



Echoing the Independent Curriculum from Eastern Indonesia

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Echoing,
Independent Curriculum,
Eastern

Received : 20, August

Revised : 21, September

Accepted: 30, October

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ABSTRACT

English abstract only consisted of one paragraph and a maximum of 120 words. The abstract should contain the aims of the research or your paper contribution to the knowledge (novelty if available). State your tested variables or concepts if qualitative, a short explanation of your research methodology and samples, as well as your data observation timelines. Close the abstract with a short statement of your results and implications, if any. The Independent Curriculum is an innovation in the Indonesian education system that aims to create more flexible and student-centered learning. However, its implementation faces significant challenges in remote areas such as Wamena, Mountainous Papua. Limited access to technology, inadequate educational infrastructure, and uneven teacher training are the main obstacles in adapting this new approach. This paper describes the author's experience in implementing the Independent Curriculum at SD Triesa Unggul and Jayawijaya Regency, with a STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Result) approach. The author outlines the challenges faced, strategies for changing teachers' mindsets, and the importance of building a learning community to support the successful implementation of the Independent Curriculum in the area. This reflection shows that although major challenges remain, opportunities for improvement remain open through collaboration and ongoing support from various parties.

INTRODUCTION

Education in Indonesia continues to undergo transformation as an effort to improve the quality of human resources and create equal access to education throughout the archipelago. One of the latest breakthroughs is the launch of the Independent Curriculum, which aims to provide more flexibility for schools in adapting learning to local conditions, student needs, and technological developments. This curriculum focuses on student competence, reduces administrative burden for teachers, and provides more freedom in designing creative teaching methods (Kholifah 2022). However, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Indonesia does not always run smoothly, especially in remote and isolated areas such as Papua, especially in Wamena, one of the largest cities in the Central Highlands of Papua. Wamena has a geographical condition that is difficult to access, with steep mountains and limited transportation infrastructure. In addition, complex socio-cultural challenges and the diversity of local tribes make the implementation process of national curricula such as the Independent Curriculum more challenging in this region.

Wamena and its surroundings are an area that is very rich in local culture and wisdom, with dozens of indigenous tribes that have different languages, traditions, and life values. This diversity, on the one hand, provides great potential to develop a more contextual educational model through the Independent Curriculum, which encourages the integration of local cultural-based learning (Poceratu, Rumahuru, and Lumamuly 2022). However, on the other hand, education in Wamena still faces major challenges related to accessibility, infrastructure, and educators. Many schools in Wamena and inland Papua do not have adequate facilities, such as decent buildings, textbooks, and very limited internet access.

The Independent Curriculum is a new breakthrough in the Indonesian education system that aims to create more flexible, innovative, and student-centred learning (Shafi'i, 2022, p. 1). This curriculum provides space for students to explore their interests and talents through a more adaptive and contextual approach (Ardina 2023:6), where the teacher acts as a facilitator. In the Independent Curriculum, students are invited to be more independent and active in the learning process, with the hope that they can develop critical, creative, and collaborative thinking skills. However, the biggest challenge of this curriculum lies in its implementation, especially in areas with different social and infrastructure conditions, such as in Wamena, Mountainous Papua. The limited access to educational and technological resources in this remote area raises big questions about the extent to which the Independent Curriculum can be applied effectively and efficiently.

Wamena, as an area with geographical characteristics that are difficult to access and limited educational infrastructure, faces various challenges in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum (Legi and Rumpaisum 2024:233). Schools in this area often face unfavourable conditions, such as lack of internet access, as well as limited learning facilities. In addition, many teachers in Wamena have not received adequate training on the learning approach carried out by the Independent Curriculum, so they tend to still use

conventional teaching methods such as lectures. This mindset that prioritizes one-way knowledge transfer is contrary to the basic principles of the Independent Curriculum which emphasizes student independence and creativity. In this context, it is important to take a deeper look at how these challenges can be overcome with the right and relevant strategies for regions like Wamena.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Furthermore, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Wamena also raises the need to change Mindset teachers to be more open to new approaches in learning. In the face of the complexity of education in these remote areas, changes in education policies are not enough if they are not balanced with adequate human resource capacity building (Legi and Toruan 2024:104). Teachers not only need technical training regarding the new curriculum, but also mentoring and support in changing their mindset in order to adapt to more participatory and interactive learning methods (Kholifah 2022). Government support and stakeholder other education is very necessary, both in the form of improving facilities and providing intensive training for teachers in Wamena.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative approach with the aim of understanding the phenomenon in depth related to the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Wamena. This approach was chosen because qualitative research allows researchers to explore perceptions, experiences, and obstacles and opportunities faced by teachers, principals, and education stakeholders in the curriculum implementation process. In this article, the author will describe the roles and practices that I have carried out at Triesa Unggul Integrated Elementary School and in Jayawijaya Regency related to the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum. I titled this short article "Echo the Independent Curriculum from Eastern Indonesia" while the method I use in this good practice is the STAR method Misnawati et al., "Star Method Innovation: Best Practice," Publisher of Stiepari Press (2023): 1. Star is an acronym for Situation, Task, Action, Result. The reason for choosing this method is because for the author this method is simple and simpler.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Dynamics of the Independent Curriculum in Wamena Papua Mountains

