, Sub-District, School)

Stakeholders, in these three sites, were invited to comment on the impact of regional autonomy on both government and non government education sectors, respectively. Their views were sought in relation to governance in education, both formal and informal, including their perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of programs and approaches implemented since the move to 'educational decentralization' (Bjork, 2005, p.168).

Methodology

A qualitative research design was employed that drew on ethnographic techniques of interview and observation was employed at all three sites, with 20 participants in each site. Data was gathered using semi structured interviews and focus group discussions.

Two levels of analysis were conducted. Site-level data was analyzed using thematic techniques. A cross case, macro analysis helped gauge similarities and differences across the three sites and to explore the themes that emerged across the sites.

Site One: Kota Palu

The research undertaken in Central Sulawesi, Kota Palu, was focused on School Based Management (SBM) and its related governance structures. School based management (SBM) marked one of the first steps to autonomy at the local level under decentralization (Marhum, 2005). The principal aim of SBM stressed community involvement in the education sector through local management at the school level. To this end, principals were "granted autonomy...as education managers" and were given

an "adequate budget". However, there was also a system of "control by external parties (that) formed part of an accountability system" to avoid "willy-nilly" leadership in schools (Indriyanto, 2003, pp7-8).

Participants from the Provincial Department of Education, the District Department of Education and the Sub-District Department of Education were interviewed using focus groups and a semi structured interview process. Participants were invited to comment on aspects of the SBM programs, the involvement of stakeholders and the local communities' responses to SBM. A total of 19 schools were included in the data gathering process.

The findings of the research at this site revealed a focus on governance structures related to teacher and student recruitment with sub categories including tensions between public and private schools, resourcing issues, community involvement in education and liaising with local business communities (Marhum, 2009). Key themes are detailed as follows:

1. Public and Private Schools: The Kota Palu investigation has identified a degree of confusion amongst the stakeholders as they face these limitations in their autonomy, with those governance structures in respect to the teacher appointment process. The public schools interviewed criticized the intervention of the Department of Education in the recruitment process of new staff. The schools claimed that SBM is based on the educational decentralization Law which gives access for schools to be involved in the new teacher recruitment process since the schools have a better understanding of the teachers they need. There were concerns that the private schools had full autonomy when it comes to the issue of teacher recruitment. For example, a principal of a private school reported that the school had got full autonomy when it came to the issue of teacher recruitment:

We can select qualified teachers that we need without intervention by Department of Education. It is different from public schools in which Department of Education play the most important role in selecting and recruiting teachers without involving principals or teachers. The Department of Education arranged the placement of teachers to schools and schools have to accept the placement of teachers without protest or objection. Unfortunately, the schools were not involved in the selection.

Thus, public schools have less autonomy in new teacher recruitment and selection. It can be argued that in the Era of Educational Decentralization and with the Concept of School Based Management, schools should be allowed to participate in the recruitment process of new teachers.

2. Resourcing issues: There is a common perception that not all decisions regarding resources are equitable and comments from the participants have highlighted several areas of concern. The following are some typical examples of data supporting this: One respondent remarked that, "The budgets are often not delivered on time". Another said that, "There is a widespread lack of

resources in many schools and this includes a teacher shortage". And then, "There is insufficient communication [about budgets] between all levels". A Designated International Rating school in Palu faces challenges. It is very costly to run such schools, and the subsidy from the Government is insufficient. Schools running the Designated International Rating School Programs are encouraged to generate income to support the costly programs. To address this problem school councils and parent bodies in some Designating International Rating schools (RSBI) have taken the initiative of approving the practice of fund raising. However, the Department of Education has intervened and banned the practice of fund raising to cover expenditure costs. Other schools are taking the initiative of raising the extra funds they need by liaising with local business communities. Companies are providing scholarships and awards to support academic performances in some instances. This initiative has the full support of the Department of Education.

All related school needs were provided by Department of Education based on the Proposal submitted by schools. However, in some cases principal did not involve teachers in designing the proposal. Furthermore, the Local Department of Education did not consider need analysis in arranging the supply of school related needs.

