

# **CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PROCESS OF EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN INDONESIA**

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## **WHY CRITICAL ANALYSIS ?**

There exists in Indonesia at this time several serious factors which we believe compel us to expend the maximum effort in formulating a thoroughgoing critical analysis of the educational system to serve as the basis for both an assessment of our current situation and to provide some direction for future developments in this field.

The first of these emerges from the fact that the world of education in Indonesia and in fact the social situation of the developing nations in general seems to have plunged us into the void between two worlds, the first of which is dying while the second confronts grave difficulties in its efforts to be born.

Education has become simultaneously an issue of both hope and despair, provoking optimism for social change to a better future and at the same time creating widespread scepticism and frustration. This very situation has fostered a psychological demand for critical analysis to assist in the search for certainties and answers.

The second reason is the sheer relevance of a critical analysis at this time coming as it does at the end of PELITA I (First Five-Year Development Plan) and on the eve of the adoption of PELITA II thereby enabling us to explore the successes and failures of the initial period to assist us in our preparations for a better PELITA II. Self-examination and self-criticism must form a component of any integrated effort towards progress and development. Being involved in the unceasing dialectic of history which moves along

within the unceasing tensions between dynamics and limitations we can never escape from a critical urgency. Courage and capacity in formulating critical analysis is a way to progress while paralysis of criticism will place us on the road to stagnation.

## **CHRONOLOGY AND CONTENT OF THE EDUCATIONAL REFORM**

The object of the present analysis will be the world of education in Indonesia, obviously a very vast and complicated issue being as it is a constitutive part of the process of shaping a modern Indonesia. Education has its own history in this country beginning from the early period of the *Musantara*-communities down to the present time, implying relevance to all the dimensions of the Indonesian society. It is therefore necessary to limit our scope of interest placing the focus of the analysis mainly on the policy of education in Indonesia during *PELITA I* with the hope of drawing up some notes and suggestions for the educational policy within the period of *PELITA II* and thereafter.

The main characteristic of the educational policy prevailing during the period of *PELITA I* has been reform with a new system of national education emerging as a common aspiration.

Efforts to redefine the policy of education, to realize plans for a new system and organization and to implement educational reform have represented the main activities. These areas have comprised in general such efforts as identifying the problems, planning the educational system, drawing up policies and drafting programmes and projects for educational reform. It was during the first years of *PELITA I* that a policy statement was promulgated by the Department of Education and Culture defining the general directions in which reform would be carried out.

Chronologically the current phase of educational development began in 1968 when Indonesia was entering her first *PELITA*, a plan in which education was given priority after all of the economic sectors.

It was in 1963 that a seminar was held to inquire into the underlying problems and prospects of education in Indonesia. The seminar formulated several basic proposals for reform including

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a general acceptance that any such reform must be based on thoroughgoing planning activities.

This latter point was felt to be particularly urgent given that within the 25 years of Indonesian independence the country had not it seemed managed to develop one consistently well planned strategy for national education. The prevailing education system was found to be both irrelevant to and dysfunctional for the rapidly changing demands and mounting expectations.

As a follow-up to the ideas for reform as stated by Mr. Mashuri, the then Minister for Education and Culture, an office of Educational Development known as Badan Pengembangan Pendidikan (B.P.P.) was installed through a Presidential Decree of 1969. This institution was enthusiastically supported by both UNESCO and UNDP the former of which has in fact provided consistent support for all moves towards educational reform.

In November 1970 a Basic Memorandum of Educational Policy was issued by the Minister of Education and Culture in which both the fundamentals and operational guidelines of the new educational policy were expounded.

It was on August 16, 1971, midway between the second year of PELITA I that President Soeharto reemphasized the importance of educational reform stating that the system as well as the structure of national education ought to be closely integrated with the efforts to work for progress and development. The President further stressed that the educational programmes ought to comprise of both short and long term objectives consisting of a strategy of rehabilitation and construction.

The main conclusions of the new policy on education crystalized step by step eventually dictating that Indonesia ought to develop a new system of education functionally integrated into the social development of the nation. The resultant Development Educational System (sistem Pendidikan Pembangunan) required that formal schooling took the form of a Development School (Sekolah Pembangunan).

