

CASE STUDY

Semai Benih Bangsa School of Character

The Partnership Between PT PP London Sumatra Tbk and Indonesia Heritage Foundation

Millennium Development Goals Target 2 A: Achieving Basic Education for All

Indonesia's efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on universal primary education and literacy had led to the achievement of the 2015 targets. Indonesia sets the primary education beyond MDGs target by adding junior high school as the universal basic education's target. In 2008/09, the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) of elementary schools had reached 117% and the Net Enrollment Ratio (NER) had achieved around 95%. In general, the gap on the educational participation in primary school level amongst provinces had narrowed down and the participation rates in most provinces had reached more than 90 percent. The main challenge in accelerating the achievement of MDG on education is to improve access equality and quality for all regions. Several government policies and programs to address the challenge were: (i) expanding equitable access to primary education, especially for the poor; (ii) improving education quality and relevance; (iii) strengthening the governance and accountability of education services. The government will also continue to maintain allocation for education sector at least 20 percent of the national budget in order to accelerate the achievement of universal primary education targets in 2015¹.

SUMMARY

The partnership between PT PP London Sumatra Tbk (Lonsum) and Indonesia Heritage Foundation (IHF) was conducted between 2007 and 2011 in developing the kindergarten and primary school of Semai Benih Bangsa (SBB), located in Lonsum plantations in North Sumatra, South Sumatra, West Java, East Java, East Kalimantan, North Sulawesi, and South Sulawesi. The SBB school's program aimed at improving the quality of education for children between 5 to 12 years old who lived in the surrounding areas of Lonsum plantations by applying *Pendidikan Holistik Berbasis Karakter*/Character-based Holistic Education (CBHE) method. The program was implemented for non-profit community-based kindergartens and state elementary schools.

The main activities of this program were training SBB kindergarten and elementary schools' teachers in applying CBHE curriculum and providing assistance to already established SBB schools. Lonsum and IHF divided the main activities into two stages: (1) setting up a pilot SBB school in each plantation site as a benchmark, and (2) setting up more of SBB schools based on the pilot standards. Lonsum's contribution was identifying the schools to participate the SBB program and funded the training packages, which comprised of CBHE modules, education game tools, reference books on character building, and the school signs. IHF contributed in developing the SBB school concept and CBHE



Happy faces of the children when experiencing visitor teacher activities at their school, TK Sherina I, Deli Serdang, Sumatra Utara. © Lonsum, 2011.

curriculum, training, coaching for SBB pilot schools and teachers.

This partnership successfully organized 9 training courses for 150 SBB teachers; developed 66 SBB kindergartens and 9 SBB elementary schools across all project sites, offered education for 3,000 children per year. SBB also made a positive impact on mother and child health in preventing infectious diseases. On the other hand, SBB presented a positive image of the company and also built great demand by the children of Lonsum employees.

Lonsum and IHF would continue to collaborate in overcoming challenges, including providing training funds, selecting schools and teachers, in remote locations. Lonsum and IHF hoped that SBB schools could become more independent and sustainable, and supported by community itself in the future.

THE PARTNERS



PT PP London Sumatra Tbk /Lonsum (www.londonsumatra.com) is a subsidiary of PT Salim Ivomas Pratama Tbk. Lonsum has 52 plantations with more than 100.000 hectares in Sumatra, Java, Kalimantan, and Sulawesi. Lonsum business field includes plant breeding, planting, harvesting, milling, processing, and selling of palm products, rubber, cocoa, and tea. Besides plantation,

Lonsum also has 21 factories that processing palm into cooking oil and margarine in Sumatra, Java, and Sulawesi. Lonsum is known in the industry for the quality of its oil palm and cocoa seeds.

Lonsum is fully aware the importance of communities as a stakeholder for its businesses. It considers integrating the communities nearby their plantations and priorities into their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program. Environment & CSR Coordination (ECSR) Department was established to ensure the creation of a harmonious relationship between the corporate social responsibility and the environment. The main pillars of Lonsum CSR program are education, health, social care, and economy. The activities

include scholarships for elementary, junior, and senior high school students, the rehabilitation of the school infrastructure, health checks for the new mothers and their babies, blood tests, the provision of ultrasonography

(USG), pregnancy consultation, and provision of milk and vitamins for under five.



Indonesia Heritage Foundation /IHF (www.ihf.or.id) is a non-profit organization, which focused on the character education for early childhood (3 – 7 years old) to adolescence. IHF was established in 2000 and currently has over than 100 employees, which is mostly teachers and trainers. IHF started its activities by developing education model, called Character-based Holistic Education (CBHE) for kindergartens, elementary schools, and junior high schools. Until 2012, IHF has trained more than 3,500 teachers from 1,700 kindergartens and more than 100 teachers from elementary and junior high schools in almost all provinces in Indonesia.

