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What is This?
Democratizing Indonesia through Education? Community Participation in Islamic Schooling

Lyn Parker and R. Raihani

Abstract
In 1998, Indonesia embarked on a journey to democracy. This journey involved the decentralization of education from 2002. The new school-based management (SBM) system required greater community and parental participation in schools—thereby, it was hoped, contributing to a deepening of democracy. Islamic schools (madrasah) also adopted this policy reform. Here we present the findings of our research into community participation in madrasah in Indonesia. One of our principle findings, and concerns, is the low level of parental and community participation in madrasah governance. Parents feel they have no place in school governance or in teaching and learning. There is a concentration of power in the hands of principals, teachers and school founders (of private madrasah). In general, participation by teachers in madrasah governance is increasing. Also, there are examples of excellent madrasah, where the principals devolve power and responsibility to other teachers, cooperate with parents and community leaders, model exemplary behaviour and institutionalize a clear vision. The decentralization of education in Indonesia has not uniformly empowered citizens to become more involved in Islamic schools. The question remains how to extrapolate from practices at excellent madrasah to effectively articulate community enthusiasm for Islamic schooling and school governance nationwide.

Keywords
community participation in education, educational decentralization, educational governance, Indonesia, Islamic education, madrasah

Introduction
In May 1998, amid an economic crisis and in response to mass protests, President Suharto resigned and Indonesia embarked on an exciting journey towards Reformasi and democracy. The authoritarian and highly centralized regime of President Suharto was over. ‘Almost immediately... local leaders gave voice to long-suppressed grievances against the perceived excesses of centralized rule and called for greater regional control over political and economic affairs’ (Aspinall and Fealy,
2003: 2). After 32 years of top-down control from Jakarta, many people saw an opportunity to strengthen civil society in Indonesia: to shift power ‘down’ to lower levels of government, to social organizations and ultimately the people, and ‘out’, to the regions (Antlov, 2003: 74; Aspinall and Fealy, 2003; Nyman, 2006). Although studies of democratization often focus on elections, the focus of democratization in this article is ‘the cooperative and collaborative activities involving government and civil society’ in Indonesia (Colongon 2003: 89). Although there was ‘no clearly stated rationale for decentralization’ in Indonesia (Turner et al., 2003: xiii), democratization entailed decentralization. It was the notion of local, community participation that articulated democratization and decentralization in Indonesia (Turner et al., 2003: 6). Decentralization connoted the devolution of finances, power and control of local affairs to local authorities, the accountability of local authorities to local constituencies and the equitable distribution of each region’s own wealth to its region (Aspinall and Fealy, 2003: 2).

Education was to be decentralized as one important element of democratization. Beginning with the World Bank (1998) report, *Education in Indonesia: From Crisis to Recovery*, which recommended decentralization, including school-based management (SBM) at primary school level, as a way of improving education (Jalal and Supriadi, 2001; Sumintono, 2006: 2), the Indonesian government began to develop its plans for SBM through a series of workshops and task forces. Although many observers claimed that SBM was adopted in order to further democratization (Siahaan et al., 2006; Zamroni, 2001), Sumintono (2006: 101) claims that an examination of the main implementing Ministerial Decree No. 044/U/2002, shows that the policy makers in the central Ministry of National Education (MONE) did ‘not fully support the ideas of school autonomy and local educational governance’. Nevertheless, the Preamble to the Decree states that ‘the reason for the regulation is to facilitate society’s participation in education’ (KepMinDikNas, 2002). The homogeneous system of education had to be made more responsive to local cultures and local needs; the management and curriculum of schools had to be devolved to lower levels of governance; and local educational institutions and ordinary people had to be given a voice and empowered. The decentralization of education would contribute to a ‘deepening’ of the culture of democracy.

In this article, we present the findings of our research on community participation in Islamic schools (*madrasah*) in Indonesia, in the context of this major transition towards democracy through decentralization. We introduce our work with a survey of the introduction of SBM in Indonesia, then we outline the dimensions and organization of the Islamic education sector in Indonesia. The body of the article is structured in the following way: first we explicate and argue for the methodology we chose, then we present data and discuss our findings under the following headings: the history and community background of each *madrasah*, leadership, teacher involvement, parental and community involvement, and the role of the yayasan (foundation) in private schools. We examine closely the key players in *madrasah* governance—who was involved, in which areas of *madrasah* they were involved, how they were involved and how they interacted with one another. We also explore and discuss factors that significantly influenced community participation in *madrasah*. In short, we examine the implementation of SBM at the bottom level of education, and investigate how education in the Islamic school context contributes to the process of democratization that Indonesia started about a decade ago.

Although decentralization was not an entirely new policy in Indonesia in 1998 (Schulte-Nordholt, 2004), nor in Indonesian education (especially, Bjork, 2005), the decentralization introduced through Laws 22 and 25 in 1999 promised much. Indeed, Turner et al. (2003: xiii) claim that ‘The laws that emerged from the policy process are the most radical decentralization measures in Asia and the Pacific.’ Successive governments, strongly supported by important funding bodies such as the
IMF and World Bank, were committed to the implementation of decentralization from 2001. According to the new laws, all fields of government except foreign policy, defense and security, monetary policy, the legal system and religion were to be devolved to the regions (Aspinall and Fealy, 2003).

In the global context, the most common form of educational decentralization is through the implementation of SBM. Various terms, such as site-based management, autonomous school and self-managing school, are used to indicate the transfer of authority in decision-making from higher government to individual schools. Caldwell and Spinks (1998: 4–5) define self-managing school as:

a school in a system of education to which there has been decentralised a significant amount of authority and responsibility to make decisions about the allocation of resources within a centrally determined framework of goals, policies, standards and accountabilities. Resources are defined broadly to include knowledge, technology, power, materiel, people, time, assessment, information and finance.

Advocates of this approach argue that within SBM schools, where a democratic structure and culture are created, improvements in all aspects of school become more feasible and possible (Caldwell and Spinks, 1998; Cheng, 1996; Gamage et al., 1996). However, like decentralization, SBM serves as a means to an end in the sense that it involves a complex process which is not independent from immediate and broader contextual forces such as government policies, local acceptance and involvement of all school stakeholders in the school educational processes. Its effectiveness, therefore, has to continue to be investigated through a comprehensive body of research over time and in different contexts so that the improvement of education is enhanced.

