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Institutional Development Strategies of the Ciamis District Education Office: A Study on the Achievement of School Life Expectancy Rates

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Abstract

This study is motivated by the ongoing ineffectiveness in institutional development of education services within the Ciamis Regency Education Office, particularly concerning the achievement of the Expected Years of Schooling indicator. This issue is evident in the relatively low increase in the average years of schooling. Therefore, this research aims to analyze institutional development strategies for the Ciamis Regency Education Office. Adopting a qualitative approach, this study employs a descriptive method. Data were collected through observation, interviews, literature review, and focus group discussions (FGDs), while the data analysis utilized Miles and Huberman's interactive model of qualitative analysis. The findings reveal that institutional capacity development efforts by the Ciamis Regency Education Office, aimed at improving the average years of schooling as a means to achieve the Expected Years of Schooling target, have generally been implemented in accordance with established goals. However, in qualitative terms, the improvement remains relatively low. The root causes of the low average years of schooling include limited access to both formal and informal education services—particularly for low-income or impoverished populations—and the suboptimal implementation of equivalency education programs (Packages A, B, and C), largely due to insufficient funding. The recommended strategies to address these issues include capacity development at the individual level, at the organizational level, and at the environmental level.

Keywords: *Institutional Development, Expected Years of Schooling, Average Years of Schooling.*

INTRODUCTION

Education development is one of the top priorities in the national development agenda. It is considered crucial due to its significant role in driving progress across various spheres of life, including the social, economic, political, and cultural domains. Consequently, the government holds the responsibility to ensure every citizen's right to access education services, as mandated by the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, which substantively obligates the state to promote intellectual advancement and general welfare. This

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constitutional mandate underscores education as a fundamental pillar necessary for the nation's future progress. Moreover, education is regarded as essential preparation for navigating the global era and as a prerequisite for nations striving to succeed in global competition. The fulfillment of the right to quality basic education serves as an indicator of justice and equity in the distribution of development outcomes, while simultaneously representing a vital investment in human resources. For these reasons, education sector development has been prioritized as a key component of human capital development.

In line with the aforementioned context, Law Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System mandates that every citizen aged 7 to 15 years is required to complete basic education. This mandate is reflected in Article 34, paragraphs (2) and (3), which state: "The central and regional governments shall ensure the provision of compulsory education at least at the basic education level free of charge," and "Compulsory education is the responsibility of the state and shall be implemented by educational institutions run by the government, regional governments, and the community."

As a consequence of this mandate, both the central and regional governments are obligated to provide educational services for all school-age children at the basic education level (elementary and junior secondary schools) as well as other equivalent educational units (Ministry of National Education, 2010). In addition to formal education services, Indonesia also offers non-formal and informal education pathways, such as equivalency programs (Kejar Paket) designed to provide educational access for individuals who are unable to participate in formal schooling due to various constraints

Referring to Government Regulation Number 6 of 2008 on Guidelines for Evaluating the Implementation of Regional Government, this regulation serves as a key leverage for realizing regional government capacity. It mandates that local governments respond to performance evaluation outcomes by implementing capacity-building programs. Based on this regulation, the improvement of local governance is directed toward three main aspects: policy framework, institutional development, and human resources. This aligns with Milen (2016:14), who asserts that institutional development efforts must focus on three levels: capacity at the individual level, capacity at the organizational level, and capacity at the environmental level

Institutional development is intended to be implemented across all components, from the smallest units to the systemic level, ultimately aiming to establish a high-quality and effective government. This notion is consistent with the essence of a previous study conducted by Miroljub Shukarov and Kristina Maric titled "The Role of Institutional Development in Education System: R&D and Innovation and their Impact on Economic Growth." The study concluded that "The research findings indicate to the fact that institutionalized society with higher degree of institutional development in this case in the educational system is more likely to boost the economic growth. The results also

indicate to the fact that societies in which the degree of institutional development is higher, as it is in our case in Slovenia and Bulgaria, are more likely to produce well qualified and skilled labour force which will further impact the economic growth." The achievement of quality education services is inseparable from the availability of resources, strategic program planning, and strong stakeholder support—all of which must be optimized to produce meaningful outcomes.

