

May 2014

Equity, Access and Success in Higher Education

"The role of education for me and my family is that education will change my life and my family into a better life. I'm proud that my parents can send me to senior high school, but I must be better than them." (Senior high school student from Denpasar)

Public Disclosure Authorized
Public Disclosure Authorized
Public Disclosure Authorized
Public Disclosure Authorized



KEMENTERIAN PENDIDIKAN DAN KEBUDAYAAN



THE WORLD BANK



1. Introduction and Context



Students with the least chances of participating in higher education are those from lower social and economic status

The debate about where and how governments should invest in education has raged for decades. On one side are those who argue for strong support to basic education (usually towards universal primary education but also now for early childhood education) in order to guarantee that all citizens have an equal opportunity to gain the foundation essential for further learning and later success in life. On the other, are those who insist on more investment in higher education in order to provide strong professional and technical leadership for the nation and, increasingly, ensure a competitive edge for the nation in a globalizing world. Those who argue for investing in the middle – secondary education, both academic and vocational – are also making an ever stronger case for support.

The argument for investing more in higher education is strengthened to the extent that this investment is seen as not only improving the **quality** of higher education – and thus of the life chances for the few -- but also ultimately contributing to greater **equity in access** to higher education and thus in opportunities for later social and economic mobility. This requires the narrowing of traditional and often increasing disparities between sexes, between socio-economic and majority/minority ethnic groups, and between regions.. It is this argument that explicitly – and unusually -- underlies the government of Indonesia's plans for higher education.

Gaining access to higher education remains an aspiration for a large majority of students in Indonesia, seeing it as an essential pathway to follow to meet their hopes for a better future. The Higher Education Law No. 12/2012, passed by the Indonesian Parliament on July 13, 2012, intends to assist in this process. The Law is pro-poor (stipulating that 20% of the students in higher education should be drawn from the lowest socio-economic quintile of the population -- unlike the current practices of less than 5% of the lowest socio-economic quintile enrollment), mandates financial assistance for these students, and also requires the provision of services for students with special needs.

In order to fulfill its pro-poor mandate, the Higher Education Law now requires specific policy recommendations to dramatically enhance the equity of access to – and the opportunity for success in – higher education, especially for children of groups normally excluded from such education; these recommendations will guide the development of the regulations that will support the implementation of Law No. 12/2012.

Those who complete primary education face further, often difficult transitions – to larger, more distant, more demanding, and more competitive junior secondary and then senior secondary schools. This, combined with the inability of families to pay for the costs of education (both formal and informal), which inevitably increase with higher levels of education¹, means that disadvantaged students become more and more under-represented in the system. Ultimately, because they have not been able to make successful transitions from lower to higher levels of education, they are unable to enter and take advantage of higher education.

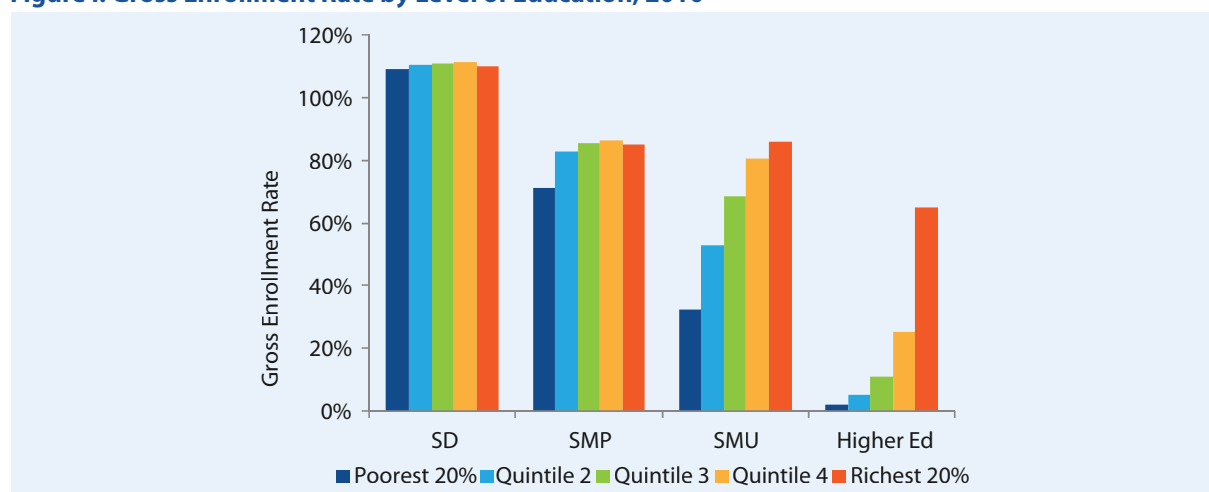
Although the Gross Enrolment Rates (GER) for primary school in Indonesia are more or less uniform across socio-economic quintiles, the gap between the highest quintile (Q-5) and the lowest (Q-1) is over 20% for junior secondary school (2010 figures), 53% for senior secondary, and 62% for S1 programs.