Many companies and organizations have partnered with IHF, among others are agribusiness companies, energy and oil companies, financial institutions, media companies, state-owned, and private and corporate Foundations that have concerns on education.

IHF currently main activities are (1) Semai Benih Bangsa (SBB) Kindergarten which was self-established by the community, (2) Elementary and Junior High School of Character in Cimanggis, Depok, West Java, (3) Seminar, Workshop and Training on Character Education and Brain-based Parenting, (4) Development



Deployment in adopting the SBB program in Indonesia

of Character Learning Module as the guidance for teacher in class, (5) Development of Character Literature Books for the parents and public, story books, and character bulletin, (6) Coaching of Kindergartens and Elementary Schools (private and public) that have been adopted the CBHE approach, and (7) Explore character-based schools or education institutions that have interest on CBHEⁱⁱ.

INITIATING THE PARTNERSHIP

The partnerships started when Eddy Sariaatmadja, the President Commissioner of Lonsum met with Ratna Megawangi, the Founder of IHF at the end of 2006 to discuss education program as the part of Lonsum CSR program. After the meeting, on January 2007, both agreed to partner in improving the school quality nearby Lonsum plantation areas gradually until the end of 2011. Lonsum and IHF based their partnerships over shared concerns about the social issues in Indonesia, e.g. teen violence caused by the education gap in teaching positive characters in children from young age.

IMPLEMENTING THE PARTNERSHIP

Lonsum and IHF agreed to run the program in two stages. Stage one was to establish one pilot SBB Kindergarten (as a benchmark) in each plantation areas. Stage two was to reach more schools adopting SBB program as the pilot benchmark.

In the first stage, Lonsum decided that Gunung Melayu and Bah Lias Estates (a province in North Sumatra) would become pilots based on the consideration that (1) both were old plantations, and (2) Lonsum had good relationship with community leaders and local authorities. From these locations, Lonsum then identified four teachers to participate the training at the IHF Training Center of, Cimanggis, Depok, and West Java.

The four selected teachers joined with other participants from the other schools and organizations to attend the Semai Benih Bangsa School training, using the Character-based Holistic Education curriculum for 15 days. As motivation, Lonsum provided an allowance of Rp. 600,000, a pair of sports shoes, a set of sportswear and batik clothes, for each teacher.

The teachers who had completed the training, could apply CBHE curriculum back at their schools. School that were adopting CBHE were officially called the SBB school and became pilot schools for others to learn.

The same activities were held in South Sumatra, West Java, East Java, East Kalimantan, North Sulawesi, and South Sulawesi. There were 38 teachers trained and 19 SBB pilot kindergartens established. The schools that applied CBHE would become SBB schools, and could use SBB logo and signage with the support from Lonsum.

In this training activity, IHF developed and distributed the packages of character building story books, supporting literatures, teaching modules, and Educational Game Tool packages. Each school received CBHE curriculum module with a lesson plan, 74 educational game tools, 120 character-building story books, and one set of literature materials for each teacher. Character-building promotes nine main universal characters and could be applied in the context of culture, values and social problems in society such as drugs; and did not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, gender, and diffable (different abilities)ⁱⁱⁱ. In addition to that topic, the teachers also gained the latest knowledge about applicative learning methods, such as child development and brain-based learning, active learning method, effective communication, class management, and storytelling techniques.

Upon completion of first training and setting-up the SBB pilot schools in all locations, IHF held the second training for the other schools in July 2009. The training took place in the plantation which allows the SBB school for observation and internship. There were 77 teachers from 47 kindergartens and 9 elementary schools participated in the second training. Lonsum only developed nine SBB schools that were located within the plantation of West Kutai, East Kalimantan, based on the fact that their remote location could increase drop-out rates without those SBB schools.

Specific for this training, IHF sent out five trainers and used the opportunity to monitor the progress of the SBB pilot kindergartens. Besides the training, IHF also held a seminar focusing on the importance of the character building from very early age children and invited participants from the Education Office, local government, and community. The seminar was impactful in increasing the awareness of Lonsum CSR program on education.

As a follow-up of the training, the Environment & Corporate Social (ECSR) Department of Lonsum conducted monitoring on all SBB twice a year (in the beginning and in the middle of the academic year). To help the ECSR team in monitoring, IHF provided a checklist, which laid out tasks to be checked such as curriculum appraisal standard, teacher ability in teaching, the regular report on student participation, activity, SBB schools/students achievements, character development of children, and photo documentation. The ECSR team sent questionnaires to the Estate managers for distribution to all SBB schools. The schools returned the fill-out form to the Estate manager, and the result would be discussed with ECSR team to decide changes to lead the desired improvement and budget planning for the next school year.