The 2020 Human Development Report published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) states that Indonesia ranked 107th out of 189 countries worldwide, placing it in the High Human Development category. Within Southeast Asia, Indonesia ranked fifth among eleven countries in terms of its Human Development Index (HDI) level (UNDP, 2020).

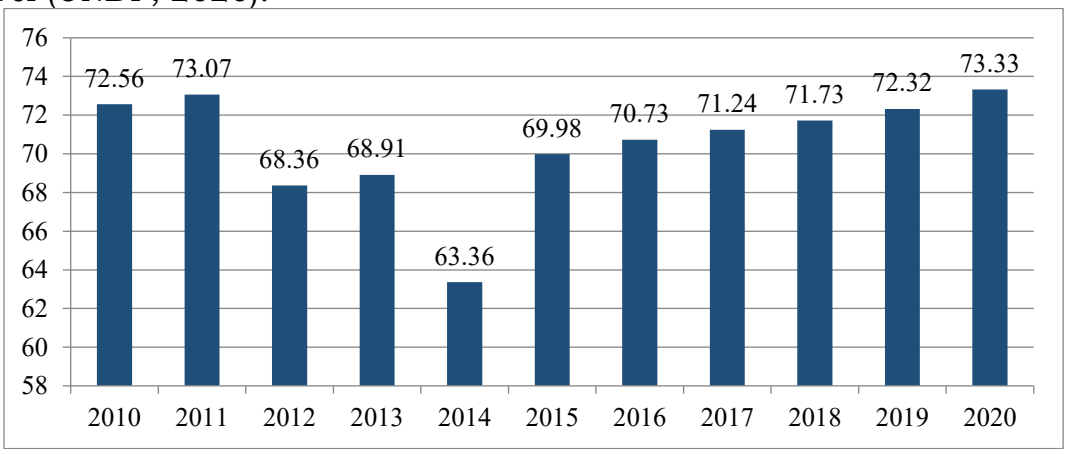

Figure 1 Human Development Index in Indonesia 2010-2020

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics (2022)

Indonesia's human development experienced notable growth during the decade from 2010 to 2020. The Human Development Index (HDI) rose from 66.53 in 2010 to 71.92 in 2019, with an average annual increase of approximately 0.87 percent. However, the COVID-19 pandemic affected the pace of human development in Indonesia. In 2020, the HDI reached 71.94, reflecting a minimal increase of 0.02 percent—significantly slower compared to previous years. As a result, the average annual HDI growth over the 2010–2020 period adjusted to 0.78 percent (BPS, 2020)

The knowledge or education dimension of the population is measured using two key indicators: the Expected Years of Schooling (EYS) and the Mean Years of Schooling (MYS). The Expected Years of Schooling (EYS) represents the estimated duration of formal education that a child of a certain age can expect to receive in the future. The trends in both EYS and MYS in Ciamis Regency are illustrated in the graph below:

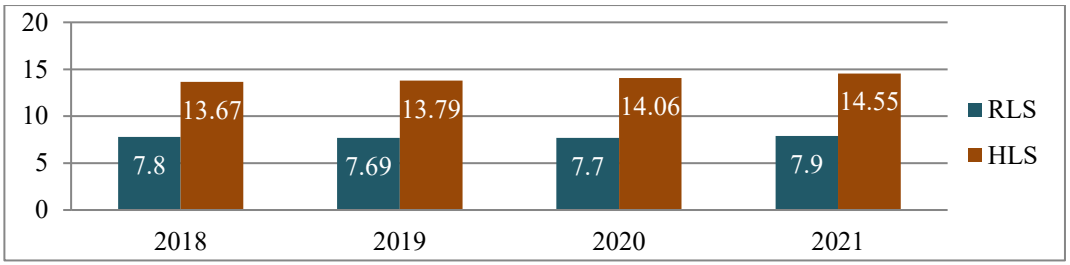

Figure 2 Expected Years of Schooling (HLS) and Average Years of Schooling (RLS) i n Ciamis Regency