¹ As quoted in the Jakarta Post of May 31, 2013 (p. 4), the Ministry indicated that the annual expenditure of a primary school student was IDR 910,000; for junior high school, IDR 1.39 million; and for senior high school, IDR 1.66 million.

Table 1: GER by income brackets, using Susenas data [BPS 2008 and 2010]²

GER	Quintile-1		Quintile-2		Quintile-3		Quintile-4		Quintile-5	
	2008	2010	2008	2010	2008	2010	2008	2010	2008	2010
Primary	106.05%	104.75%	106.05%	103.83%	106.46%	102.23%	105.43%	102.69%	103.93%	99.18%
Junior secondary	63.86%	75.33%	79.48%	88.62%	84.94%	92.69%	91.41%	95.63%	89.23%	96.81%
Senior secondary	23.21%	36.08%	42.95%	59.13%	57.65%	72.90%	67.16%	84.19%	74.09%	89.09%
D1-D2	0.46%	0.28%	0.85%	0.49%	1.51%	1.03%	2.01%	1.79%	2.49%	1.84%
D3-D4	0.07%	0.18%	0.61%	1.10%	0.90%	1.61%	2.87%	4.47%	10.34%	9.29%
S1	3.76%	2.54%	6.00%	6.37%	11.02%	13.88%	22.54%	28.32%	55.41%	64.66%
S2-S3	0.00%	0.05%	0.00%	0.13%	0.20%	0.07%	0.11%	0.21%	1.92%	2.43%

Figure I: Gross Enrollment Rate by Level of Education, 2010



Source: Susenas 2010

Thus, students least likely to gain access to higher education in Indonesia are those of low socio-economic status; such status also intersects with geographical location/rurality/remoteness, ethnic and linguistic status, and gender to produce even higher levels of educational exclusion – exclusion both from the system (the issue of access to higher education) and from learning (the issue of quality, of the institution itself and of the learning gained in it). In other words, the educational experiences and future life chances of students differ greatly based on the intersections of many forms of exclusion – and these lead to serious inequities in access to, and success in, higher education.

In other words, the educational experiences and future life chances of students differ greatly based on the intersections of many forms of exclusion – and these lead to serious inequities in access to, and success in, higher education.

In order to ensure that children of all disadvantaged groups have an equitable opportunity to gain access

to and succeed in higher education in Indonesia, the Ministry can take several actions:

- clearly define and map the groups most frequently excluded from the education system: where they live, why they are excluded, and how serious is the nature of their exclusion

- ensure that the Ministry's Education Management Information System (EMIS) identifies those groups

most excluded from the system, beginning (at least) with attendance in early childhood education (PAUD) centres/pre-schools; this requires accurate disaggregation of education data by gender, region, administrative level, socio-economic quintile, and ethnic/linguistic status with a special focus on children with disabilities

² Cited in Moeliodihardjo, B. Y. 2013. *Equity and Access in Higher Education*. p. 10.



The Ministry's Education Management Information System (EMIS) needs to identify groups most excluded from the system, beginning (at least) with attendance in early childhood education (PAUD) centres/pre-schools

- develop programs to promote inclusion at all levels of the education system (e.g., for children with special needs, children who do not speak the language of instruction when they enter school, children of the extreme poor, etc.)
- define specific measures (including enrolment and achievement targets per group) to increase the access of normally excluded children to education, beginning with participation in pre-school programs and ending with equally opportunities to enter and succeed in higher education.