The Indonesian government introduced a model of SBM in 2002. The Ministry of National Education (MONE) issued Decree No. 044/U/2002 (KepMinDikNas, 2002) to introduce a new model of community involvement in education. It was a very short decree, consisting of only four articles, which established new institutions called education councils at district level and school committees in each school, which could be ‘an initiative from the society (masyarakat), educational institution and/or the district government’ (Sumintono, 2006: 98). This latter clause instantiated ambiguity about responsibility for school committees. Article 3, however, which abolished pre-existing school boards, was clear. The appendices to the decree were much more detailed and clear: for instance, the Education Council was to be a body that provides a place for societal participation in order to improve the quality, equity and efficiency of educational management in a district; to be autonomous and not to have any hierarchical connection to district government. Similarly, school committees were to be autonomous bodies to improve the quality, equity and efficiency of educational management in a school, and to consist of the principal, teachers and community (masyarakat) members such as parents, community leaders, education leaders, representatives of industry or the educational profession and alumnae (KepMinDikNas, 2002).

We note that in the government’s documentation of SBM (for example in KepMenDikNas, 2002) the word that is used in association with ‘participation’ is ‘society’, masyarakat, where we would use the word ‘community’ (as in our title). There is an Indonesian word, komunitas, meaning community, but it is not commonly found outside academic circles, and we believe the government’s use of the word masyarakat is best translated as ‘community’. In English, ‘community’ is a term that, according to Raymond Williams (1983: 76), is ‘unlike all other terms of social organization ... [in that] it seems never to be used unfavourably, and never to be given any positive opposing or distinguishing term’. In English, ‘community’ has a range of different senses. We
would argue that in the context of decentralization in Indonesia, its two major senses—that is, the people of a district, as in ‘the local community’, and ‘the quality of holding something in common’ or ‘a sense of a common identity and characteristics’ (Williams, 1983: 75)—have been conflated. Decentralization policy assumes that people in any given school community share a common interest and can participate equally and together in educating their children. Our research questions this assumption.

Observers such as Bandur (2008), Bjork (2009) and Sumintono (2006) agree that the involvement of parents and community in schools remains limited to the provision of school funds. These scholars have identified the main factors that have impeded successful implementation of SBM: (1) stakeholders lack knowledge about SBM—they especially lack understanding that the power and authority of school management is now in the hands of the school community; (2) stakeholders are not yet competent to play effective roles in SBM; and (3) there is cultural resistance to the reform. These factors, along with the broader educational context and socio-economic situation of communities wherein schools operate, show that SBM in Indonesia is still ‘finding its feet’.

In the field of curriculum reform, the government introduced a new competencies-based curriculum (Kurikulum Berbasis Kompetensi [KBK]) in 2004 and implemented it in some schools between 2004 and 2006. The previous curriculum was believed to have been unable to face the new challenges posed by the rapid, global development of knowledge, science and technology (Diknas, 2003). The former curriculum employed a centralist approach, and there was little space for teachers to develop their own curricula. A local content curriculum component, that had been introduced in 1994, was considered to have been unsuccessful in empowering teachers and enabling schools to respond to local needs (Bjork, 2005).

The new curriculum stressed the achievement of standardized competences that students had to achieve, and the development of life skills to prepare graduates to survive in life after school. This implied a big change to teachers’ beliefs, understanding and skills in both curriculum development and pedagogical strategies (Diknas, 2003). Significant revisions were made in 2006, following the trials with KBK, and the ‘perfected’ curriculum, called Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (KTSP) or school-based curriculum, was introduced. Under KTSP, the central education authority develops generic competences and minimum content outlines while individual teachers are supposed to independently develop their subject curricula, including formulating learning objectives, selecting content and teaching strategies, and developing learning evaluations (Darmadji, 2009; Diknas, 2006). The central guidelines have also become the standard by which the central government designs the national examination. The national exams, which are held at the end of primary school, junior high school and senior high school, remain controversial to many teachers, education observers and parents, being against the spirit of decentralization and the devolution of curriculum, learning and teaching.

**Islamic Education Sector**

The national education system in Indonesia has been progressively moving to integrate Islamic schools into its ambit. There are two main types of Islamic schools in Indonesia: madrasah (Islamic day schools) and pesantren (Islamic boarding schools). Here we will only discuss madrasah, but would note that the two are not mutually exclusive or discrete institutions: it is not uncommon for students at madrasah to simultaneously be students at pesantren, and to return each afternoon after class to study and sleep at their pesantren.
Madrasah are an integral part of the Indonesia national education system today, but their development through the 20th century was strongly shaped both by international Islamic movements and by Dutch colonization. This history can be characterized as a battlefield of ideological conflicts between Islamists and nationalists (Effendy, 2003; Mujiburrahman, 2006). The structural dualism in Indonesian education that continues today has its roots in the colonial era. Madrasah are currently administered by the Ministry of Religion (MOR) and general (secular) schools by the MONE.

Although madrasah remain under the MOR, the curriculum of madrasah for secular subjects is that for general schools, and the national exams in those subjects are set by the MONE. The tension between integration and dualism reflects the continuing ideological and political conflict, and the efforts of madrasah to modernize. The most notable integration effort was made in 1975 through the Three Ministers’ Decree (the Ministers of National Education, Religion and Internal Affairs). This decree imposed a new curriculum on madrasah, consisting of 30 per cent religious subjects and 70 per cent secular subjects. These proportions were the opposite of those pertaining in the previous curriculum (Zuhdi, 2005). The benefits for madrasah graduates included their eligibility to continue their education to a higher level at secular schools or universities. Although the response of the Muslim community to this reform was quite negative, the government continued with its efforts to ‘modernize’ madrasah. With new Education Laws in 1989 and 2003, madrasah are now like secular schools, except that the ‘religion’ subject is divided into five separate subjects: Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), Akidah/Akhlaq (faith and morality), al-Quran/Hadith (Islamic holy book and the Prophet’s traditions), Islamic history, plus Arabic. This division requires more school hours to be allocated (at least eight more hours a week) while the rest of the subjects remain the same as those in general schools. This is not to include extra-curricular activities which are practised in almost every school. This means that the curriculum of madrasah is more overloaded than that of general schools, and this causes some pedagogical problems such as lack of concentration by both teachers and students. In informal conversation, a Grade 3 student of one of the studied schools said:

We are so tired here, Sir. We have to wake up at 5am, and be at school at 6am for extra lessons in the morning. We will not get home until 5pm because from 1 to 5 pm we have religious subjects. This is a full-day school, Sir. (20 August 2009)

The madrasah sector is significant in the national education system because of the groups in society which it particularly serves, namely those from lower socio-economic groups, those in rural areas and girls. Islamic schools cater to some of Indonesia’s poorest children. It is ironic that madrasah receive very little government funding. This is due in part to the large number of private schools in this sector, which is about 91.5 per cent of the total madrasah (Departemen Agama, 2005). Private schools here mean those owned, administered and funded by community groups, individuals, or non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Currently, government contributions to private schools only cover basic operational needs excluding teachers’ wages, school infrastructure and facilities. As a result, one of the key issues that Islamic schools face is the number and quality of teaching staff, including teacher shortages, low teacher qualifications and teacher mismatch. At all levels of madrasah education, there is a total shortage of approximately 120,000 teachers, or 20 per cent of required teaching staff (Departemen Agama, 2005: 42–46, Tables 3.14–3.16). Despite this lack of funding, over the last decade, Islamic education in general has become an increasingly popular choice for Indonesian parents, as part of the process of Islamization. In the five years...
since 2000, enrolments at *madrasah* at all three levels grew at a much faster rate than enrolments at general schools (Diknas, 2006).