However, many schools reported that the introduction of School Based Management is much better if compared to the past situation in which Department of Education used to intervene all kinds of school management. Schools did not have any autonomy to manage their own school related business.

Recently, schools have been given autonomy to manage dana Bos (School Operational Budget). The budget is regularly transferred to school Bank accounts without much intervention from the local Department of Education. The school Operational Budget Assistance from Ministry of Education is considered to be useful and helpful. Many schools development programs were supported by the School operational Budget Assistance (Dana Bos). However, it can be speculated that the financial management of School Operational Budget Assistance is less transparent and accountable since members of school council (komite Sekolah) were not involved in the financial management of the budget assistance.

In some cases, there were separations of job description when it came to the school financial management including fund raising or income generating. For example, members of School Council (komite sekolah) were only involved in the fundraising from local communities and not involved in managing school budget assistance (Dana Bos) from Government. On the other hand, many

kinds of budget assistance from Government were managed only by Principal and few staff.

Human resources were identified as a problem. This supports the literature which likewise highlights a lack of quality human resources. Bappenas, the Indonesian National Planning and Development, identified that only 3 of 27 Provinces audited had government personnel who were sufficiently qualified for the positions they held (Bappenas, Jakarta, 2002), and the impacts of this lack on the efficiency of local autonomy measures is supported by this study.

3. Community involvement and liaison: There is a lack of communication between schools and stakeholders as can be seen from the infrequency of school-stakeholder meetings. Some members of school council reported that they rarely received an invitation for meetings with schools. This is particularly the case with public schools. On the other hand, it is different for private school cases, where teachers have contacted a number of schools and they often contact parents or stakeholders whenever they need. Parents or students also have got their teachers' contact numbers and they often communicate with teachers through mobile phone if necessary.

Some resourceful schools are raising the extra funds by liaising with local business communities. Companies are providing scholarships and awards to support academic performances in some instances. This initiative has the full support of the Department of Education.

The education literature highlights a lack of effective middle management in decentralized education management and governance that may account for some of the inconsistencies that have been noted at the SBM level, including insufficient clarity of communication between all levels, and delayed budget payments. According to the 2009 March Report for More Effective Decentralized Education Management and Governance, implementation and communication processes may well be hampered by "...a systemic weakness, a lack of middle level support functions (including) professional staff and accessible information" (USAID/Indonesia Quarterly Report, No 16, 2009, p. 45).

Site 2: Makassar

The South Sulawesi investigation, in this project, explored the non government education (NGO) sector in the city of Makassar, the largest city on the island of Sulawesi which itself contains 5 Provinces. The main objective of the research was to examine governance structures related to the NGO sector, in their goal of providing access to basic education for poor children.

Semi structured interviews were conducted with the different tiers of governance including the Director of the non government sector and the Head of the Provincial Department of South Sulawesi as well as parents, teachers and students from the selected intensive research site, Rumah Sekola, which means 'Home School'. It needs

It is noted that there is considerable inequity within the NGO sector because well established NGOs are privy to government funding and often view the government as a partner in their programs. As an interviewed spokesperson from JICA – Prima Indonesia reported:

We have a cooperative relationship with the South Sulawesi Provincial Department of Education (SSPDE). The Government has provided us with a building as a work place and they also assist us with funding for approved activities. At the kabupaten level, we have an implementation team that consists of staff from the local planning office and the Dept of Religious affairs.

However, other NGOs, and here we examine the one called Rumah Sekola as a typical example, are self funded. Rumah Sekola, or 'Home School', was established in 2004 as an initiative of Butet Manurung, the founder of Sokolah Anak Rimba. Rumah Sekola also offers a Kindergarten for the very young and computer training and a range of other life skill topics for drop out teenagers. Rumah Sekola is located in the slum areas of inner urban Makassar. The provision takes place in a two storey old wooden house and is surrounded by rubbish dumps. At the back of Rumah Sekola are 'fish ponds' with floating rubbish in them.

The slums where the school is located are left over from a slum clearance program which saw multi-story new basic modern apartment blocks built. Unfortunately many of these apartments were snapped up by the more affluent who saw them as a better accommodation option than was otherwise available. Across the road from this mixed housing estate is an international games and fun park of top level standard, leading out to a promontory containing new parks, restaurants, shopping malls and beaches mainly for the affluent.