Al Ikhlas Kindergarten, Lubuk Linggau, South Sumatra, officially established as Semai Benih Bangsa School (SBB) through partnership between Lonsum and IHF © Lonsum, 2011.

RESULT AND IMPACT

Until early October 2011, the partnership between Lonsum and IHF had established 66 SBB kindergartens and 9 elementary schools in all project areas. Around 150 teachers had been trained to become SBB teachers for implementing CBHE curriculum to 3,000 students per year. Up to 19 out of 66 kindergartens had been developed as pilot kindergartens.

SBB that were located in the vicinity of Lonsum plantations had resulted positive impacts. The numbers of children attending the SBB had increased each year due to the "joyful learning" method used in the classroom that made kids enjoy learning process. The school became self-funded from tuition fee; teaching spirit and quality of teacher increased, many SBB teachers became speakers/resource persons in local seminars/workshops, and some teachers were offered to become government employees by government. SBB had also resulted a positive image for the company, and SBB schools were in great demand by the Lonsum staff. Considering these positive impacts, Lonsum issued a policy to recruit teachers as permanent staff to ensure a continuous and sustainable SBB in the areas.

Some teachers and parents revealed that the children are more creative, eager to learn, sensitive and caring to their surrounding environment compared to the other children.

SBB teachers in East Kalimantan established an association of character teachers in Jempang district in Kabupaten Kutai Barat with 35 members. This association provided technical support and education for public and private schools wishing to adopt the CBHE curriculum and set-up the SBB school. SBB school also gave positive impact for mother and child health by teaching clean and healthy behaviors, such as household cleanliness, personal hygiene, nutritional food, proper waste treatment, and creating habits to wash hands with soap to prevent various infectious diseases.

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

One of the challenges in implementing the SBB program was the cost of sending teachers to training especially during the first stage. However, Lonsum management was committed to cover travel cost. The other challenge was the selection of schools and teachers to participate in the training program in

order to make sure the teachers would be capable of applying the skills and knowledge. To do this, CSR team of Lonsum consulted with the Estate managers to identify potential candidates based on the ability and capacity of the teachers to have the model worked. Criteria for participating teachers: high school graduates, high level of motivation to adopt the character education model, recommendation by the principals, and willingness to participate in the IHF training. The other challenge was the school remote location. One of the schools in East Kalimantan, for instance, took 9 hours through air, land, and water to reach.

The sustainability of the SBB schools depended on how the teachers and school in applying the CBHE curriculum consistently and continuously. The better the teachers applying the curriculum, the higher the quality of the education, and this would lead to the increase of the number of children enrolled.

IHF had not experienced significant obstacles during partnering with Lonsum. This could be caused by the shared

vision and mission between the two organizations in improving the quality of education, particularly in teaching methods and children's character building. When a technical problem occurred during the preparation of MOU and schedules, Lonsum and IHF could always find the best solution for both parties.

FUTURE PLANS

Lonsum and IHF hope that the schools whose teachers received the CBHE training will become more independent and the community keeps sustaining the SBB in the future. Lonsum planned to set up SBB elementary schools in its all plantation areas to maintain the character building taught until the children reached 12 y.o.

Footnotes

- i. Brain-based parenting is an educational method based on the ability and child way of thinking development.
- ii. Both School of Character and SBB adopt the CBHE curriculum. However, SBB is more for non-profit and self-sufficient schools, while School of Character is for non poor.
- iii. The CBHE model focuses on promoting the nine pillars of character, which are taught to the students explicitly and continuously. The nine pillars of character are: love towards God and all God's creation; responsibility, self-discipline, and independence; honesty; respect and compassion; love, caring, empathy, and teamwork; confidence, creativity, resourcefulness, and determination; justice, fairness and leadership; kindness and humility; tolerance,

References

1. Ministry of National Development Planning / Agency of National Development Planning. The report on the Achievement of the 2010 Millennium Development Goals. Jakarta 2010.

About this Case Study

This one is one of the series of the case studies based on the presentations by the partners at HBRI Partnership Forum. HBRI Partnership Forum is one of the activities of CCPHI, a project from Public Health Institute funded by the Ford Foundation.

This case study is based on a presentation by Muhammad Waras, Head of Environment & Corporate Social Responsibilities Lonsum and Ratna Megawangi, the Founder of IHF at the 17th of HBRI Partnerships Forum. Dian Rosdiana, CCPHI Communication Officer, prepared the study in consultations with Lonsum and IHF.

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