These actions are essential in making Indonesia's entire education system more inclusive. **This policy brief will focus on the last stage of this process -- the challenges to promoting equity in higher education and on policies to address these challenges.**

2. Make Higher Education Affordable

The major constraint to more equitable access to higher education in Indonesia – whether academic, professional, or technical -- is financial. A recent survey of over 1800 senior secondary school students from nine provinces indicated that over 73% of those

who had decided whether or not to continue to higher education had financial constraints in doing so; this ranged from 53% in the wealthiest category to 94-95% in the two lowest income categories.^{3,4} The latter, even those with high ability and aspirations, face strong competition for a place in the highly desired public universities and so are pushed more often to cheaper but lower quality private institutions.

Some kind of financial support is therefore essential to improve the access of low- and even middle socio-economic students, especially those with an average level of academic achievement, to better quality institutions. Financial support in Indonesia is almost exclusively focused on personal (rather than bank) borrowing, most often from family members, and on scholarships. Loan schemes, most likely targeting students from the middle quintiles, have been discussed in Indonesia and even tried out, but designing effective methods of selecting students for loans, managing the large number of potential borrowers, and collecting on loan repayments post-graduation have proven difficult to do. As mechanisms for such repayments (e.g., tax systems and salary deductions) become more efficient, attempts to develop feasible loan schemes should be further explored.

Because personal loans are not always possible, scholarships remain the major source of financial support for higher education. The BIDIK MISI full scholarships program implemented by Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) in 2010 subsidized 20,000 students. The number of recipients has been increasing in subsequent years. In 2012, there were 90,000 students receiving the full scholarships. In 2013, there will be an additional 50,000 new recipients of BIDIK MISI scholarships.

There is also a variety of the Directorate General for Higher Education (DGHE) scholarship schemes covering approximately 180,000 students with partial scholarships along with private, philanthropic, and regional government schemes (for an additional 90,000 students) available to provide such support. But there are several problems with these schemes:

3 Myriad. 2013. *Improving Access and Equity to Indonesian Higher Education for Candidates from Economically Disadvantaged Backgrounds*.

4 This is especially true for students coming from vocational schools (who often feel more able and confident to enter community colleges and perhaps polytechnics than universities) and from B and C accredited schools (who think polytechnics and perhaps poorer quality universities may be within their reach).

- There is often limited knowledge about available scholarships, especially among students living in rural and remote areas and from lower socio-economic quintiles.
- The provision of scholarships is based more often on merit than on financial need so that they do not target the lowest quintiles of the population and therefore do not necessarily increase equity in higher education.
- They largely cover only a portion of the costs of higher education (e.g., covering tuition costs or topping up students' living allowances) so are of limited use to the lowest quintiles of the student population.
- Scholarship payments are often made late leading to uncertainty when funds will arrive – a particularly serious problem for poor students who depend on them for most of their expenses.
- Many higher education institutions (HEIs) have not yet internalized the fact that, given the 2012 Law, "equity" must become an essential dimension to their vision and mission. As a result, many such institutions lack a dedicated, well-resourced, and professionally staffed unit charged with managing scholarship programs and monitoring and assisting scholarship recipients.

Policy Recommendations:

- The DGHE, HEIs, and secondary schools should provide potential applicants more complete information about the range and availability of financial assistance.
- Higher education institutions should internalize the importance of equity in their vision and mission (and see it not only as in compliance with Law 12/2012) in order to make their financial assistance programs better targeted and more effective.
- These institutions should establish a unit dedicated to manage their scholarship programs, with adequate organizational infrastructure, funding, human resources, and authority. Such a unit would function inter alia to disseminate scholarship information to local secondary schools, select recipients based on scholarship criteria, determine the amount of support per student, develop an annual plan for scholarship management, and monitor recipients' academic progress.
- A similar unit should also be established in DGHE to plan and implement in a more systematic way the range of scholarship schemes available, always with a special focus on promoting more equitable access to higher education. The functions of this unit should ensure that university leaders internalize the need to promote equity in their institutions and also promoting, funding, and building the competence of scholarship units in individual higher education institutions.