**Methodology**

We chose to study *madrasah ibtidaiyah* (primary Islamic day schools) because, first, the only major evaluation of SBM in Indonesia so far, a World Bank study, did not include *madrasah* in the sample (Bjork, 2009). Second, as noted above, the Islamic education sector is of considerable and growing importance within the Indonesian education system. At primary school level, *madrasah ibtidaiyah* (MI) constitute 13.2 per cent of schools and MI students constitute 10.3 per cent of primary school-age students (Diknas Statistical Pocket Book, 2005/06). Third, the primary school level is of critical importance, partly because of its reach—nearly all school-age students attend primary school—and partly because it provides the essentials of basic literacy and numeracy. Finally, there is a dearth of research into the private sector of schooling in Indonesia (Bangay, 2005: 168) and the MI level is particularly characterized by the predominantly private status of *madrasah*. Ninety-three per cent of MI are private, accommodating 88 per cent of all MI students.

We decided on a qualitative methodology for several reasons. From our previous experience of *madrasah*, we knew that the context and history of each school are unique, and that they shape the contemporary institution, even though *madrasah* are under government control. Most *madrasah* have grown out of pre-existing schools or Qur’an-reading courses that have evolved autonomously from their communities. It is the quality of the complex relationships and articulation between community and school that is our focus.

Qualitative data were obtained by the two principal researchers from a sample of six *madrasah*—four in the province of West Sumatra, and two in Yogyakarta in central Java. In West Sumatra, the sample consisted of one urban private *madrasah* (hereafter WSUP, indicating West Sumatra, urban, private) and one urban state *madrasah* (WSUS, West Sumatra, urban, state), one rural private *madrasah* (WSRP, West Sumatra, rural, private) and one rural state *madrasah* (WSRS, West Sumatra, rural, state). They range in quality from a new, struggling, isolated, private *madrasah* (WSRP) to a champion state *madrasah* (WSRS) with a catchment of poorly educated parents, who worked as smallholder farmers and labourers. In Yogyakarta, the state *madrasah* (hereafter YRS, indicating Yogyakarta, rural, state) is located in a rural area and the private *madrasah* (YUP, Yogyakarta, urban, private) is in an urban area of Yogyakarta. The choice of *madrasah* in the two provinces was made after consultation with regional MOR offices. In the case of West Sumatra, where fieldwork was conducted first, the researcher asked for ‘the best and the worst’ schools in each district. Our rationale was that this would give a broad, introductory overview of the range. This province is unusual in that only half the MI are private and half are state schools. For fieldwork in Yogyakarta, it was decided that we would choose only two excellent *madrasah*, but study them in more detail. ‘Excellent’ *madrasah* were those that met two criteria. First, student performance, as indicated by results in both the national and school examinations, had shown a constant improvement over the 3 years since 2007. The data on examination results were gathered from the local MOR officials and the schools. Second, the reputations of the schools were deemed ‘good’ by the MOR officials we consulted in the district.

While findings from such a small sample cannot claim to be representative of the situation for all *madrasah* across Indonesia, they do suggest patterns, from which potential similarities and differences with other *madrasah* can be extrapolated. Data in the study were collected through multiple methods. The main method was semi-structured interviews. In schools, interviews were
conducted with the principal, teachers, committee members, parents and, in the private madrasah, one or several members of the yayasan. In the Yogya schools, interviews were conducted with six teachers, three committee members and six parents; in the West Sumatra schools, all principals were interviewed, and, depending on availability, several teachers, parents and committee members. In each madrasah, focus group discussions (FGD) were held with one or two groups of parents, one or two groups of teachers and one group of committee members. With one exception (a FGD with a yayasan), the interviews and FGDs were conducted in rooms provided by the school. We had common information sheets and informed consent forms (which all participants signed) and common interview and FGD questions. These questions were about the roles and responsibilities of each school stakeholder, their interactions and possible tensions and resolutions, their power and authority, and factors that influenced their involvement in school processes. While each interview lasted about 1 hour, occasionally discussions took longer—up to 1.5 hours. The recruitment of FGD participants was made in consultation with the principal, and in one case the school founder took it upon himself to choose participants. Usually the researchers suggested criteria for participation in the FGD, that, for example, each teacher FGD group should have classroom teachers, subject teachers, public servant teachers and honorary teachers. Within the limited time the researchers had (in one case, only two days, but generally 7–10 days in each madrasah), they were able to observe the madrasah and surrounding districts. The observations focused on the school’s age and physical condition, including their buildings, classroom settings, facilities and school yard, the school’s location, including distance from bitumen roads and public transport and issues of physical access for students, and on its culture, as manifested in the interactions among and between students, teachers and parents. Time constraints meant that observations of school culture were very limited. We also took note of the apparent prosperity or poverty of the surrounding neighbourhoods—the quality of housing and public amenities such as public transport and electricity, the agricultural production in the area (for rural schools), and any other relevant information, such as relationships with mosques and other schools, which might reveal the relationships between the school and the community.

Because of the small sample size, and the qualitative methodology, there was no need to use software to code interview and FGD data. We read and re-read transcripts, developing key words, themes and criteria from repeated reading; then we compared notes and developed several grids: one was of the characteristics of the madrasah (for example, number of students, number of civil service teachers, number of honorary teachers, year established, fathers’ occupations, socio-economic level of parents); another listed the components and agents of governance and a third table allocated governance activities (for example, budget, fund-raising, curriculum development) to the agents in the six schools. From this tabular skeleton, we developed our text. These findings were presented at a workshop in Canberra, and at seminars in Indonesia, and we produced a policy briefing report (Parker and Raihani, 2009), which was workshopped with MONE and MOR officials and others in Jakarta. We have weighted the presentation of the data that follows towards those findings that seem to convey the nature of madrasah as community-based schools and that contribute something new or different to the debates on SBM and the interaction between communities and schools. For instance, it would be expected that students in madrasah where parents are from a lower socio-economic class or where the parents are poorly educated, would not perform well in national examinations. The sociology of education teaches us that we should expect socio-economic disadvantage to be reproduced. So we have been particularly interested to examine the exceptional, excellent madrasah where parents and community are involved, even though they are from lower socio-economic and educational backgrounds, and/or where student examination performance is strong.
Data Presentation and Analysis

