

A Model for a Continuous Professional Development Program for Early Childhood Teachers in Villages: Insights from the Coaching Pilot in Indonesia

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Abstract : Coaching has been showing great potential to strengthen the impact of brief group trainings and help early childhood teachers solve specific problems at work with the goal of raising the quality of early childhood services. However, there have been some doubts about the benefits that village teachers can receive from coaching. It is perceived that village teachers may struggle with the thinking skills needed to make coaching beneficial. Furthermore, there are reservations about whether principals and supervisors in villages are open to coaching's facilitative approach, as opposed to the directive approach they have been using. As such, the use of coaching to develop the professionalism of early childhood teachers in the villages needs to be examined. The Coaching Pilot for early childhood teachers in Indonesia villages provides insights for the above issues. The Coaching Pilot is part of the ECED Frontline Pilot, which is a collaboration project between the Government of Indonesia and the World Bank with the support from the Australian Government (DFAT). The Pilot started with coordinated efforts with the local government in two districts to select principals and supervisors who have been equipped with basic knowledge about early childhood education to take part in 2-days coaching training. Afterwards, the participants were asked to collect 25 hours of coaching early childhood teachers who have participated in the Enhanced Basic Training for village teachers. The participants who completed this requirement were then invited to come for an assessment of their coaching skills. Following that, a qualitative evaluation was conducted using in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussion techniques. The evaluation focuses on the impact of the coaching pilot in helping the village teachers to develop in their professionalism, as well as on the sustainability of the intervention. Results from the evaluation indicated that although their low education may limit their thinking skills, village teachers benefited from the coaching that they received. Moreover, the evaluation results also suggested that with enough training and support, principals and supervisors in the villages were able to provide an adequate coaching service for the teachers. On top of that, beyond this small start, interest is growing, both within the pilot districts and even beyond, due to word of mouth of the benefits that the Coaching Pilot has created. The districts where coaching was piloted have planned to continue the coaching program, since a number of early childhood teachers have requested to be coached, and a number of principals and supervisors have also requested to be trained as a coach. Furthermore, the Association for Early Childhood Educators in Indonesia has started to adopt coaching into their program. Although further research is needed, the Coaching Pilot suggests that coaching can positively impact early childhood teachers in villages, and village principals and supervisors can become a promising source of future coaches. As such, coaching has a significant potential to become a sustainable model for a continuous professional development program for early childhood teachers in villages.

Keywords : coaching, coaching pilot, early childhood teachers, principals and supervisors, village teachers

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