3. Proactively Help the Extreme Poor to gain Access to Higher Education

To seriously address the issue of inequitable access to higher education, especially among children of the very poor, more deliberate and proactive efforts must be put in place. Such efforts should already begin during senior secondary school and even earlier⁵. Children with academic potential but relatively low performance compared to more advantaged peers will often simply give up on any chance of entering higher education. There are several reasons for this:

- the often poor quality of their primary and secondary education; e.g., overcrowded, understaffed, and poorly resourced primary schools, and secondary schools with relatively undertrained and uncertified teachers and poor facilities (libraries and laboratories)
- the lack of encouragement from parents and other family members who may not understand the importance of higher education or who lack information about the range of higher education choices and the availability of financial assistance to make such education feasible for their children (e.g., recent research showed a gap of 20% -- from 78% to 58% -- from the wealthiest to the poorest secondary school students concerning the importance they placed on having a higher education degree)⁶

- few local role models of successful university graduates
- the absence of affirmative action programs proactively seeking out and nurturing promising students from the lowest quintiles
- the limitation of most scholarship schemes to students who are already admitted to higher education and therefore the lack of funds available to help poorer students prepare for, apply for, and make a successful transition into, higher education.

There are some doubts, however, as to the extent to which these scholarships are actually reaching Q-1 students, and the scheme has not apparently succeeded in establishing a better balance of recipients coming from Java and Sumatra compared to eastern Indonesia.

An exception to this is the innovative “Bidik Misi” scheme of the DGHE, for both S1 and D3 programs, which targets high school students from poor families **before** they graduate. Applications can be submitted online, criteria related to family income are sometimes verified by home visits, funds are provided both to manage the selection process and to settle students from remote regions in their universities, and a minimum GPA of 3.0 is required to retain the scholarship. By 2013, almost 140,000 students received these scholarships.⁷ There are some doubts, however, as to the extent to which these scholarships are actually reaching Q-1 students, and the scheme has not apparently succeeded in establishing a better balance of recipients coming from Java and Sumatra compared to eastern Indonesia.

5 The Scholarship for Poor Students program (Bantuan Siswa Miskin - BSM) already does this at lower levels of the system but could be expanded in funding and coverage, with improved targeting and perhaps providing a transition bonus; e.g. 100 percent of the cost for all poor students from SD to SMU, providing a transition bonus for those moving from SD to SMP and from SMP to SMU. This would ensure that cost is not a reason for dropping out.

6 Myriad. 2013. *Improving Access and Equity to Indonesian Higher Education for Candidates from Economically Disadvantaged Backgrounds*

7 Jakarta Post. op.cit. The Minister indicated that the Bidik Misi scheme's budget would be increased to IDR 53.4 million in the next budget.



Data related to gender issues in education (i.e., both access/participation and achievement) should be disaggregated by location, ethnicity, socio-economic status, etc., in order to identify where gender parity has still not been achieved – with a special focus on all types and levels of higher education

Policy Recommendations:

- In order to increase the number of candidates applying from and being accepted to higher education from the Q-1 and Q-2 income brackets, they should become the primary target for an expanded full scholarship program while partial scholarships, in general, should be focused on higher income Q-2 and Q-3 students.
- Within the available budget, the Bidik Misi scheme should be expanded with stronger monitoring of its coverage of and impact on Q-1 and Q-2 students and with research on the extent to which students from eastern Indonesia are disadvantaged in the scheme's administration and, if they are, recommendations for achieving a better balance of regional representation.
- The reach of this scheme should be extended to the beginning of senior secondary school (Grade 10); these schools should work with district office staff to identify students with future academic potential and motivation (rather than only current academic achievement) and provide support to receive additional tutoring/lessons from "cram schools" or local LPTK. Higher education institutions should collaborate in this process by working with the district office to seek and support students with high potential.
- Adequate information regarding all higher education opportunities (including community colleges and polytechnics as well as universities) and financing options should be made widely available, especially to children with high potential but from low income brackets; this should be accompanied by a public information campaign directed at families from lower income brackets to raise their awareness of the feasibility of their children gaining access to higher education.

