

Independent Evaluation of Learning Assistance Program for Islamic Schools (LAPIS) MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

Aid Activity Summary

Aid Activity Name	Learning Assistance Program for Islamic Schools (LAPIS)		
AidWorks initiative number	INF817 (DCP Grant)		
Commencement date	January 2005	Completion date	June 2010
Total Australian \$	\$34,902,203.54		
Total other \$	\$0		
Delivery organisation	Cardno Emerging Markets Pty Ltd		
Implementing Partner	Directorate of Madrasah Education, Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA),		
Country/Region	Indonesia		
Primary Sector	Education		

Aid Activity Objective:

The Learning Assistance Program for Islamic Schools (LAPIS) aims to contribute to improved quality in Islamic basic education in Indonesia. The program commenced in January 2005. As a result of an Evaluability Assessment finalised in December 2008, the objectives of the program were subsumed into five common outcome areas as follows:

1. Improved performance of school students.
2. Improved performance of school teachers.
3. Improved performance of school personnel.
4. Improved performance and involvement of support agency personnel
5. Improved performance and involvement of community members

The program was due for completion on 30 June 2010, however, as a result of schedule changes related to the launch of Australia's new Education Partnership with Indonesia, LAPIS is now scheduled for completion on 30 June 2011. Under the extension phase three common outcomes have been defined:

1. Enhanced capacity of support agencies to provide quality education services in the Islamic Basic education sub-sector.
2. Enhanced capacities of Madrasah communities to manage and provide quality education
3. Enhanced capacities of local networks to improve their *Madrasah* communities.

Key activities

Over the life of the program a range of activities were undertaken as follows:

1. *Innovation activities*: small grants activities worth up to \$50,000 each. LAPIS received and supported proposals for innovative ideas from *Madrasah* communities and civil society organisations. There were two proposal selection cycles each year; around 10 activities approved each cycle.
2. *Consolidation activities*: medium-scale activities identified from Innovation activities and scaled-up to subproject level. They comprised:
 - a. PGMI: an activity to improve the capacity of support agencies to deliver teacher training programs for primary school teachers.
 - b. ELTIS: a basic English language training activity for junior secondary school teachers.
 - c. ELOIS: promotion of equality of learning outcomes for girls and boys in primary and junior secondary schools.

3. *Integration activities*: designed to enhance cohesion and impact of all LAPIS activities at school level; these addressed some common issues that impedes delivery of basic education in *Madrasah*. Capacity building was directed towards a select number of *Madrasah* and locations, targeted towards helping *Madrasah* meet the national education standards so that they could fulfil accreditation requirements.

AusAID decided to take an innovative approach that became known as 'the LAPIS Model', which could be said to be a hybrid between a project, a program and a facility. While LAPIS operated under an agreement with Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA) Directorate of Madrasah Education (MAPENDA), it always worked 'with government, not through government'.

During the life of the program 983 Islamic schools, 161,000 students and 15,200 teachers have participated in program activities aimed at improving the quality of education.

Key activities during the LAPIS extension phase (30 June 2010 to 30 June 2011) will focus on on *Madrasah* accreditation. The work under this extension was not the subject of this ICR.

Independent Evaluation Summary

Evaluation Objective:

The objectives of the independent evaluation as per the terms of reference were to: (i) assess to what extent program objectives have been achieved; and (ii) draw out valuable lessons to assist with the planning for the implementation of the Islamic School Accreditation component of the forthcoming Education Partnership. The terms of reference focused on four key evaluation questions as follows:

1. Effectiveness: Have LAPIS program objectives been achieved?
2. Lessons: What lessons from LAPIS can be applied to the planning and implementation of the Islamic School Accreditation component of the Education Partnership?
3. Program approach: How appropriate were LAPIS' approaches?
4. Monitoring and evaluation: Does evidence exist to show that objectives have been achieved?