History and Community Background of the Madrasah

The new (2006), WSRP madrasah in an isolated rural area of the Sumatran highlands was the brainchild of a low-level but idealistic civil servant, whose stated purpose in establishing this school was to serve the widely scattered and poorly served community with a faith-based primary school. It transpired that a second motive was to set up the members of his extended family in proper jobs. He was the head of his descent-group and bore the honorific title of Datuk. His daughter was the principal, and three other teachers were his children; the land was donated by his descent-group. The School Committee comprised members of his extended family. All staff in this school are honorary teachers (guru honor), that is, they do not receive a proper wage and are not public servants. The founder hopes that his school will become a state school soon, and his children public servants, but the district MOR office seemed not to even know where the school was located or how to get there. Interestingly, the founder told us that the MOR had offered him some civil service teachers, but he had refused the offer on the grounds that he thinks the ones who are already serving (that is, his family) should be given first ‘bite’. The school principal said she did not know about this offer. In field notes we noted: ‘His dream is to build an Islamic education complex, right through from kindergarten to STAIN (State Tertiary Institution).’ The founder had had a sign made, apparently decades in advance of realization:

Department of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia

[Name] Technical Islamic Boarding School (Pesantren)


[Place].

However, given that access was by a rickety suspension bridge over a raging torrent, and that one could see and hear gibbons and monkeys in the jungle from the glass-less classroom windows, realization of his dream seems a long way off.

The WSUP madrasah is similarly distinctive, though the story of its history is not uncommon in Indonesia: a group of traditional elders of a rather poor urban kampung got together and decided that they wanted to establish a private school, on a faith basis, which would cater to all and provide free education; it would be the first private madrasah in the town. Most of the original founding group were wealthy perantau—emigrants who had followed a strong ethnic (Minangkabau) tradition of out-migration from the ethnic homeland, in search of wealth, often to Jakarta. Among them was a rich haji (a man who has been on the pilgrimage to Mecca). He began by buying up land and establishing an MDA (Madrasah Diniyah Awaliyah, a basic religious school) as an expression of his faith and to extend religious piety and knowledge in the community. He then expanded, building a large and rather grand three-storey school and mosque complex in this poor urban kampung. His money built the buildings and pays the salaries, but the madrasah is totally dependent upon and beholden to their rich patron, who is now an elderly man living in Java. The school has 10 guru honor and only four civil-service teachers. Nevertheless, the achievements of its students in external examinations show it to have performed at a very high level.

The champion WSRP madrasah began life as a private MDA, flourished, and became a state madrasah in 1996. In 1993 there was already a mosque in the community, and the male community leaders (the elderly man who still today heads the school committee, the management of the
mosque, a clan leader [Datuk], the village head and a couple of members of the yayasan [foundation], met with the district MOR officials and decided upon its establishment. Enrolment grew from 26 students in 1995/6 to 161 students in 2008/9. This progression—from community faith school to state madrasah—is typical of madrasah. This madrasah has 13 permanent, civil-service teachers (paid by the government) and six honorary teachers (who receive only an honorarium). The educational level of parents was very low (141 parents had only primary school education or less); and the vast majority (139) of students’ fathers are farmers and day labourers. The school’s excellent examination and extra-curricular results are unexpected given this low socio-economic context. Key words in the discourse of the teachers and parents at this school are openness, cooperation, consensus and participation. As one teacher said:

If we’re taking a decision about anything, it is discussed involving all the teachers. The head of the school, the teachers, the committee. . . . If there is a problem, we all discuss it together, and when a decision is made, it is like there is one voice. (FGD, 22 June 2009)

The WSUS madrasah is a very average performer in terms of examination results, even though the school claims that at least one-half of its students are of middle-class status (Profil WSUS, 2008). Its financial basis is much more secure than those of the private madrasah, and it has the luxury of 19 civil-service teachers and only four honorary teachers.

In Yogyakarta, the YRS madrasah is located in an area with relatively low average household incomes—the majority of parents are labourers and farmers. The madrasah has a long tradition of community participation in Islamic education. It was established by the community, led by several Islamic scholars, in 1928, to cater the community needs for Islamic schooling. Beginning from 1950, the madrasah included several ‘secular’ subjects such as sports and arts, and in 1963 it started to affiliate with the curriculum determined by the MOR, but was not transformed into a state madrasah until 1968 (the MIN website—not revealed here for confidentiality reasons).

The YUP madrasah is in an urban area of Yogyakarta; the parents are mainly businesspeople, traders and public servants. The madrasah was established in 1968 as part of an integrated Islamic centre founded by a yayasan in Yogyakarta. The yayasan had very minimal resources with which to pay the teachers’ salaries. In 1994, the madrasah added to its name Sekolah Dasar Islam Terpadu (integrated Islamic school), thus informing the community that it was not a school teaching about religion only, but also incorporating secular subjects equal to those of schools under the MONE. The madrasah added substantially more religious subjects after formal school hours, which means the madrasah has a very full day (from 6.30 am to 5 pm). This strategy was claimed to have been successful in gaining the community’s attention and interest in the madrasah, as indicated by a constant increase in enrolments (Profil YUP, 2008). Both the state and private madrasah in Yogyakarta have demonstrated excellent performance in terms of students’ achievements in the national examination and in extra-curricular competitions for the last couple of years.

Leadership

The two excellent madrasah in Yogyakarta and the excellent madrasah in West Sumatra (WSRS) have principals who exercise a type of leadership which enabled the madrasah to achieve outstanding performance relative to other madrasah in their respective contexts. These principals demonstrate visionary, participative and exemplary leadership. Both the principals in Yogyakarta were described by teachers and parents as leaders who had a clear vision for their
madrasah. Their goal was outstanding achievement in both local and national contexts, and students’ religious development. Yunus, a teacher in the private madrasah, said:

Under our principal, we are proud of heading to achieve the vision of being a school which is based on Islamic teachings. We want to prepare a generation so that their Islamic values are not undermined. *Alhamdulillah* [thank God], our school can compete with other schools from the MONE as well. (26 August 2009)

The principals’ vision to become the best madrasah provided direction for the madrasah teachers and staff to achieve their shared targets and objectives. The YRS madrasah’s principal initiated a new pattern for the home–school relationship, and set implementation guidelines, including who is in charge of what. The clarity of vision and direction was applauded by both teachers and parents. As a result, students’ achievement in the final national examinations meant that for the last two years 100 per cent of students were able to advance to junior high school. Also both madrasah have won competitions in a variety of extra-curricular activities, for example, the state school won a ‘healthy school’ national competition in 2009, and the private madrasah won a student pencak silat (martial arts) championship in Yogyakarta in the same year.