4. Overcome other Barriers to Educational Access

Financial constraints are only one factor in creating inequitable access to and exclusion from higher education. There are many other barriers to such access including the following:

1. Gender. Although national aggregate statistics do not show serious disparities in access to education by gender, the intersection of gender with a rural, remote location (more risk in getting to school) and with cultures, traditions, and religious beliefs that prescribe different roles for girls and boys may

narrow the educational choices available to girls. Even when enrolment rates at the undergraduate level are at parity (or even favour girls), disparities may appear in graduation rates, in the professional courses available to (or welcoming of) girls, and in opportunities for higher degrees.

Policy Recommendations:

- Data related to gender issues in education (i.e., both access/participation and achievement) should be disaggregated by location, ethnicity, socio-economic status, etc., in order to identify where gender parity has still not been achieved – with a special focus on all types and levels of higher education.
- Measures to reduce any identified disparities (including to the disadvantage of males) should be developed.

2. Rurality/remoteness/region

Almost 58% of those admitted to universities from the lowest quintile come from rural areas compared to 28% of the highest quintile. But students from rural and remote areas face special problems – not only the lack of nearby higher education institutions (which, if they exist, are more often poor quality private institutions)

but also the sheer lack of information about the possible options open to them. This is exacerbated, of course, by geographic location with students from less developed regions of eastern Indonesia being disadvantaged. Table 2 indicates that over time the percentage of scholarship recipients from eastern Indonesia has, in fact, decreased while the percentage for Java has steadily increased.

Table 2: Distribution of scholarship recipients [DGHE-a 2012 and DGHE-b 2012]⁸

	Year of admission		
	2010	2011	2012
Sumatra	26.3%	22.1%	18.9%
Java	43.8%	48.8%	54.0%
Kalimantan	7.0%	7.8%	8.6%
Sulawesi	12.9%	13.3%	11.2%
Bali	3.9%	2.7%	2.7%
Maluku	2.5%	2.5%	1.9%
NTT + NTB	2.3%	1.8%	1.5%
Papua	1.2%	1.1%	1.2%

8 Moeliodihardjo, B. *op.cit.* p. 20-21

Policy Recommendations:

- Special efforts should be made to ensure that senior secondary students in rural/remote/disadvantaged areas have adequate information about higher education and scholarship options.⁸
- Private institutions of low quality in remote areas and eastern Indonesia with a large percentage of students from disadvantaged groups should be given priority in terms of quality improvement.⁹



In partnership with local governments and private education providers, Community Colleges has the potential to expand access for higher education

3. Ethnic/linguistic status

Despite the 700+ languages spoken in Indonesia, including some languages spoken by many millions of people, there is virtually no government or community interest in promoting mother-tongue based education and initial literacy in the mother tongue. Although teachers from linguistic minorities may (for good or bad) be given priority for employment at the district level, this does not often translate into the use of local languages in formal instruction and initial literacy.

As a result, many children whose home language is different from that of Bahasa Indonesia, the

official language in school, have difficulty in mastering literacy in the national language. The repetition and, eventually, the dropout rates of such children are usually considerably higher than those who speak the national language at home, thus narrowing the base of linguistic minorities who eventually master Indonesian and thus are able to gain university admission. Even those who succeed may find that despite their ability in Indonesian, the difference between the culture of their home/ethnic group and that of the university, often combined with lower socio-economic status, can be an obstacle to an easy transition into, and eventual success in, higher education.

Policy Recommendations:

- In the short-term, higher education institutions should examine the extent to which students entering from regions where Indonesian is not a language of everyday use are academically disadvantaged and provide remedial instruction for those who are.
- In the longer-term, the Ministry should seek to identify existing programs in the country which promote mother tongue-based instruction at the stage of initial literacy, assess their impact on the mastery of Indonesian, and explore the possibility of developing more such programs to ensure greater mastery of Indonesian.