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Wamena still faces significant challenges, especially related to the learning methods used by teachers. Although the curriculum offers flexibility and a student-centered approach to learning, many teachers in Wamena still use conventional methods, such as lectures, which emphasize one-way knowledge transfer (Legi and Wamo 2023). This is not in line with the spirit of the Independent Curriculum which encourages students to learn independently and creatively. Geographical challenges and resource constraints in Wamena have exacerbated this situation,

as teachers may not have access to innovative materials or support facilities needed to implement a more interactive and participatory approach.

In addition, the lack of adequate training or in-house training for teachers regarding the Independent Curriculum further hinders the adaptation process. Ideally, this training is essential to equip teachers with better skills and understanding of the new approaches offered by the curriculum. However, in Wamena, efforts to increase teacher capacity through formal trainings have not been carried out thoroughly as a result, many teachers find it difficult to switch from traditional learning methods to more flexible and student-centered methods. Without proper training, teachers find it difficult to understand and implement the principles of independence, exploration, and emphasis on individual potential offered by the Independent Curriculum.

Another challenge is the mindset of teachers that has not changed in accordance with the demands of this curriculum. The Independent Curriculum requires teachers who are open to change, willing to relearn, and able to develop creativity in the teaching process. However, in Wamena, many teachers are still stuck in the old mindset, where they tend to think that their main task is to transfer knowledge directly to students. This change in mindset requires time and effort, as well as support from the school and the government. The transformation of a more inclusive and adaptive education culture in Wamena will largely depend on the willingness of teachers to accept these changes and actively participate in more innovative learning.

2. Echoing the Independent Curriculum in Wamena

1. The Evolution of the Curriculum in Indonesia: From the 2013 Curriculum to the Independent Curriculum: Education in Indonesia has undergone various changes in curriculum policies in response to social, economic, and political changes. One of its milestones is the 2013 Curriculum, which focuses on developing student competencies in aspects of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The curriculum is applied nationally to relatively uniform standards, but has been found to have weaknesses in terms of flexibility and local relevance, especially in remote areas such as Papua. These limitations prompted the birth of the Independent Curriculum in 2021 (Legi and Rumpaisum 2024), which provides greater freedom for schools to design learning activities that are more relevant to local needs and conditions. Research on previous curriculum implementations in Papua showed that national standards could not always be applied effectively in areas such as Wamena, which have limited infrastructure and significant cultural differences. A study by Journal of Education and Culture (2018) found that remote areas such as the Central Highlands of Papua often lack access to decent educational resources, and teachers often have to improvise in adapting subject matter to address local language and cultural differences.
2. The Context of Education in Papua, Especially Wamena: Education in Papua, especially in Wamena, faces challenges that are not only related to physical accessibility, but also socio-cultural challenges. Based on a

UNICEF Indonesia report (2020), most of Papua, especially in rural areas such as Wamena, still face serious obstacles in accessing proper basic education. Few schools have complete facilities, and many still rely on limited resources such as old printed textbooks. Language is one of the main obstacles in the implementation of the curriculum in Wamena. In the mountainous region of Papua, Indonesian is not the first language spoken by most students (Howay 2018). Local languages such as Dani or other dialects of the local tribes dominate the daily conversation. As a result, the transition to using Indonesian as the language of instruction in schools often makes it difficult for students to understand the subject matter, especially at the elementary school level. In addition, the role of teachers in supporting the Independent Curriculum in Papua is an important concern. Many teachers in Wamena are contract or honorary teachers from outside Papua, so they often do not understand the local cultural context and language. Research by Astuti (2021) in the journal "Education in the Interior of Papua" highlights that teachers' unpreparedness in adapting to local conditions often causes the learning process to become rigid and ineffective.