Participative leadership is another quality attributed to the principals. They invited teachers, staff, parents and the community to join them in leadership practices and decision-making processes. In the case of the champion WSRS madrasah, the female principal worked closely and cooperatively with the male head of the school committee, who played a role something like ‘wise elder’. Clearly he had contributed an enormous amount, through his selfless dedication and wise counsel, to the history and growth of the school over decades. The principal shared many duties with the vice principal and with the school administrative officer (and all three are public servants). The principal of the YRS madrasah was found to have established certain delegating mechanisms for his staff and teachers in order that they could participate in leadership. He involved parents and community in the whole process of madrasah education. Interestingly, even though students in these madrasah are young (7–12 years old, on average), their voices were heard through a small survey to identify their interests and aspirations.

Staff in the state (WSUS, WSRS and YRS) madrasah were aware of the new paradigm of SBM, and they had drawn up documents, such as School Profiles, that had a section on SBM. However, only one private (YUP) madrasah seemed to even be aware of it.

One incentive for principals to implement SBM is that they can lighten their workloads by sharing their leadership. The principal of the YUP madrasah said that her job is much easier now because she is helped by teachers and the madrasah committee. There are teachers who are in charge of curriculum development, student affairs and administrative affairs, each appointed through election to help the principal. However, the presence of the founder’s wife was described as being like a shadow principal. The principal acknowledged that she was a very powerful figure, as sometimes she would veto decisions which had already been made through meetings.

The YRS, YUP and WSRS principals were found to have set an example for their school community, particularly in terms of commitment and discipline. They came early and left late. Hanna told a story of how the principal was keen to show an example of discipline by making a drama.

One day the principal came late without any reason. Other teachers then applied a sanction, as is done to others, which is to stand for an hour in the madrasah yard. All students and teachers were called to
watch this, a penalty which had actually been set by the principal and a few teachers. This was to teach others that everyone is equal before the rules, and discipline is really important. Next time, another teacher was set to do the same. (10 August 2009).

In West Sumatra (WSRS), the school principal was famous for her commitment that she would willingly do whatever jobs her staff were asked to do. Teachers told how she even cleaned the toilets!—and indeed, the toilets at that model madrasah were sparkling.

Another aspect of participative leadership in schools should be openness and accountability in school budgeting. Although state madrasah sometimes ‘publish’ their sources of funding in their School Profile, it appears that only the senior management make the decisions. We only found two madrasah—WSRS and YRS—where teachers seemed to understand the budget and to have been involved in the decision making about the budget. ‘Openness’ was one of the principles of their leadership.

Weak leadership was a feature of the newly established WSRP madrasah. The school principal was the daughter of the school’s founder, and constantly deferred to him in answering our questions. It will be recalled that she was not aware that officials from the MOR had offered her father some civil-service teachers for her school, and that he had declined this offer. The discipline at this school was atrocious: the principal, teachers and students alike seemed to wander in and out of school at will, the children were wild, destructive and noisy, the teachers and principal seemed unable to control them. The paperwork for the school, such as it was, was not kept at the school but at the founder’s house. In other words, the founder was the real power, and his daughter, the school principal, was his underling; the result was a school with minimal participation in governance from teachers and parents.

**Teacher Involvement**

There is no doubt that teachers in our sample were greatly involved in the process of teaching and learning. But the extent of their autonomy in the curriculum decision making and of their involvement in school-wide policy-making was quite various.

In the YRS madrasah, teachers had the autonomy to make decisions with regard to curriculum content, teaching strategies and methods while they had to follow curriculum competences set by the central government. In the YUP madrasah, however, teachers’ autonomy seemed to be limited by the teaching beliefs and competences of other, usually older, teachers, who did not see the importance of new and varied teaching methods introduced by their younger, more spirited colleagues. In the focus group discussion (FGD), one teacher in this madrasah said:

My concern is that it is difficult to apply new knowledge of teaching because other teachers do not like it. For example, after I followed a LAPIS [Learning Assistance Programs for Islamic Schools, an AusAID initiative] to help madrasah teachers improve their teaching skills and competences training of teaching methodology, I wanted to apply what I had learnt, and it requires a new classroom setting. Other teachers protested because they still like the traditional method of teaching, [that is,] lecturing. (15 August 2009)

This implementation problem probably reflects a complex hierarchy among teachers in madrasah. This hierarchy is based on several factors, which include age and generation, length of teaching experience, different qualifications and, the most important, the difference between salaried teachers, who are civil servants, and honorary teachers, who only receive an honorarium and whose
position is only temporary. There are usually interactions among these factors: civil servants are usually older, more experienced and secure, while younger teachers are often better qualified and enthusiastic, but may not have permanent, civil-servant status. Usually the proportion of teachers who are civil servants is much higher in state madrasah than in private madrasah. It is not uncommon for older teachers to exert their power over their juniors by restricting access to new teaching resources or knowledge, or access to professional development opportunities, such as the LAPIS training. Only a few teachers in that private madrasah had participated in the LAPIS training; however, in the state madrasah, most of the teachers had received the training from LAPIS and other organizations.

Involvement in school-wide decision making and policies was found to be promising in most madrasah, but to be more obvious and active in the state schools. Teachers in the YRS madrasah actively participated in the development and implementation of madrasah policies through regular meetings and informal conversations. This participation cannot be divorced from the leadership style exercised by the principal: he opened up channels of communication, delegated and transferred authority, invited others to join his leadership, and built trust in the madrasah community. In the YUP madrasah, however, the involvement of teachers in the development of madrasah-wide policies was restricted to the annual madrasah planning meeting, which was first held in 2009. This meeting was attended by all teachers and the madrasah committee members. In most meetings, however, teacher involvement was limited to the guru inti (core teachers), who were selected by the principal (teacher FGD, 15 August 2009).

The WSRS madrasah had a comprehensive school profile, in which the implementation of SBM was detailed, along with extensive descriptions and samples of curricula implementation, details of teachers and their qualifications, timetables and so forth. The first point in the ‘Implementation of SBM’ section was the laudable aim ‘to empower the teachers and staff and position the personnel so that they can service the needs of the students’. A key component of SBM for this school was the district-wide ‘teachers’ work groups’, which were really opportunities for collegial professional development. This horizontal network stimulated and empowered teachers, and refreshed those who had been teaching for a long time. Teachers and parents put the success of the school down to the friendly cooperation among staff, the dedication of teachers and good leadership. Teachers tended to emphasize their commitment in singling out particularly talented children for particular competitions, and tutoring and drilling them in preparation for these performances; and the practice of intensively coaching students for two months before the national examinations.