Development Schools seemed the major issue in the following period with efforts and studies being directed to finding ways of defining and giving concrete structure to enable their realization.

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In 1971 a seminar was held in Jakarta to discuss the overall prospects and programs of the Development School while a second seminar in 1972 attempted to draw up more operative details.

It was formally expected that the new system could begin operating in 1974 to coincide with the beginning of PELITA II and that within a period of 10 years i.e. by 1984 that it would be operational throughout the country.

However, the process of educational reform met mounting obstacles particularly the growing confusion and controversy over the new system. These doubts had their impact upon the debates and discussions in the People's Consultative Assembly's (MPR) general sessions in 1973, however, this body laid down some decrees on the general outline of the educational policy which were implied in the Broad Lines of the State Policy.

In the same year Mr. Mashuri who had presented the idea of the new educational system was replaced by Prof. Sumantri Brodjonegoro who on the 2nd May 1973 in his first policy statement as the new Minister of Education and Culture emphasized that the process of reform was to be continued with the minimum of tension and sacrifice.

Much of Prof. Sumantri's attention was directed to elevating the social status of teachers, however, the last days of PELITA I were marked by his sudden departure leaving the world of education in Indonesia an as yet unanswered question on the eve of PELITA II.

Of more importance than the presentation of chronological data is an examination of the contents of the new educational policy in an effort to answer such questions as "what are its main objectives and basic assumptions?"

Any such attempt again meets with certain problems as the issues concerning its content appear to have developed and suffered from changes through time, however, certain key features can be identified.

In the first phase there were three main issues concerning the content of the new educational policy:

- a. There ought to be one system of national education;

- b. The system of education in Indonesia ought to be functionally integrated with efforts to work for social development.
- c. There ought to be a single administration for national education.

These three issues were meant to overcome the existing confusion, disfunctionality and irrelevancy of the educational system.

The next phase was especially directed towards efforts to realize these objectives implying involvement with the problems of *quid-quis-ubi-cur-quomodo-quando* of the new education. In short it was a period in which the macro-strategy of the educational system was disaggregated into its micro components implying efforts to redefine the new principles of education in operational terms, for planning the new curriculum, the new paedagogical approach, administrative construction, territorial planning, allocation of resources etc. Here the content of the new education was directed to meeting perceived qualitative, quantitative and administrative demands while at the same time ensuring its relevance to both the countries economic programmes and short and long term objectives while recognizing the need for minimum expenditure of human and financial resources and the prevalence of limited facilities.

It was to meet these demands while faced with the hard fact of resource scarcity that further formulations on education were drawn up namely that:

1. Education is to be considered as encompassing conscious efforts to develop human potential, to make the individual capable of developing his personality, of mastering the natural environment and of effecting social as well as cultural progress.
2. The new educational system adopts the principles of life long education. This means that the Indonesian society is to be transformed into a learning society as one educative community.
3. This life long education necessarily implies that education is implemented not only through formal but also non-formal schooling.
4. To meet the demands of social development as well as those presented by employment problems education ought to plan balance between vocational and academic streams.

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5. All of the above factors have their consequences in the organization of curricula and school administration.
6. As effective education depends very much on the teaching staff it is therefore of importance to raise the quality of teachers.
7. Education will be the responsibility of the whole society encompassing the government, parents and the community. This factor has consequences for the extinction of the existing conventional distinction between private and public schools hence the state's examination was abolished.
8. Educational financing is to be supported through collective sharing by the government, the family and the community.
9. Innovations in the educational system are to be carried out through several reform centres at which experimental pilot projects for the new system have already been tested, this role also explaining why the pilot projects are affiliated with eight teacher training colleges throughout Indonesia.
10. In the meantime efforts have been made to develop the Department of Education and Culture to make it capable of becoming a strategic centre to lead such innovations.
11. Emphasis has been placed on reforming the pre-University education with additional stress on the importance of non-formal education (i.e. adult education).