Source: Ciamis Regency Education Office (2022)

The Expected Years of Schooling (EYS) in Ciamis Regency showed an upward trend from 2018 to 2021. However, this increase was not matched by a significant improvement in the Mean Years of Schooling (MYS), which rose by only approximately 0.2 points. In 2018, the MYS stood at 7.08 years, indicating that, on average, residents of Ciamis Regency had only completed education up to the first or second year of junior secondary school (SMP), and many had not yet graduated. The progression of educational attainment in Ciamis Regency is further illustrated in the following graph:

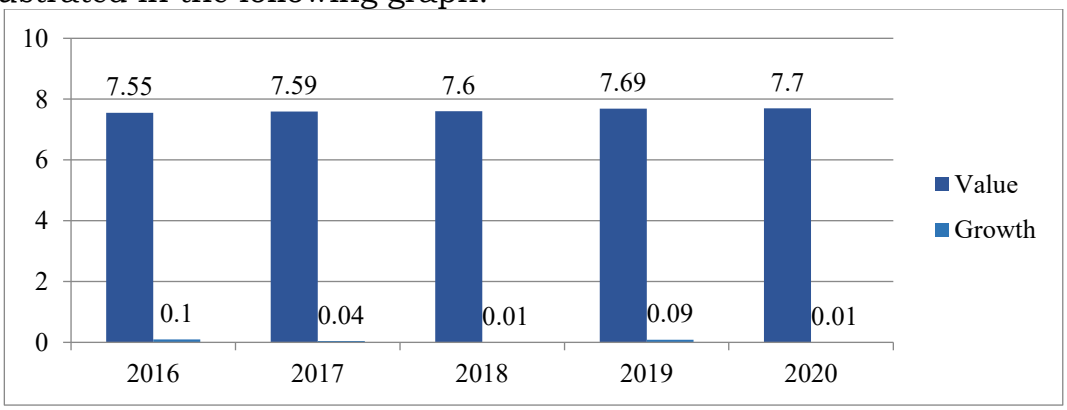

Figure 3 Growth of RLS Ciamis 2016-2020

Source: Ciamis Regency Education Office (2022)

The low Mean Years of Schooling (MYS) should not be assessed based on current Gross Enrollment Rates (GER) or Net Enrollment Rates (NER), as MYS specifically measures the educational attainment of the population aged 25 years and above. Therefore, the government's responsibility lies in increasing the MYS by encouraging individuals aged 25 and older to complete their basic education.

Based on the data and discussion above, it is evident that the Mean Years of Schooling (MYS) in Ciamis Regency remains relatively low. This condition is presumed to be linked to several factors: the suboptimal contribution of human resources in delivering equivalency education services, the ineffective communication and coordination among local government agencies (OPDs), the limited engagement of stakeholders in raising public awareness, the weak coordination between non-formal education institutions and village/sub-district governments, inadequate policy support in positioning equivalency education as a top priority, and the lack of effective collaboration and stakeholder participation with local communities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In general, the concept of capacity strengthening can be understood as a process of building the capacities of individuals, groups, or organizations (Satibi, 2012). Institutional capacity strengthening may also be defined as efforts to enhance the capabilities of individuals, groups, or organizations, as reflected in the development of skills, talents, potential, and competencies—enabling them to adapt and respond effectively to rapid and unpredictable changes (Walters, 2007). Institutional capacity strengthening can be viewed as a creative process aimed at developing latent or untapped capacities.