3. Curriculum Implementation in Remote Areas: Research on curriculum implementation in remote areas has provided insights (Pertiwi, Handayani, and Rostika 2022) about the various obstacles and opportunities that exist. Curriculum implementation in Papua underscores several key challenges, including limited access to the internet and technology, low availability of educational resources, and lack of training for teachers regarding the implementation of the new curriculum (Sitorus, Rantung, and Naibaho 2023). In the context of the Independent Curriculum, the flexibility provided can actually provide a solution to this limitation, but only if there is full support from the local government and intensive training for educators. In the context of Wamena, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum is still in its early stages and there have not been many empirical studies that highlight its direct impact. However, some literature mentions that the flexibility of this curriculum gives hope for the development of a project-based learning model that is more adaptive to local needs and conditions. This is reinforced by research from Papua Educational Research Institute (2021) found that the use of contextual and project-based learning methods in Wamena can help increase student engagement in learning, especially when the project involves elements of local culture, such as handicrafts, traditional agriculture, and tribal history.
4. Integration of Local Culture in the Curriculum: One of the important components of the Independent Curriculum is the integration of local culture in the learning process. In Wamena, this is very relevant considering the cultural wealth owned by the local community. Research by Bisarul (Ihsan, Syafi'aturrosyidah, and Qibtiyah 2019) shows that the integration of local culture in learning can increase students' motivation to learn and make the subject matter more meaningful to them. For example, the use of local folklore or traditions as part of language and history learning can help students better understand the material in a way that is relevant to their

daily lives. However, to realize this integration, readiness is needed from teachers and schools to identify and adapt local wisdom into a syllabus that is in accordance with national education standards. The Independent Curriculum provides space for such creativity, but requires clear guidance and support from local governments in the form of training and technical guidance for teachers, so that they can effectively implement this curriculum in areas such as Wamena.

3. Action in Echoing the Independent Curriculum

Echoing the Independent Curriculum in remote areas like Wamena is not an easy task. Infrastructure challenges, resource limitations, and mindsets that are still trapped in conventional learning methods often hinder the implementation of these educational innovations. However, behind every challenge there is always an opportunity, and big changes often start with small actions. This principle is reflected in the phrase "Do small things with great love," which emphasizes the importance of sincerity and dedication in the face of limitations.

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Wamena begins with simple steps, such as forming small teams in schools and districts, organizing in-house training, and building a learning community between teachers. These steps, while seemingly small, have a huge impact in initiating change. With great love and commitment, each of these efforts has succeeded in opening up insights and motivating teachers to dare to try new methods that are more interactive and student-entered.

The successful implementation of the Independent Curriculum does not always require a large budget or massive government intervention. Through collaboration, creativity, and sincere dedication, teachers and principals can take the initiative to improve the quality of education, even in limited conditions. Ultimately, small acts done with love have the potential to create meaningful change for the future of education in Indonesia. Mother Teresa once said, "Do small things with great love", I understood and understood that statement was true. I complement his statement "Do small things with great love", because in that sincerity lies the power that can change the world, every small step we take with great love, can create meaningful changes. Because greatness is not measured by the magnitude of actions, but by the sincerity of heart in doing small things. Maybe for some people what they do is just a ridiculous and meaningless little thing, but for me, the small actions I make can at least open the horizons of thinking of the teachers I lead and also the teachers in Jayawijaya district.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Although the challenges in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Wamena are very complex, opportunities for improvement remain. By providing continuous training for teachers, creating teaching modules that are suitable for local conditions, and forming learning communities that encourage collaboration between teachers, the quality of

learning can be improved. These steps must be followed by a holistic approach, where infrastructure development, education office support, and adaptive education policies for 3T regions are priorities. Reflection on this situation shows that education in Wamena still has the potential to develop, as long as the support and concrete actions from various parties are carried out with strong focus and commitment. The implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Wamena is a great opportunity to create a more relevant education. The success of this curriculum depends on the extent to which the government and related parties can bridge the gap between central policies and real conditions on the ground. The Independent Curriculum can be an important instrument in realizing inclusive and quality education in Wamena, as well as providing new hope for the young generation of Papuans to develop their potential in the midst of limitations.

FURTHER RESEARCH

After I carried out the activity, there were things that needed to be the attention of the stakeholders. In the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Wamena, it is clear that there are big challenges that must be faced, both in terms of infrastructure and human resource readiness. The situation on the ground shows that many teachers are still using conventional learning methods and have not received sufficient training regarding this new curriculum. The implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Wamena is a revolutionary step in improving the quality of education in this region full of cultural diversity. With a flexible and adaptive approach, the Independent Curriculum provides space for students to learn according to their potential and interests, not limited to national standards alone. The Independent Curriculum is here to bridge the educational gap. Another challenge that can be seen is the change in the mindset of teachers, who are still stuck in the old mindset, where the one-way method of lecture and knowledge transfer dominates the classroom. This mindset transformation requires a long process and must be supported by proactive school leadership, as well as an open and adaptable mindset is the key in facing a new era of learning that is more dynamic and challenging.

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