Rumah Sekola provides an education in reading and writing for the children of very poor families who live in the remaining slum areas. These children, typically, are those who assist their parents who have night food stalls or sell goods of various kinds. Children are required to help and so are either too tired or otherwise unable to go to 'ordinary' school.

Generally, all respondents agreed that, as one put it, "Money and facilities are problems". In reality, NGO's and private schools must rely on their own initiative, raising money to run programs. One respondent said that, "The sustainability of the program depends on the money raised by the school itself". Rumah Sekola, like any other non-government supported NGOs in Makasar and of course other regions who are also experiencing this situation:

Rumah Sekola exists through fundraising and runs a school for poor people in the slum areas of Makassar. Approximately 50 children are enrolled in this school (2008-9); no fees apply. Uniforms are provided by the parents because they believe that using a uniform is cheaper than having to provide different clothes every day. Also the uniforms can be handed down by neighbors or family members and this saves money.

The community members who were interviewed unanimously supported the view that NGOs hold a vital key to providing education for situations such as this. As one of the respondents said, "It is important that all NGOs be included in funding opportunities

was to provide services like Rumah Sekola's, as the cost of schooling is too expensive for the poor". Problems frequently persist because information is not disseminated properly by the government. Supporting this, one of the respondents remarked that, "Parents and students are not aware of government policies – there is a lack of awareness and involvement in educational planning". However, all respondents agreed that, "Both funded and community supported NGOs are working to support the improvement of the quality of the educational system".

The findings from this site therefore support existing research in this regard. The education literature cites a similar lack of clear channels of communication as a cause for concern. A 2006 study of parents, for example, revealed that many of them felt that "at the school level responsibilities and duties (were) unclear" (Kristiansen and Pratniko, 2006, page 11). The literature also supports that view that education for the poor should definitely be included in funding initiatives. The findings from the Makassar site therefore support the World Bank's Reform Agenda for 2004, which proposed that:

The central government should adopt pro-poor education programs to stimulate demand consistent with the goals of the global Education for All initiative, and provide adequate and timely technical assistance to local governments to build the capacity of local governments to carry out their new responsibilities effectively. (Vol 1, 2004, page xiii).

This situation seems to have changed little today, 5 years on.

Site Three: Gorontalo

The North Sulawesi research was undertaken in 2 areas of the Gorontalo province, namely, the City of Gorontalo and outside in a regional area of the Regency of Gorontalo, with the focus of inquiry being educational planning. Semi structured interviews and focus groups were conducted in the Department of Education at the Provincial, District and Sub-district levels and selected schools.

The findings highlighted several concerns. It was felt, like one of the respondents remarked that, The Regional government still intervened in the planning process rendering applied regional autonomy different from its initial conception. Furthermore, the quality of human resource holds an essential key in the planning process, as one respondent said that:

A lack of human resources and funds constantly inhibited the education planning process. A particular problem was the lack of suitably qualified human resources with specialist training in educational planning.

Furthermore, government bureaucracy is the dominant influence on the planning process:

Frequent changes in leadership at the provincial and district levels, often lead to changes in the organizational structures of agencies and technical units that left the local government affected in adverse ways.

In general, the research results show that in reality education decentralization in the province of Gorontalo was unofficially implemented since 2004. The authority to conduct regional decentralization (extensively) was given since then, but in practice the implementation of decentralization is not fully submitted, especially at the school

level (elementary, junior and senior high schools). They were given authority to plan the program but budget arrangement still depends on policymakers. These mean that the autonomy is not running or has infringed the technical concept of autonomy, since the policy was not consistent. When the school developed a plan based on needs, usually the realization is out of expectation. This lack of commitment between schools and local government frequently provoke mismatch programs made by the two parties.

