REACHING THE UNREACHED/MARGINALIZED IN INDONESIAN EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT

A. Background

The preamble of the Constitution 1945 mandated that the government of the Republic of Indonesia shall develop the social welfare, educate nation’s life, and participate in enforcing the world’s orderliness based on freedom, immutable reconcilement, and social justice. The process of educating nation’s life is conducted through education. Thus, every citizen has the right to get the proper education (article 31 verse 1 of Constitution 1945). The Ministry of Education on behalf of Indonesian government has developed educational system which is able to provide the services and equal access for every citizen with no exception.

In the effort to provide educational service, the government has not yet able to reach all of Indonesian citizen due to following factors: (1) geographic, (2) economy, poverty, (3) culture, (4) disabilities, (5) job demand, (6) disaster, (7) conflicts, (8) gender bias, (9) etc.

Nevertheless, the government is providing the nonformal educational services for the citizen who cannot acquire the educational services through the formal means.

B. Education in the Framework of “Reaching the Unreached/Marginalized”

Indonesia is the biggest archipelago country in the world with approximately of 16,700 islands with more than 240 million citizens and more than 300 ethnics and 583 traditional languages. There are 6 major religions namely Islam, Protestant, Catholic, Buddha, Hindu, and Konghucu. About 60% of the citizens live in Java and Bali, the rest of them live in Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Maluku, and Papua. Indonesia is truly “unity in diversity” in accordance with the principle and social value of “Bhinneka Tunggal Ika” and Pancasila ideology. Nowadays, Indonesian administration system is enforced by using decentralized and autonomous system with 33 provinces and more than 497 regencies/cities.

There are 11 categories of “the unreached/marginalized” that have been determined previously by UNESCO, namely:
1. The learners from the remote and isolated areas;
2. The learners from religious/tribe minority communities;
3. Mothers and girls (especially in remote/isolated areas);
4. Boys at risk of dropping out of school;
5. Children from migrant, refuge families without any identity papers, nomadic citizens;
6. The learners with disabilities/special needs;
7. Children workers/waifs and stray-trafficked children, abused children;
8. Children in difficult circumstances (conflict area(s), disaster, prison, etc);
9. Orphans/abandoned children;
10. The learners from very poor families (urban poor);
11. Children with HIV/AIDS

In administering the “reaching the Unreached/Marginalized” in educational program, Indonesia needs to add one more category (12th category) that is: children and/or citizen in the borderlines and Indonesian migrant workers in some countries. This category is important to be discussed in this meeting to provide solutions for why the efforts of providing educational services for Indonesian citizens in the borderlines and in their workplace overseas, especially in ASEAN regions, are still blocked by some obstacles.

The unreached/marginalized groups that can be identified in Indonesia are: the learners in remote areas, either in mountains or islands and main land but dispersed in smaller groups. For example, in Papua, there are 244,106 illiterate people in 2009. In Jaya Wijaya District that have not acquired education, around 246,494 of its citizens are illiterate in 2009. In Sulawesi, Suku Bajo, the fisherman tribe living on the sea is having 17,000 primary school graduates that cannot proceed to the junior high school since they do not have the junior high school built in their area. To overcome this problem, the government implements the Open Junior high School, and Educational Equivalency (Package A and B) through “Mobile Learning Services” i.e. “Boat Schools,” Motorcycle Learning Services, Mobile Classes Room or “Smart Cars,” etc.

The educational services for religious groups and indigenous (remote/isolated) are given to reach the learners existing in traditional Pesantren (Salafiyah religion school) which only teaches religion education and refuses to accept “secular” educational system. There are 3,991 traditional Pesantrens in Indonesia dispersed in Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan, Nusa Tenggara Barat, and Sulawesi. Thus, the government implements a collaboration program between The Ministry of National Education and The Ministry of Religion to administer the “Open Junior high School” program and Educational Equivalency (Package A and B) in the framework of compulsory learning. Therefore, all students graduating from Pesantren have the right to acquire formal education and acquire certain skills appropriate with their potentials and environments.