Parental and Community Involvement

In madrasah in West Sumatra it was apparent that just about everybody—principals, teachers, school committees and foundations—believed that the educational side of schools was a matter for teachers and students, and that parents and the community should not interfere. They thought that the role of parents, the school committee and the foundation was just to find funds for the school. Their version of SBM was, at best, a model where teachers were active in school decision making. Parents were not considered to play a role inside the classrooms, as long as they sent their children to school on time, clean and fed. In our observation, it was the few parents with education who were most likely to converse with teachers after school to discuss their children’s progress. Teachers tended to complain that parents were not sufficiently active in helping their children learn, for instance, by overseeing homework, but given the low education levels of parents, and the fact that
most parents had to work every day, it is difficult to see how parental participation could be improved. One mother expressed it this way in a FGD with parents:

Mo: In this school it is the teachers who are responsible. Parents can’t be responsible for things in school because we have to look for our livelihoods. Maybe at night we could look to their education [at home].

LP: What about you, Sir, what is your opinion?
Fa: My opinion is the same: it is not possible for parents to teach in school. (26 June 2009)

The parents and communities of both madrasah in Yogyakarta can be said to have been actively involved in their children’s education. While their involvement as parents who oversee and help their children in learning and doing homework was positive, only one school really encouraged parent participation in the decision-making processes.

In the YUP madrasah, parent involvement was limited to their individual initiative to voice their concerns. This means that parental involvement was not strong, as it depended on their individual bravery to speak up with teachers or the management. The madrasah committee confidently assumed that they were representing parents but we found them to have failed to channel parents’ concerns. We observed that the monthly meeting attended by the principal, teachers, committee members and parents was very much programmed for religious learning (mujahadah), and was really a school information session with hardly any interactive dialogue. On the occasion we witnessed, the committee acted strongly as the speaker and supporter of the madrasah, rather than as a representative of the parents. In the parent FGD, one parent said:

In my observation, the madrasah committee acts as the speaker of the madrasah, not of the parents. We as parents are never invited to talk about how much we contribute, etc. Suddenly, there is a notice from the madrasah supported by the committee that we have to pay this or that amount. (19 August 2009)

By contrast, in the YRS madrasah, it was found that parent and community involvement in the decision-making process was strong. Parents were channelled through three different levels of communication representing different areas and scope of decision making in which they could be involved. First, they were involved in paguyuban, which was a parent group for each grade, through which parents expressed their concerns regarding their children’s classroom learning. The classroom teacher is the ‘partner’ of the parents, and they meet monthly to discuss classroom needs and curriculum. Aisyah, a classroom teacher, explained:

[In paguyuban], we agree to provide students with drinking water and other needs. In meetings, we identify the needs and the sources of money to meet the needs. Also, we agree on giving students homework and deciding the roles that parents should play. Very frequently as well, parents in paguyuban come up with ideas to improve classroom processes or with stories about their children at home. (21 August 2009)

Second, several parents from each paguyuban became members of patembayan, a higher parent group of the madrasah representing the voices of paguyuban. Their partner is the principal, teachers and the committee. They usually talked about parents’ concerns about school fees, regulations, extra-curricular activities and school events such as competitions and ceremonies. Third, several parents from the patembayan and paguyuban were elected to become members of the madrasah
committee. With other members from different segments of the wider community, they partnered the madrasah (principal and several teachers) to make decisions on the madrasah budget and finance, staffing and recruitment, and major madrasah programs and curriculum. The role and activities of the madrasah committee were not visible on a daily basis, but the committee acted as an important partner of the madrasah. The chairman of the YRS madrasah describes one of the roles of the committee as follows:

Every year, we have a big meeting to discuss the madrasah program and budget. We usually receive recommendations for improvement from the patembayan, teachers, and even students. We invite students to talk about their aspirations for this madrasah in the future. And we are proud of our principal, who is strongly committed to building togetherness and collaboration amongst stakeholders . . . Another role is that the committee decides about teacher recruitment, but it is the principal and teachers’ authority to decide what kind of teacher to recruit because they know what they need. We only approve and provide the funds. (20 August 2009)

There was another type of involvement of a larger madrasah community in both madrasah in Yogyakarta: helping students face their national examination in a unique way. The national examination, which was started a few years ago, has become a source of worry to the madrasah community. Teachers pointed out to us that the curriculum for madrasah is much more extensive than that for secular schools, and yet they are treated in the exams as though they are on a level playing field. Each year the newspapers report many cases of student failure which are said to result in psychological and social pressure on the students, schools and parents, and even to lead to suicides. Both madrasah in Yogyakarta initiated a community gathering prior to the exam and held religious supplication ceremonies to help the students spiritually. The ceremonies were led by a respected Islamic cleric and attended by almost all parents whose children were taking the exam. In the YRS madrasah, teachers and parents also held a breakfast session one week before and during the exam to ensure that students received proper nutrition. This symbolic event, on the one hand, reflects their strong support of their children’s education, but on the other hand, also voices their stress in dealing with this fiercely debated government initiative. Extra lessons were given to the students long before the exam as well.

The Role of Yayasan

The yayasan (foundation or trust) is an essential component of private madrasah management and governance, and its existence is required by law (Law No. 16, 2001 about Yayasan and Law No. 28, 2004 about changes arising from Yayasan Law No. 16, 2001). In law, it is a body responsible for establishing and running a private institution, be it educational or other civil society organization. Theoretically, its role can be very determinative. We found diversity among our three private madrasah, but, in general, the yayasan play a limited, usually finance-only, role. None of them directly intervenes in the educational aspects of the school, except insofar as finances impact on schools. The roles played by the yayasan directly reflect the history and funding base of the madrasah, and the degree of devolved power in the madrasah.

In West Sumatra, the WSUP madrasah which had been founded by, and was completely dependent upon, the rich haji, was the only school where an external body was dominant. However, it was the individual founder and financier of the madrasah who was able to determine the life or death of ‘his’ madrasah, not the community members of the yayasan. The yayasan members
thought it only proper that the *yayasan* should not intervene in educational matters, but they did have a role in *yayasan*—community relations. In interview, a member of the *yayasan* said:

The *yayasan* gives full autonomy to the school principal in education . . . in how the curriculum should be implemented. All that is surrendered to the school, because they are the real technical experts—that is their field . . . Yes, there are 107 students; among them are 17 who have ‘letters of poverty’ [which means they are exempted from certain fees and attract a government subsidy]. That leaves 90 students. [Student fees] used to be Rp. 10,000 a month; for the last four months it has been Rp. 25,000. We need more or less Rp. 6.5 million now every month. He [Pak Haji] is the one who pays.

LP: From his own private funds?

Yes, from his private funds . . . He bought the land, then built the buildings, and he donated all that to the village (*nagari*). He built the buildings, and he helps each month with however much we need for funding.