Conceptually, schools have the authority to arrange the whole process of plan composing, but plan implementations were still being intervened by the local government. Nevertheless, after the educational autonomy was put official, strategies on educational planning is now being put into the RPS (Rencana Pengembangan Sekolah, School Development Plan), causing: quality based culture is started to be built, some of the budget is managed by the schools, and control is handed over to the school. Consequently, the nature of the planning model started to be bottom-up based on needs, which is then outlined in each schools Strategic Plan (long-term, medium and short). Schools now have the freedom to make plans based on their own identified needs. In quality terms, planning is becoming more focused and measurable.

Regarding the differences between financing pattern of education planning before and after the autonomy can only be seen through the budget source. Before, the entire planning was financed from the state budget (APBN), budget sharing between the provincial and regency/city government. Now, the entire planning budget is adjusted with the overall strategic plan. Operationally, the planning education in schools is very effective, which can be seen from the curriculum, teaching process and the learning process as well as the increased professionalism of teachers. Nevertheless, planning on the physical aspect of the infrastructures is frequently not going accordingly to plan because the financial arrangement usually linger, since the discussion on budget at the executive level is usually finish after the planned events took place.

Additionally, budget arrangements are often changed, influencing programs effectiveness. On implementation, education planning also has its own inhibiting factors: strategic plan prepared by schools usually is difficult to realize, the lack of consistency between policies, policies made by the center government is not in accordance with the local needs (schools) and management especially in finance has not been fully handed over to the school. Whereas the supporting factors are: the community has largely support the education planning and human resources are adequate.

Compared with before, the level of effectiveness on school education planning after the autonomy took place is much better, because it is more targeted. To monitor or evaluate the implementation of educational planning can be done in a way that is carried out to evaluate the implementation of education planning in schools, which is tailored to the strategic plan, tailored to the size of the available funds, and the readiness of the teaching process, i.e. the preparation of the RPP before the teacher teach.

To measure the effectiveness of its implementation, educational planning has its own indicators, which are: drafted schools strategic plan that is implemented in accordance

with the needs of learning **planning readiness** before teaching with the minimum of 80%; the innovation of **learning every year**; the level of learning completion at least 75%; increasing learning **achievement** at least 95 %. Whereas the implementation constraints of educational **planning on planning activities** are: the expenses that will be used in realizing programs, human resources, bureaucracy and government intervention. While the most significant challenge will be the lack of funds available for realizing the strategic plan compiled, in combination with government intervention on school policies. To overcome this problem it is suggested to establish communication and cooperation between the executive, legislature and judiciary parties; do more socialization on school autonomy; synchronize perceptions about the implementation of education autonomy; and building commitment about school business as a shared responsibility.

The participants generally agreed that the strength of autonomy lay in its potential to hand more decision-making and provision of education services to the local level. However, in support of Bjork's (2005) original findings, in the final assessment, notwithstanding the ongoing need for review and improvement, the impacts of regional autonomy were usually only seen in small, but sometimes, as in the case of School Based Management, important ways. School based management (SBM) was particularly seen as a positive step towards encouraging education planning based on the perceived education needs of local communities.

Findings:

Palu:

- The Department of Education (regional government) still intervene in the recruitment process of new staff at the local level.
- The Department of Education (regional government) has intervened and banned the practice of local fund raising initiatives to cover expenditure costs of RSBI.
- There is a lack of communication between schools and stakeholders.

Makassar:

- NGO's and private schools must rely on their own initiatives, raising money to run programs.
- NGOs hold a vital key in providing education for the poor.
- Problems frequently persist because information is not disseminated properly by the government.

Gorontalo:

- Regional government still intervenes in the planning process.
- The reality of applied regional autonomy is not in accordance with the rhetoric of the policy concept.
- Human resources and lack of funds inhibit the local education planning processes.
- Organizational structure at the provincial, cities and regencies level changes frequently, causing the bureaucracy to become more cumbersome and process longer.

- There is a **lack of human resources** with special educational background on educational **planning**.
- There is still **no common perception** on regional autonomy and the autonomy of education at **all levels of government**.

Combined:

- The reality of **applied regional autonomy** is not in accordance with the rhetoric of the **policy concept**.
- There is still **no common perception** on regional autonomy, especially on education, at **all levels of government**.
- **Regional government** still intervenes in the education planning process, budgeting allocation, and the recruitment process of new staff and teachers.
- **Human resources** and **lack of funds** inhibit the overall education planning process and schools' (private, state owned as well as schools supported by NGOs) programs.
- Problems frequently persist because information is not disseminated properly by the government. There is also a **lack of communication** between schools and stakeholders.