In 1972 the Department of Education issued a manual on educational reform outlining the basic considerations and main directions of the new policy. However, many areas were left undefined at a time when uncertainties remained unanswered and controversies were mounting up. Among these were questions centring on the structure of the schooling which was still being confusedly debated: was the 6—3—3 to be changed and the 8—4—4 pattern to be adopted? Discussions on the structure and the organization of non formal education, on continuous progress (to take the place of the conventional classroom pattern), were on the mode of operation. Not infrequently the new policy was obscurely accused of avoiding principle of socialization by giving too much attention to the qualitative aspect without adequately considering the quantitative demands of education. Controversies on priorities were also coming to the fore. The practical link between education and social development seemed still confused; this aspect

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encompassed questions on the relationship between the educational system and economic planning in general and employment planning in particular not only at the national but also at the more concrete regional levels. Not infrequently the presence of corrupt educational administrators (with widely confused systems of administration) particularly at the regional levels aroused great scepticism on the possible success of the reform plan.

It is not surprising that controversies over the philosophy of education were still coming to the fore in 1972. It appears logical that the system of national education is to be grafted from the spirit of the constitution and the Pancasila. The educational system has as its major objective the development of the Indonesian population to a level sufficient to utilize their human potentials as a tool to build their society, this goal of promoting those values and attitudes necessary to shape the Indonesian people into a creative national and social force must always be borne in mind. While it inevitably follows that the Indonesian population must be imbued with the national spirit realised through Pancasila-morality programmes, the crucial controversy here revolves around the respective roles of Pancasila-morality-instruction and religious instruction within the new system of education.

Finally some mention must be made of the crucially growing problem of educational finance for all social planning should be supported by its respective cost analysis and more importantly by its available budget. It has come to be realized that educational reform is facing serious financing problems and due largely to the prevailing scarcity of financial resources the state budget has made only a small allocation for education. This very fact has become one of the reasons for the controversy between an economic or non-economic approach which ultimately challenges the very assumptions of Indonesia's overall development planning.

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From the above discussion we can observe that while the process of educational reform appears to have been initiated with the hope of accelerated activity progress has in fact been retarded if not subject to total stagnation.

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At the outset educational reform represented a true movement encouraged by Government initiated aspirations and backed by widespread support. There was a common belief that 25 years of undefined educational policy had resulted in a social maladjustment encompassing ideological, economic, social, cultural and political distortions which the new political order was eager to rectify. Basic remedial measures were to be directed towards the primary element, the human factor, with education being the chosen weapon. Hence it should not be surprising that the emergence of the new order had logically stirred up demand for educational reform the enthusiasm for which could be seen through actions such as decree no XXVII of the People's Provisional Consultative Assembly (MPRS) which in 1968 stated that 25% of the state budget was to be spent for education.

As all social reform was to be based on planning it was only logical that the process immediately entered into the phase of planning activities; this consisted of efforts to define the macro strategy of reform as well as breaking it down into the details of its micro components. Simultaneously reform of the institutional structure was undertaken implying efforts to reorganize the basic pattern of educational administration throughout Indonesia generally and within the Department of Education and Culture in particular.

It was at this stage that dilemmas and controversies began to appear and the process of retardation became apparently unavoidable. Notwithstanding all attempts to arouse social participation in the process of reform, such actions could not help decrease the growing confusion.

### FACTORS UNDERLYING THE RETARDATION

It is ultimately necessary to analyse the factors underlying the process of retardation. Why is the reform retarded? Is educational reform bound to see failures? These were questions which entered many minds causing a type of general frustration and scepticism.

The crisis affecting the world of education does not seem to be limited to Indonesia alone. It is a world phenomenon, a part of the great crisis of humanity these days.



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Possibly the root cause is to be found in education itself as it continues to grow and become increasingly complicated. Naturally the deeper cause lies in humanity itself, man being the source and victim of all complicated problems. It has been in this century that people have come to look upon education as part of all social and cultural processes placing it in a position where it must continually attempt to meet the expanding political demands made upon it and adjust to relentless economic and social changes.