Evaluation Completion Date:

The evaluation process started with five days of desk study and evaluation plan development (5 – 12 May 2010). The fieldwork was conducted over nine days (17 – 25 May 2010). The Aide Memoire was presented to MoRA on 27 May 2010. The evaluator was provided with three days for data processing and four days for drafting the report (29 May – 7 June 2010). The Final Report was submitted on 15 July 2010. In line with the requirement for a rapid evaluation, the M&E specialist used qualitative methods; specifically key informant interviews, focus group discussions, field observations and document reviews.

Evaluation Team:

The evaluation was conducted by Paul Crawford (M&E Specialist). AusAID Jakarta (the Program Manager and Program Officer responsible for LAPIS, and a representative from Performance & Quality Unit) provided necessary support to facilitate the evaluation process.

Summary of the Evaluation's Findings:

- Relevance: LAPIS activities were generally perceived as valuable and demand-driven. LAPIS was found to have contributed to AusAID's support for the Indonesian education sector and aligned with MoRA's strategy to improve the quality of education in private *Madrasah*.
- Effectiveness: Beyond achieving the objectives of the individual activities, LAPIS also achieved its implicit aim of establishing Australian credibility in the Islamic education subsector. LAPIS' effectiveness was also reflected in the high quality of work done and comprehensive approach to capacity building. There was minimal investment in school management capacity, which remains a recognised weakness across the Islamic education subsector.
- Efficiency: LAPIS was implemented on time and within budget. LAPIS was also responsive and flexible to AusAID's changing priorities and requirements.

- Impact: The ELTIS and PGMI components of LAPIS were found to be potentially scalable although input-dependent. ELOIS, Integration and Innovation activities were found to be limited in their scalability.
- Sustainability: LAPIS was positioned outside institutional structures, which avoided bureaucratic hurdles and enabled early success, but hindered the development of sustainability, such as ensuring maintenance, use and development of products and processes.
- Gender: LAPIS addressed gender equity both through a dedicated component (ELOIS) and as a crosscutting theme. In addition to being a stand-alone project, ELOIS supported the other LAPIS components (ELTIS, PGMI and Integration activities) with gender and inclusion training and resources.
- M&E: LAPIS' commitment to good practice M&E was reflected in the significant investment in M&E throughout the life of the program. However the engagement of multiple M&E Advisers for different components was inefficient and contributed to 'evaluability' concerns.

Management Response

The typical profile of pupils in Islamic schools is that of a child of poor parents living in a rural or remote area, disadvantaged by the low quality of education provided. In response to this development challenge, AusAID designed LAPIS that aimed to improve the quality of basic education in Islamic schools in Indonesia. At the time of LAPIS' commencement, there were only a few donors that had had long-standing engagement within the Islamic schools sub-sector. The assistance provided by these donors was largely targeted at individual project partners (such as individual Madrasah and Islamic universities), and did not focus on the demand of related activities such as curriculum development, teacher training, materials supply and school administration.

In improving Islamic schools' quality, LAPIS had an explicit objective of relationship building with moderate leaders and institutions who were willing to work to improve Islamic schools. Besides becoming LAPIS partners, those moderate leaders and institutions could also be a force for peace and stability. LAPIS assistance therefore worked to improve Islamic school quality through institutional capacity building, working with Indonesian government, moderate Islamic organisations and civil societies. It will be fundamental to the success of the Islamic school accreditation component of the Education Partnership for this approach to be continued.

AusAID's M&E technical panel agreed that the LAPIS ICR report has done a good job of providing a coherent and empirical evaluation within constrained resources. AusAID will utilise the ICR's recommendations in supporting Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA) in finalising their madrasah accreditation framework and in developing AusAID's implementation strategy for the Islamic school accreditation component.

AusAID agrees with all but one of the recommendations.

AusAID partially agrees with team's last recommendation that AusAID's future assistance should include school management capacity development as a component of any future assistance; this should include entrepreneurship training to foster independence.

AusAID agrees that school management capacity remains a recognised weakness across the Islamic education sub-sector and should be included in the Islamic School Accreditation component of the Education Partnership. However, AusAID would need to consult with Islamic education stakeholders in determining the inclusion of entrepreneurship training within the new program. AusAID's support for entrepreneurship policy formulation will be provided through the Education Partnership's Analysis and Capacity Development Partnership