In addition to the specific recommendations listed above, there are several key strategies⁹ aimed generally at promoting inclusion and improving access to higher education. These include the following:

- Community colleges offer a new – and less expensive and competitive – option for disadvantaged students. But they are relatively little known. Community colleges also offer the possibility of providing a second chance for adults and supporting young people and adults to develop a range of skills for employment, further education and training.
- Compensatory programs add points to student academic scores. Targeted students can include any of those from the above disadvantaged groups – especially those who have attended schools in remote and rural locations in areas of high poverty.
- Second chance programs offer adults the opportunity to enter higher education and provide remedial foundation courses or other courses in order to improve academic skills or enable potential students to sit a test to determine academic potential.
- Outreach programs can be developed by higher education institutions and designed for students at all levels of schooling, primary through to senior secondary. The majority of courses are designed to raise the aspirations of students with little or no knowledge of higher education. Some outreach programs (such as that of Binus University in Jakarta) provide students with preparatory courses (with academic credit) prior to university enrolment.
- Equivalency has been addressed through the Indonesian Qualifications Framework, and this needs to be expanded to include equivalency and recognition of prior learning for those students wanting to continue higher education and enter through community colleges. The introduction of community colleges through partnerships with local governments and private higher education providers offers the potential to expand access and include large numbers of students new to higher education. The acceptance of Paket C of the Community Education program of the Ministry as equivalent to a senior secondary education certificate would also assist in this process of equivalency.
- Open and distance learning through, for example, the Open University, also provides an opportunity for individuals (many of whom are already working) to gain university certification.

9 Adapted from Gale et al (2010).

5. Go beyond Access to Success

Being included in higher education by gaining access to the system is only one part of the challenge. Ensuring that disadvantaged students are also included in learning and gaining the kind of education they require is also essential. Students from distant parts of Indonesia, from rural and remote areas, and from poor areas often find difficult the transition to

what are more urban, cosmopolitan, heterogeneous towns and cities, requiring much more independent living, and to larger, more academically rigorous and competitive campuses, requiring much more independent study.

Policy Recommendations:

- Support programs, from the district office and/or from local HEIs, should be developed to assist students from disadvantaged groups to make a successful transition to higher education. Such programs must start with providing adequate information about higher education options and scholarship schemes. These can also provide tutoring, orientation, academic skills development and other strategies – perhaps beginning even at year 10 or 11 for students with academic potential.
- Support programs should also include a range of “bridging” or orientation activities at the HEI (from a few days to several months) that introduce students to the university environment, facilities, subjects, and activities and also provide those who need them stronger foundational study skills and content (especially in language). Such programs can also help identify students at risk of failure and provide additional assistance as needed.
- This kind of support should continue throughout the student’s university career to ensure they succeed in their studies and get as much as possible out of the experience.
- Institutions should develop a range of strategies to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is not reduced when more heterogeneous cohorts of students enter. Teachers and lecturers will need to develop skills to understand the needs of and successfully teach a broader variety of students with differing needs.

References

Jan Edwards, (2012). *Access and Equity in Higher Education in Indonesia*. World Bank: Jakarta

Gale, T., S. Sellar, S. Parker, R. Hattam, B. Comber, D. Tranter and D. Bills (2010) *Interventions early in school as a means to improve higher education outcomes for disadvantaged (particularly low SES) students*. Commissioned research by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. Commonwealth of Australia.

Helen Keller International (2012) Indonesia. Access date 29th July 2012. <http://www.hki.org/working-worldwide/asia-pacific/indonesia/>

Moeliodihardjo, B. Y. 2013. *Equity and Access in Higher Education*. World Bank: Jakarta.

Steff, M, R Mudzakir and Andayani (2010) *Equity and access to Tertiary Education for students with disabilities in Indonesia*. Washington D C: World Bank.

As parts of its support for the Indonesian Tertiary Education, DFAT (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, previously known as AusAID) through the World Bank has funded studies to support the Directorate General for Higher Education's strategic planning and provide on-demand policy recommendations. The findings, interpretations and conclusions expressed in this publication does not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of Indonesia and the Government of Australia.

Human Development Sector
World Bank Office Jakarta
Indonesia Stock Exchange Building,
Tower 2, 12th Floor
Jl. Jenderal Sudirman Kav. 52 – 53
Phone: (021) 5299 3000,
Fax: (021) 5299 3111
www.worldbank.org/id/education