For the third world the problem of education has become obviously more serious and complicated changing from being the previously expected main road to progress and modernity to a critical dimension in the complex and vicious-circle-like social problems which characterize these regions.

Not infrequently the historical development of the existing educational policy is the cause of the difficulties as is the case in Indonesia. Education naturally has its early history in Indonesia, however, the so-called modern education began with the colonial period. When the colonial government planned its policy on education it naturally had its own assumptions, however, unfortunately it is that same educational system which has been adapted by the nation, even after gaining its political independence. In fact the late Ki Hadjar Dewantoro, the first Minister of Education and Culture, from the outset emphatically declared that the colonial system ought to be replaced by a new one, however, twenty-five years have shown only slight alterations and certainly nothing approaching fundamental reform.

In the first years of independence there was a popular conviction that education and schooling in particular was the symbol of modernization and freedom. This was the reason why the expansive approach to educational policy was adopted with schools being opened everywhere to meet the quantitative demand. It was realized too late that the expansion of education did not per se bring modernization and social progress.

A further factor adding to the serious problems associated with a quantitative or expansive approach is the emergence of a monolithic system with little attention being given to the urgent need for diversification. Hence we find a pattern emerging which is heavily dominated by general education with vocational training institutions remaining generally unknown.

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All of these factors are emerging in a country in which the population continues to expand uncontrollably encouraging a parallel expansion of education conducted without clearcut objectives or targets and without conscious planning to ensure its functionality and relevance.

A further phenomenon of some importance is the narrow philosophy of education adopted by the bulk of the population. Education is blindly identified with schooling strengthening the unpragmatic traditional value of associating schooling with status rather than with the acquisition of knowledge or skills which will have relevance for their lives. There is no life-orientated attitude to education but rather a popular preference for the natural value of education rather than for its real and pragmatic content.

All of the above factors have constituted fundamental weaknesses in the education system within her twenty-five years of independence and in addition to these we must also consider the political life of the nation since her independence.

It is generally known that Indonesia has suffered from a continuous inner power struggle. Politics play a dominant role in the country and each political group has been seeking tactical bases from which to attain their goals with education becoming one of the major tactical targets. This has had its consequences in that the world of education soon became involved in politics with all its associated conflicts and tensions resulting unfortunately in a deterioration in the educational function of shaping the Indonesian society. It is not only the infrastructure of education such as administration but also its content which has been widely corrupted while simultaneously the system of so-called national education has remained unimplemented.

It is clear that the general background of the existing educational policy up until the beginning of PELITA I had already become pregnant with retarding factors. The unplanned strategy of educational policy, its monolithic system, its narrow understanding of education, the existing traditional values, population explosion and politics are all factors which ought to be taken account of in the strategy of educational reform.

It is therefore very reasonable if the first step of the education policy is directed toward rehabilitation with macro formulations aimed at overcoming the above mentioned obstacles.

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We must also be aware of the existing factors which have caused the process of retardation within the period of PELITA I. Many of them are a natural continuation of past unsolved problems while others must be categorized as new, however, both are implied in the process of educational planning.

As mentioned above dilemmas and controversies began emerging in the period of planning activities. Obviously reform activities as well as planning will always be accompanied by dilemmas and consequent controversies such as those between old and new, between priorities for objectives etc. People will always be confronted with the problem of selecting and defining criteria, determining the value premises of reform and formulating means to ensure implementation, however, these factors are of particular significance for education given the goal of its integration into programmes for social development. Education is not only a matter of schooling or pedagogy but it is also unavoidably involved with politics, economic development, social problems requiring not only the refining of its philosophy but also the formulation of a concrete sociology of education and technology.

In the beginning controversies centred primarily around fundamental problematics such as educational objectives, however, these were soon followed by more practical problems such as the organizing of curricula, the system of schooling, patterns of education (vocational and academic), socialization of education, its administration etc.

It is possible to identify three types of controversies within the educational debate, firstly academic controversy, secondly controversy motivated by political interest and finally a mixture of these two factors.