So if Pak Haji dies prematurely, we will be very worried and confused. Because in the finance area there isn’t any, um, any alternative, there’s no way forward . . . Yes, that is the problem now. We have one strong person, but if he isn’t here any more, it’s not sustainable . . . The money that comes in [from students] is supposed to be Rp. 2.5 million—that’s if they all pay . . . We have a team, we visit all the houses of the students, to see their livelihood and check if they are really poor, if they need help. Sometimes there are people who cry poor but actually they have enough . . . So, we in the *yayasan* first ask for a letter from the village head, and if they can’t produce one, we do this survey, this fieldwork; we might call the parents in for a discussion. (19 June 2009)

In this school, the members of the *yayasan* knew that all the power was in the hands in Pak Haji, and in effect they had no say. They knew how much was needed each month, the number of students, the number of students classified as ‘poor’ (who were subsidized), and they were involved in school–community relations through their ‘team’, which identified poor students. Also, there was a process by which the *madrasah* principal would apply to the *yayasan* for special funds (the examples the members gave was for the purchase of a drum band the previous year and the mending of a leaky roof). Apart from the problem of sustainability, there were two main budget problems. One was that although there was a procedure that formally involved the *yayasan*, in practice any proposal for funds went straight to Pak Haji because he was the only source of additional funds. It was also clear that there was no forward planning, or budget plan, so funding was always reactive, not proactive.

In Yogyakarta, the YUP’s *yayasan* limited its role to seeking and providing funds for major *madrasah* re-building programs, special approved programs and staff recruitment. It looked like the *yayasan* was very powerful because major decisions could only be taken on the *yayasan*’s approval. However, the principal and teachers claimed that the *yayasan* exercised a *laissez-faire* management, which gave almost all power and authority to the *madrasah*. The impression from interviews and FGDs was that *yayasan* approval was only ‘rubber-stamping’. Kartini, a senior teacher, complained about this *yayasan* role:

To be honest with you, the *yayasan* here exists in name only—it doesn’t have a significant role. You know, in other schools, *yayasan* are responsible for finding financial resources for the school’s operation, and, most importantly, for covering teachers’ salaries, but here we struggle on our own. (5 September 2009)
To us, this seemed preferable to a powerful and autonomous *yayasan*, because such a *yayasan* would be able to undermine the *madrasah*’s autonomy and intervene in its affairs. However, the principal and teachers thought that the *yayasan* should play a more active role than they currently do, particularly in regard to the provision of their welfare. The *yayasan*, in their view, should be more actively seeking funds to increase their salaries because *madrasah* tuition fees were not sufficient to provide proper salaries for the teachers.

From the data presented above, the *yayasan-committee-madrasah* relations are quite various in private *madrasah*. With one exception we have not found evidence that *yayasan* and committees work together to help the *madrasah* improve. The one exception is the WSRP *madrasah*, wherein the *yayasan*, school committee and teaching body were the one unit, that is, it was a family fiefdom. In Pak Haji’s WSUP *madrasah*, the provisioning role of *yayasan* was reduced to the power of Pak Haji, and there was no mention of a *madrasah* committee. Conversely, in the YUP *madrasah*, the committee’s role was very strong and applauded by the principal and teachers, while the *yayasan* was really just a symbolic umbrella for the *madrasah* to meet the requirements of the law. It seems to us that the triangle of interrelations among the *yayasan*, school committee and *madrasah* do not make for effective governance.

**Conclusion**

We agree with Schulte-Nordholt (2004) that there is no automatic democratic effect from the legislation and even implementation of decentralization. The decentralization of education in Indonesia has not uniformly empowered citizens to become more involved in decision-making in their children’s or communities’ schools. This conclusion focuses on four salient points in our findings: parental and community participation, the importance of good leadership, teachers’ participation and our ambivalence about private *madrasah*.

One of our principle findings, and concerns, is that *parental and community participation* in *madrasah* education (whether through the *madrasah* committees, or otherwise) is generally low. There is still a very pervasive misperception in *madrasah*, and among parents and *madrasah* committee members, that parents should not engage in the academic life of the *madrasah*, whether through offering input on curricula development, pedagogical techniques, teaching resources, or supporting teachers in the classroom. Most *madrasah* committees and parents understood their proper role as confined to providing financial support. In other words, the pre-SBM paradigm for *madrasah* committees and governance generally still holds. This misperception undermines attempts to entrench SBM, and is one of our most important findings. In private *madrasah*, not all the committees were operating according to the role designated to them by the 2003 reforms. Sometimes the committee did not exist or existed in name only, identified on the wall of the administration office but playing no genuine role.

The involvement of *madrasah* committee members and parents in most cases was mainly limited to sourcing and contributing financial support. *Madrasah* committee and parent participation in budgeting, in the sense of planning and controlling the financial aspects of *madrasah*, was very limited in almost all cases. The apparently deliberate failure to provide a structural mechanism that allows openness and scrutiny in budgetary matters discourages parents and the community from questioning the use of funds received by the *madrasah*. On the other hand, we wonder if it is reasonable to expect parents with low or no education, and a precarious economic situation, to be active in schools. After all, as they argued above, it is the teacher’s job to teach, and the principal’s job to administer, and these professionals are paid and trained to do these jobs, so why should
parents, who have to find work on a daily basis, and of course actually do the work, have to ‘work’ in schools for no pay?

However, our research on three excellent madrasah which have achieved outstanding results in external examinations shows that a low socio-economic context does not have to produce low academic results. We cannot prove that the introduction of a version of SBM in all three produced these results, but the indicators are that good leadership is important. The principals’ willingness to devolve power and responsibility to other teachers, to work cooperatively with parents and community leaders, to model exemplary behaviour and to institutionalize a clear vision for the future were instrumental in providing a good learning environment for students. It is also reasonable to expect that those parents who participate in school decision making, are able thereby to develop ‘democracy skills’ such as public speaking, negotiation, teaching skills, networking and advocacy which might have some flow-on effects in other community development contexts. However, these flow-on benefits cannot be assumed, particularly as parent participation was so minimal in our sample.

Our fieldwork on private madrasah in particular shows that although Islamic schools grow out of local communities, the concept of ‘community’ needs to be deconstructed. The assumption of SBM policy is that ‘the community’ is homogeneous and unproblematic, and therefore that the human resources of ‘the community’ can easily be harnessed in service of the school. However, in all three private madrasah researched, the founder continued to either cast a ‘shadow’ or directly ran the school. This proprietorial role undermines efforts to democratize the governance of the school. Further, there are majority and minority groups, and sometimes dominant individuals, in any community. In WSUP madrasah, a rich individual (Pak Haji) was not just proprietorial, he was determinative of the development of the school. In WSRP, the Sumatran madrasah that functioned as a family fiefdom, the school was being used by its founder to eventually provide his family with secure public-service employment. The researchers were never allowed to discover what the non-family members of ‘the community’ thought about this, such was the control exercised by this dominant group. The designers of SBM in Jakarta assumed that ‘the community’ exists as some sort of homogeneous, unified entity, that unproblematically represents the diversity of people at local level, and that they (all) have the desire and resources to participate in their children’s schooling. We think this assumption is ill-founded.