Recommendations

As noted in the earlier methodology section, the research design for the project culminated in a cross case analysis of the findings of governance structures supporting regional autonomy in the three sites. A focus group discussion, with all researchers present, identified some common threads that required recommended further action and development. There was comment that parents and students, the stakeholders of governance structures, are a respected part of the national ideology, known as Pancasila. According to the Five Principles, of Pancasila, specifically the one related to *kekeluargaan* (family spirit), all stakeholders in education deserve to experience respect and feelings of inclusivity. Regarding recommendations, it is recommended that:

1. All education stakeholders should be informed about laws, regulations and processes if true autonomy is to be accurately defined and implemented. By education stakeholders, we refer to all levels of governance and their stakeholders associated with regional policy.
2. Teachers, leaders and employees at the provincial, district and local levels of governance should be suitably qualified for the areas and levels in which they either teach or work.
3. Budgets and funding require accountability procedures and funding should be received in advance of due dates to support the budgeted expenditures and autonomy processes.
4. If School Based Management, as a clear instance of regional autonomy policies which is enacted across levels of governance, is to function effectively, the roles of local and district governance representatives need to

be defined clearly and there must be sound communication between them. This knowledge of the set roles needs to be common, shared knowledge for all stakeholders involved in SBM. If there is a right of veto then all parties must know about it.

5. A research and evaluation project be initiated to set up, trial and evaluate a model of local governance using an 'informal leadership group' (see Surata, 2008) as the decision-making clearinghouse. The project should span a 2 year period and establish the factors that impede and facilitate information about resources, communication and policy matters between the various groups in a community

Conclusion

It is appropriate to finish this report with a reflection on the importance the national government gives to review and discussion in the process of achieving successful regional autonomy and decentralization. The Explanation to the Constitution "... is very specific on the point that laws are inseparable from the people charged with implementing them and that good people can overcome the negative effects even of bad laws." (Report from the World Bank, 2004, Vol 1, p.ii).

...even though a constitution may be imperfect, if the spirit of government actors is good then the (imperfect) constitution will not hinder the national journey. So the most important thing is the spirit of the nation" (General Explanation, Point IV).

In essence, the study detected a large amount of goodwill towards regional autonomy, and this in itself is an indication that there is quite a widespread awareness of the policy. The findings in this study show where some of the ways forward towards improving the impact and effectiveness of regional autonomy may lie. It cannot be a conclusive study, as it is based on only three sites in three Provinces of one island of Indonesia. The results support a view that important progress has been made, while certain resource issues can be improved, such as regionally based central government staff knowing and understanding about regional autonomy. Frequent changes to leadership damaged a region's capacity to implement regional autonomy effectively, which suggests better succession planning procedures need to be implemented to overcome this matter. Autonomy in hiring staff for local needs also emerged as an important issue, as did knowledge about budgets and the timely receipt of funds. While the success of groups such as Rumah Sekola in providing basic education for the poor and disenfranchised are clear from Site 2, the study also shows that there is a gap in the effectiveness of mainstream education in providing for these groups, as well as a gap in communication and funding arrangements for some NGOs who are at the front line in provision.

When considering the question as to what strategies would make a difference to the effectiveness of regional autonomy, the findings of this research would suggest that formal connections between levels of government, the education system and communities would improve both the communication about resources and policy matters for all. In some regions, there exists a community based body that has formal or informal representation of government, community and non-government groups. Such a finding was established in recent Indonesian research (see Surata, 2008,

http://www.cdu.edu.au/centres/spil/publications_ijlsc.html) and note earlier in this report. The 'informal' community leadership body acted as the clearinghouse for local decision-making. The result was that all parties knew about and had a voice in local autonomy matters.

The chief recommendation of the research reported here, then, is to set up, trial and evaluate such a governance model over a 2 year period and establish the factors that impede and facilitate information about resources, communication and policy matters between the various governance groups in a community.

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