Discussion and controversy over the premises of educational reform have brought into question the very assumptions of national development implying debate over priorities, approaches and financing. It is of course undeniable that these very assumptions play an important role in directing the reform activities within the educational sphere, however, it must be borne in mind that the main challenge to educational reform will be the need to secure the maximum results with the minimum of resource expenditure while all the time facing the reality of an unceasingly expanding population.

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The critical problem is that the policy cannot adopt the principle of *either* meeting the qualitative or the quantitative demand but must rather formulate a new educational system capable of answering both of these challenges. Naturally, national planning which does not give serious consideration to the problems of education will basically represent a retarding factor.

Added to all the above is the fact that the extended controversy over content and structure has made the education problem one of discussion rather than decisive action. The issues involved will become increasingly serious if the approach to education remains merely academic and scientific rather than being accepted as requiring solution at the social action levels.

Politics continue to remain a major obstacle to effective reform given its not infrequent disguised actions in the field of education. The most glaring controversy attributable to political motivations is that between the secularist and dogmatic approach to education. Following this is the continuing debate between the Pancasila Morality instruction and religious instruction. While operating under the pretext of a "quantitative approach" people discover political interests at the root of many conflicts.

A further factor must be mentioned if we are to fully discuss the causes of retardation, namely the question of leadership generally and educational leadership in particular. National education reform has failed to get the full support of vigorous educative forces, a fact often attributable to the prevailing administrative system.

News concerning anticipated reform has been spread throughout the country, however, this fails to arouse deep perception on the essence of such reform. The situation is continually deteriorating due in particular to the absence of a unified circle to lead the educational reform. In reality this is urgently needed since the social objectives to which the new education is to be functionally tied requires several fundamental structural as well as cultural changes.

It is rather utopian to expect schoolteachers and education administrators to manage the leadership of the process given that their conditions make them too weak to actively pursue such ideals.

It can be only too easily understood that to decrease the growing confusion is not a simple matter, the process of reform has been retarded while the content and structure of the new system remains undetermined.

However, we should not say that the educational policy during PELITA I has consisted of nothing but failures. The policy has succeeded in laying down the macro strategy particularly in redefining the educational principles and objectives while at the same time establishing several institutions to plan and experiment with the new system. The policy has correctly defined the communitarian operative principle namely that education will be the task and responsibility of the whole community. The mounting demands for education can only be met by unified educative forces.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

All social analysis is by nature policy directed in the sense that it is aimed at acquiring expected social conditions. It is therefore of particular importance that we begin these final remarks by stating the basic assumptions used as value premises in this analysis.

Logically we should begin from the very problem of national development. If education is to be integrated into the demands of development then it appears quite clear that educational planning will always presuppose the assumptions and approaches of social planning in general. Questions concerning the integration of education into social development need no further discussion since it is assumed to be sufficiently clear.

The very assumptions and approach to social development will logically define the role of education in overall development as well as the objectives and projects to be attained through educational programmes. If the planning of social development gives insufficient weight to education then logically all are blameless when little attention is paid to it, however, the discussion should not stop at the logic of the arguments but should rather analyse the premises themselves, that is the very assumptions of social development.

In the author's opinion the role and importance of education in social development is irrefutable. Any social development will depend on two determinants: the development of the "within human resources" and the development of the "without human resources". The Javanese thesis which states that man is the *sangkan paran*

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of social progress and development appears quite relevant, man is both the efficient and final cause of progress and development. We must add to this that here we understand man in his concrete situation involved with his world and history, all these factors are the basic determinants of social development.

The acquisition of the desired goals of social development will radically depend upon the human factor i.e. population; it therefore follows logically and is highly relevant that national development should be based on the existing population policy. However, this should not be understood in too strictly conventional manner including only arrangement of absolute numbers but must also encompass the promotion of the existing population to ensure that they become a creative and accelerative force for social development, that is structural as well as cultural development. In this context I am prone to suggest that national development ought to be supported and even initiated with, a clear and distinct cultural policy. By cultural policy I mean all those efforts to develop all those values and attitudes, all those intellectual developments (both theoretical and practical) through which man is made capable of developing his personality, and together with his fellow citizens is able to master all natural resources as well as organizing the social life. Education is both the inherent factor and function of all cultural development.