Indonesia owns a number of isolated tribes located in 28 regencies in 12 provinces around the country. Those indigenous people are: Suku Baduy (Banten), Suku Anak Dalam (Jambi), Suku Dayak Punan (Kalimantan), Suku Bajo (Sulawesi Tenggara), and more than 200
indigenous (isolated) people in Papua and Papua Barat provinces. To those indigenous
(isolated) people are given educational services as well so that they can finish their education to the extent of Junior high School. It is not an easy thing to make them accept these services because of the values and cultures obstacles they believe in as their heritages.

Most of the girls and mothers in villages do not have any access to education so that most of them are illiterate. The number of illiterate men and women in Indonesia is 5.97% in 2008 and 4.89% in 2009. The parity gender index for basic education is quite good, that is 0.98-1.03. Educational programs implemented for mothers are functional literacy education by teaching them to read, write, calculate, and life skills to increase family’s income.

There are a number of Indonesian children who lives in difficult circumstances and conditions to acquire education. In rural areas, there are 846,079 children dropping out of Primary School and 172,402 children dropping out of Junior High School in 2008. Most of them are boys, because they have to work to help their parents for economic reason. Parents in rural areas forces and be forced to have their boys working rather than going to school. Some of them are doing “early marriage” so that they quit schools. There is an understanding that boys are parents’ replacements, so that they are forced to quitting schools.

In the Act No. 13 of 2003 about Labor is mentioned that children workers are children under 18 years old. However, because of economical reason those children are transformed to be workers in some plants, singing beggars in busses, and panhandlers in some streets. These conditions are easily to find in urban areas. In rural areas, many children are forced to leave their schools to help their parents by working in the wet rice fields, farms, and work as fisherman ship crews, or staying in fish-catching places, etc. According to the data from International Labor Organization (ILO), the number of children workers in Indonesia aged 10-14 years old is 10.4 million children. This number is increasing to 12.6 million children in 2007. According to the study conducted by ILO and University of Indonesia in 2003, the number of domestic children workers is 700,000, 90% of them are girls.

However, the number from National Welfare Census (2003) found 1.502,600 of Indonesia children aged 10-14 years old without school and have jobs. Approximately 1.621,400 children are not going to school and help their parents at home or doing some other jobs. About 4,180,000 junior high school age children (13-15) or 19% of children that age, do not attend school. According to the same data, the children workers in rural areas are so much more than in the urban areas, that is 79% in the rural and 21% in the urban. Almost 62% are working in the agricultural sector, 19% in industrial, and 19% in service sector.

Some particular children, especially girls, are forced to wander to the big cities to work as servant, but unfortunately some of them were forced to work as prostitute and even trafficked. The Ministry of National Education cooperate with The Ministry of Social Affair and some independent organizations to overcome the urban poor groups by establishing reception
centers called “Rumah Singgah” as places to accommodate and learning centers for those waifs and strays. In big cities such as Jakarta, Medan, Bandung, Surabaya, and Makasar and some other cities, the government provides some Rumah Singgah. Besides, the government also provides some “Smart Car” around some red light areas and makes it the place where those children can learn. In addition, the government provides the scholarship for the poor and gives School Operational Aid (BOS) so that the children from the poor families are no longer obligated to pay the school fee.

In addition, there are children who are not able to attend the normal school because of their disabilities. These children are sometimes being “hidden” by their parents so that they cannot acquire the proper education. The number of special needs children in 30 provinces in Indonesia is 66,425 children in 2008. Meanwhile, the number of the school for these children from the primary to the middle level is only 1,418 schools in 30 provinces around the country. As a result, many children with disabilities are not able to access the education. Therefore, the decision makers and the competent authorities are expected to put some care and awareness to improve the educational services for those children with disabilities. The development and enforcement efforts of “Inclusive Education” programs are needed in some particular areas which have many children with disabilities.

During 2005-2010, Indonesia has experienced many disasters. In 2005, Tsunami in Aceh and Nias was the biggest disaster that ever happened in Indonesia history. On October 2010, we experienced great disasters such as tsunami in Mentawai archipelago, landslide in Wasior West Papua, and the eruption of Merapi Mount in Yogyakarta and Central Java. Hundred thousands of people were dead and lost. Hundred of schools were heavily damaged. After the tsunami disaster in 2005, 2,500 of tent schools had been established. The rehabilitation of educational facilities has been done in 65 kindergartens, 250 primary schools, 156 junior high schools, 167 high schools, 14 vocational schools, and 1 college. Appointed 1,110 teachers and built 290 houses for teachers. Making skills training for 5,600 people and 227 master trainers in Java. By using the same means, the government has established tent schools and reformed educational facilities.