Participation by teachers in madrasah governance is increasing. Most schools are gradually involving teachers in more and more governance roles. The teachers’ work groups (KKG) are an encouraging sign: they provide a forum where teachers can develop strategies for the improvement of teaching quality and disseminate ideas of ‘best practice’ in SBM. The interaction with teachers in other madrasah in a district boosted teachers’ morale and provided inspiration as well as practical assistance (for example, with teaching materials and development of curricula). These groups could be strengthened by making them more democratic, and by using them as a vehicle to introduce peer evaluation of teaching.

Nevertheless, as we noted in the Introduction, there are many serious problems with teaching staff in madrasah. We agree with Bjork (2006) that the teacher culture among civil-servant teachers is a problem, though it seems to be gradually changing. Problems associated with their acceptance of the authority structure, complaisance, passivity and other entrenched qualities are pervasive. This inertia means that it is difficult to implement SBM. Still, civil-servant teachers in general are probably better trained and more committed than honorary teachers who dominate numerically in private madrasah. We can qualify this by saying that we did find, among the honorary teachers in both public and private madrasah, younger teachers who often
have good qualifications, understand the SBM message and are more enthusiastic than their
civil-service seniors.

The private madrasah depend heavily on honorary teachers. While such community-supported
volunteerism might be admirable given the strained resources of poor communities, honorary
teachers are often not qualified and cannot be expected to devote their undivided time and energy
to the job (see also Bangay, 2005: 172; Neumann, 2000: 40). It would be unfair and unrealistic to
expect honorary teachers to be active in madrasah governance. This situation has serious implications
for the educational quality of madrasah.

The overwhelming numerical dominance of private madrasah in the madrasah ibtidaiyah level
nationally, means that problems with SBM in private madrasah have nationwide significance. The
examples above of the school run as a family fiefdom and the school which was totally dependent
upon its rich Haji demonstrate the diversity and autonomy of private madrasah. The quality of edu-
cation offered by the first school was abysmal; the second school was doing well academically,
especially considering the low socio-economic background of parents. The autonomy implied
by private status can be detrimental to the quality of education: in this regard we recall the rejection
of the government’s offer of ‘free’ civil-servant teachers by the founder of the family-fiefdom
school because he wanted to further his family’s employment prospects. Clearly the interests of
students were not being served in this case. Conversely, one of our excellent schools in Yogyakarta
is a private school, and the combination of an active school committee, flexible leadership and
community commitment to good education seemed to create this excellence. So we can conclude
that private status is not necessarily a bad thing.

The government decree that introduced the decentralization of schooling via SBM
to the Indonesian education system aimed ‘to facilitate society’s participation in education’
(KepMinDikNas, 2002). It would be premature to claim that the decentralization of madrasah
education has enhanced society’s participation in education and thereby deepened democracy in
Indonesia. Nevertheless, there are some encouraging signs, and plenty of good will and enthu-
siasm. The appetite for Islamic education at the local level is strong and probably growing. The
question remains how to extrapolate from the practices at the excellent schools to enable an
effective articulation between ‘community’ commitment and enthusiasm and school govern-
ance nationwide

**Glossary**

*Akidah/Akhlak:* a subject taught in madrasah in Indonesia comprising teachings about Islamic theological
doctrines and ethics.

*Al-Quran/Hadith:* a subject taught in madrasah in Indonesia comprising teachings about Quranic verses, the
Prophet’s traditions, their meanings and exegesis.

*Datuk:* a clan leader. This term is mostly used in Sumatra.

*Diknas:* stands for Pendidikan Nasional, short for Ministry of National Education.

*Fiqh:* a subject taught in madrasah in Indonesia comprising teachings about Islamic jurisprudence.

*Guru honor:* honorary teachers, officially called guru tidak tetap (GTT) or non-permanent teachers.

*Guru inti:* core teachers meaning those who are selected by the principal to become key players in the
school leadership. They are usually taken from senior teachers and classroom teachers.

*Haji:* a title given to a Muslim particularly in Southeast Asian countries who has gone on the pilgrimage to
Mecca—one of the five pillars in Islam. Pak Haji is for males, and Bu or Mak Haji is for females.

*Kampung:* Village.
KBK and KTSP: *Kurikulum Berbasis Kompetensi* or competency based curriculum—a curriculum initiated and put in trial in 2004. It was revised and changed into KTSP (*Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan*) or school-based curriculum, and has been used since 2006 in schools across the nation.

KepMenDikNas: *Keputusan Menteri Pendidikan Nasional* or Decree of the Minister of National Education.

Komunitas: community. It is explained in the body of the article.

LAPIS: an Australian government-funded initiative for *madrasah* improvement. It stands for Learning Assistance Programs for Islamic Schools.

*Madrasah*: Islamic day school. There are three levels of *madrasah* in Indonesia: *madrasah ibtidaiyah* (primary, grades 1–6), *madrasah tsanawiyah* (junior secondary, grades 7–8) and *madrasah aliyah* (senior secondary, grades 9–12). These *madrasah* teach secular subjects, comprising more than 70 per cent of the curriculum, and religious subjects (30 per cent). There is another type of *madrasah* that teaches only religious subjects prescribed by the government, namely *madrasah diniyah awwaliyah* (MDA) or basic religious school.

Masyarakat: society, community. It is explained in the article.

MIN: *madrasah ibtidaiyah negeri* or state Islamic primary day school.

MONE: Ministry of National Education.

MOR: Ministry of Religion.

Paguyuban: an informal social group or organization.

Patembayan: an informal social group or organization with fewer members than *paguyuban*.

Pencak silat: Indonesian traditional martial arts.

Perantau: emigrants.

Pesantren: Islamic boarding school.

Reformasi: derived from reformation or reform. It has been used in Indonesian politics to indicate the era after the fall of Suharto in 1998.

SDIT: *sekolah dasar Islam terpadu* or integrated Islamic school.

STAIN: *sekolah tinggi agama Islam negeri* or state college for Islamic studies.

Yayasan: foundation or trust.

**References**


**Biographical Notes**

Lyn Parker is a professor in Asian Studies at the University of Western Australia. She has produced three books: *From Subjects to Citizens: Balinese Villagers in the Indonesian Nation-State, The Agency of Women in Asia* and *Women and Work in Indonesia*.

R. Raihani is an ARC postdoctoral fellow at the University of Western Australia. He has published three monographs: *Curriculum Construction in the Indonesian Pesantren, Successful School Leadership in Indonesia* and *Transformative School Leadership*. 