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**Community Participation in Education: Does
Decentralisation Matter?
An Indonesian Case Study of Parental
Participation in School Management**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
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Abstract

A prominent idea in the decentralisation and development literature is that decentralisation leads to deeper and stronger community participation. This thesis seeks to examine this argument by investigating the practice of community participation in the Indonesian decentralisation context, focusing on parental participation through access to and control over school financial resources. Drawing on a case study in Depok city, the practice of parental involvement has been explored by identifying the characteristics and the extent of parents' participation in school management. School Committees (SCs), as a mechanism of community involvement provided by the decentralised education policy, were also examined in this research to develop an understanding of parental representation in school management.

The study found that the characteristics and the extent of parents' participation in school management have changed and decreased significantly as a result of a new Free School Programme (FSP) introduced by the government in 2009 which freed parents from school operational cost. Prior to FSP, parents actively participated in terms of supplying resources and involvement in school meetings, had some access to financial information, and had limited engagement with school budgeting through representation in SCs. However, the new absence of financial contribution by parents has affected parental participation by transforming it into a weaker form of participation where parents act as mere beneficiaries.

The study also revealed that in the Indonesian context, the SCs, as institutional channels for community involvement in education provided by the education decentralisation policy, are not effective in terms of representing and engaging parents in school management. Based on the evidence above, this thesis concluded that in the context of the Indonesian education system, decentralisation has not necessarily enhanced community participation. In this respect, decentralisation is not the only possible answer for achieving a meaningful and empowering parental participation in education. Furthermore, other contextual factors surrounding participation also have to be taken into account. While FSP brings the benefit of allowing students to access education freely, the absence of parental financial contribution has been proved to impact parental participation in a way that is contradictory to one of the purposes of decentralisation policy, which is to engage the community in educational management.

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Abbreviations and Glossaries

ADB	Asian Development Bank
APBD	<i>Anggaran Pendapatan Belanja Daerah</i> (Local Income and Expenditure Budget Plan)
APBN	<i>Anggaran Pendapatan Belanja Nasional</i> (National Income and Expenditure Budget Plan)
APBS	<i>Anggaran Pendapatan Belanja Sekolah</i> (School Income and Expenditure Budget Plan)
BAPPENAS	<i>Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional</i> (National Development Planning Agency)
BAWASDA	<i>Badan Pengawas Daerah</i> (Local Monitoring Body)
BOS	<i>Bantuan Operasional Sekolah</i> (School Operational Assistance)
BP3	<i>Badan Pembantu Penyelenggaraan Pendidikan</i> (Educational Assistance Body)
CIDA	Canada International Development Agency
DPR	<i>Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat</i> (People's Representative Assembly)
DSP	Dana Sumbangan Pendidikan (Education Operational Fund)
EC(S)	Education Council(s)
EO/ES	Education Office/Education Service
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FSP	Free School Programme
IMF	International Monetary Fund
KKN	<i>Korupsi, Kolusi, Nepotisme</i> (Corruption, Collusion, Nepotism)
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MoNE	Ministry of National Education
MPR	<i>Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat</i> (People's Consultative Assembly)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PAR	Participatory Action Research
POMG	<i>Persatuan Orang Tua Murid dan Guru</i> (Parents and Teachers Association)
RAPBS	<i>Rancangan Anggaran Pendapatan Belanja Sekolah</i> (School Budget of Revenue and Expenditure Plan)
RSBI	<i>Rintisan Sekolah Bertaraf Internasional</i> (International Standard School Piloting)
SBI	<i>Sekolah Bertaraf Internasional</i> (International Standard School)
SBM	School-based Management
SC(S)	School Committee(s)
SOP	<i>Sumbangan Operasional Sekolah</i> (School Operational Fund)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
UPT	<i>Unit Pelaksana Teknis</i> (Technical Operational Unit)
WB	World Bank