For the children infected with HIV AIDS, government and non-government organizations provide educational services. Their number reaches 3.26% of children with HIV/AIDS from 17,998 HIV/AIDS cases in Indonesia. The average age are 13-19 years old (school age children) that are definitely willing to school. However, the comprehensive treatments for these HIV/AIDS children are yet to be done. It happened because of the wrong perception from the society, including the educators at schools. Thus, the political willing is something that they expect from the decision makers around this country. To do so, the security process for these HIV/AIDS children’s education is something necessary. Capacity building is also something that needs to be done for the HIV/AIDS prevention volunteers in education sector.

Another the Unreached/Marginalized category that needs to be added in educational services context in Indonesia is children in borderlines and Indonesian migrant workers with their children. There are many children of Indonesian migrant workers in Sabah, Malaysia, without
educational services. The government will establish a special educational institute for those children, either formal or non-formal education. To do so, they need a good commitment and cooperation between Indonesian government and the country where those workers work.

C. Priority Program in the Framework of “Reaching the Unreached/Marginalized” in Indonesia

The services for “Reaching the Unreached/Marginalized” in Indonesia is more aimed to fulfill the priority program of fulfilling the “minimum learning capacity” or minimum services standard. There are 3 main programs in these services, that is: (1) Eradicating the Illiteracy, (2) Filling 9 Years Basic Education Plan, and (3) Distributing the Educational Program for Life Skills. However, the service for the early age children (ECE) in Indonesia is still assumed to adopt the EFA program, so it still has to meet the target of participation which just reach 50.62% (2008). The early childhood education (ECE) program is still developed in two ways, that is formal ECE (kindergarten) and non-formal ECE to reach the remote areas. In order to meet the target of compulsory learning, in 2009 the Net Enrollment Rates (APM) for primary school is 95.18% and Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) for junior high school is 96.24%. Meanwhile, the literacy program for the citizen aged 15-44 has been successful by reducing the illiterate people until 3.21% in 2008. For the service in life skills educational program, 959,920 citizen of more than 15 years old has been served or 63% from the target of 1.5 million unemployed people.

Since that, the best practices of Education for All implementation intended to reach the unreached/marginalized are: (1) Open Junior High School Program, (2) One Roof Primary/Junior High School Program, (3) Educational Equivalency Program, and (4) Education in Disaster Areas Program.

D. Cooperation Proposal in the Framework of Reaching the Unreached/Marginalized

In relation of international cooperation among EFA Coordinators facilitated by UNESCO, then the discussion and information sharing efforts are proposed as well as the programs and activities concept related with the accomplishment of EFA target. There are 3 things that need to be discussed in this meeting, which are:

1. Educational treatment in Indonesian borderlines is facing some troubles in providing the educational services for Indonesian citizen in borderlines areas, especially with Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, and Timor Leste. Good commitment and cooperation that respect one nation’s sovereign over another is necessary. Indonesia is planning to establish and manage the schools in the borderlines areas in order to serve the Indonesia
citizen in a better way.

2. The educational treatment for migrant workers and/or their children. Indonesia owns many migrant workers who work in the neighboring countries such as Singapore and Malaysia. Those workers are still in need to improve their education to a minimum level as equivalent as junior high school. To do so, Indonesia is planning to establish the schools or administer the educational equivalency program (Package A, B, C) so that the workers and their family can improve their knowledge and skills.

3. Education for people with HIV/AIDS. The commitment and concrete implementation of comprehensive educational program for people with HIV/AIDS is still not working properly as expected. To do so, we need a commitment reinforcement from ASEAN countries that become a collective agreement to do any prevention and assurance effort for educational continuity of children with HIV/AIDS until they reach the highest education.

E. Conclusion

Naturally, Indonesia has complex challenges. Educational treatment has to consider the geographic, culture, economy, and social-politic complexity. To do so, we need to keep developing approaches and strategies to reach the Unreached/Marginalized, without putting aside the educational program services for the regular citizen.