It therefore becomes clear that cultural and education policies have a strategic function in the process of development as they are particularly directed at development of the "within human resources". It has also become evident that a failure to define clearcut objectives in the planning of national development in general will have its impact on the process of education.

If these assumptions are accepted then we must take the further step of defining the educational policy in its *stricto sensu*.

The main thesis of the education policy in Indonesia appears to be to get the maximum possible effect from cultural and educational programmes with the minimum use of resources at a time when the population is not only expanding rapidly but is also involved in meeting the challenges and demands of social progress. This means that a system must be found which is capable of meeting both the qualitative and quantitative demands and is also flexible enough to adjust to the changing demands of history.

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It seems only logical therefore that a wider philosophy of education must be adopted in which education is not merely identified with formal schooling (although this will still have its strategic function) but will include a more diversified pattern of education which must become the responsibility of the whole community.

We must understand Indonesia not only in terms of *communitas politica* and *communitas demographica* but Indonesia, particularly in these times, must also be understood as *communitas economica* and *communitas educativa*.

This means that the crisis and challenge of education are to be met by the entire community as one educative force and by all the educative forces in the society. The policy of etatism is to be avoided.

Here then is the importance of politics. If there is no political stability (whether disguised or undisguised), and as long as education remains a tactical target for political conflicts, the crisis and challenges of education will never be surmounted. Education is expected to have its function and relevance in the political life of the future, however, the expected reform of education will depend on the prevailing political situation. Commitment to education as well as to the national interest is a prerequisite. Distractive conditions in the Indonesian society will always be one of the basic obstacles in the world of education. Politics will continue to have its impact on educational reform as all policy efforts must be founded upon a definite nation-wide political back up. Politically speaking the 1945 constitution should be accepted as the primary model of social development and hence also the primary model of educational planning.

The progress of our discussion has now reached a factor of decisive importance, leadership. National efforts to materialize social development, particularly in the third world, will always be in need of leadership capable of motivating and directing social changes towards social development. There should be a close link between leadership in both political and cultural life; educational administration, being an infrastructural basis of education, ought therefore to be accommodated with new demands and both their own conditions and those of teachers elevated. Naturally a leadership capable of inviting social participation is of importance.

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The content of the new education must then be defined — this is the problem of pedagogy — or that of agogy — in particular, a factor we fear which is all too often forgotten given its basic importance in culturally and structurally reforming the population. It ought to be remembered that this pedagogical approach must be understood in its pragmatic sense, not as a matter for academic discussion but rather of action, of agogy.

Experimentation with new educational techniques must be conducted in the light of solving national problems and not fall victim to the possibility of becoming mere scientific exercises. Educational centres both public and private must take part in educational leadership and then hopefully the current state of growing confusion can then be overcome.

In the field of educational financing developments will be the result of many factors including whether cultural and educational factors are considered as of importance in overall planning, the allocated budget and the presentation of realizable programs by educational planners.

In determining the emphasis of reform I believe great weight should be given to pre-university formal schooling as this will make the realization of a more diversified system more readily determinable, secondly, non-formal education should be widely organized within a definite system designed to meet the problems of socialization, unemployment etc. Naturally this presupposes the existing social planning, including unemployment planning, as well as regional construction.

To conclude the analysis I would like to re-emphasize that national development is essentially a process of acculturation. To materialize national development plans we need a well planned acculturation and at the same time leadership capable of creating acculturative process. Population is one of the strategic factors of national development and it is therefore absolutely imperative that we develop a cultural policy with a view to developing the population to be an acculturative force, and in this role we cannot deny the importance of education, we cannot escape from the challenges of social demands and of history. With a minimum of



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resources, facing rising expectations, mounting social demands and the challenges of history we must construct a system to maximize the possible effect of any cultural and education policy i.e. to make the population become the strategic acculturative force. This appears to be the core of the cultural as well as the educational strategy in Indonesia now and hereafter.

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