Human resource development (HRD) serves as a fundamental infrastructure that supports the realization of good governance. Given this strategic significance, both organizational structure and human resource development strategies must be improved. Such improvements are essential to fully benefit from the development of all organizational aspects, which requires a structure that facilitates continuous learning processes. One effective approach to achieving this is through institutional capacity building. This aligns with Grindle's (1980) perspective, which defines capacity building as "intended to encompass a variety of strategies that have to do with increasing the efficiency, effectiveness, and responsiveness of government performance" (Grindle, 1980). Capacity building can thus be interpreted as an effort to strengthen the capacities of individuals, groups, or organizations through the development of skills, competencies, talents, and potential—enabling them to remain resilient and capable of responding to rapid and unforeseen changes. From another perspective, Morgan, as cited in Milen (2001), states that "capacity development refers to the ability, skills, understanding, attitudes, values, relationships, behavior, motivation, resources, and conditions that enable individuals, organizations, networks, and broader systems to carry out their functions and achieve their goals over time" (Milen, 2001).

Capacity development is closely related to strategies for organizing inputs and processes to achieve optimal outputs and outcomes, as well as managing feedback as a basis for continuous improvement in subsequent stages. The strategy for managing inputs refers to an institution's ability to provide various types, quantities, and quality of both human and non-human resources, ensuring their availability when needed. Meanwhile, the feedback management strategy pertains to the organization's capacity to implement ongoing improvements by evaluating achieved results, identifying weaknesses or deficiencies in inputs and processes, and undertaking concrete corrective actions by adapting to environmental changes (Haryanto, 2014).

The aforementioned view aligns with Yap's (2018) perspective, which states that "Capacity building usually is understood to mean helping governments, communities and individuals to develop the skills and expertise needed to achieve their goals. Capacity building programs, often designed to strengthen participants' abilities to evaluate their policy choices and implement decisions effectively, may

include education and training, institutional and legal reforms, as well as scientific, technological, and financial assistance" (Yap, 2018).

Based on the above explanation, it can be concluded that capacity building is an effort aimed at enhancing the capabilities of personnel (human resources) to achieve organizational goals by effectively implementing decisions through the improvement of understanding, skills, and competencies. Institutional development, in this context, follows its own distinct approach, enabling capacity enhancement at the individual, systemic, or organizational level, and typically involves several general stages of implementation.

According to Gandara (2008), the stages or phases of institutional capacity development involve four key factors: (1) Collective Commitments, (2) Conducive Leadership, (3) Institutional Reform, and (4) Strengthening of Existing Strengths and Addressing Weaknesses. These elements are considered significant in ensuring the effectiveness and sustainability of institutional capacity development efforts.

Institutional capacity is generally understood as an effort to assist governments, communities, or individuals in developing the skills and expertise necessary to achieve their objectives (Lundqvist & Biel, 2021). Institutional capacity strengthening programs are fundamentally designed to enhance the ability to evaluate policy choices and implement decisions effectively (Healey, 2022). Institutional capacity encompasses the resources, knowledge, and processes utilized by an organization to fulfill its goals (DeCorby-Watson et al., 2018).

In line with this, Milen (2001:14) emphasizes that institutional development should focus on three key levels:

1. Capacity at the individual level; capacity at the individual level includes knowledge, skills, value, attitude, health, awareness, etc. It can be developed through various ways such as formal, non-formal and/or informal education, training, on-the-job training (OJT), independent reading, etc. In the context of organizational development, it is also referred to as human resources development (DeCorby-Watson et al., 2018).
2. Capacity at the organization level; it refers to anything that will influence an organization's performance and includes: human resources (capacities of individuals in the organization); physical resources (facilities, equipment, materials, etc.); intellectual resources (organization strategy, production technology, program management, process management (problem solving skills, decision-making process, communications); inter-institutional linkage incentive and reward systems; organizational culture and leadership of managers (Healey, 2022).
3. Capacity at the environment level; this includes systems and frameworks necessary for the formation/implementation of policies and strategies beyond an individual organization. There are various dimensions on environment such as administrative, legal, technological, political, economic, social, cultural, etc. (Lundqvist & Biel, 2021).

The aforementioned capacity development is fundamentally aimed at enhancing the efficiency, effectiveness, and responsiveness of institutional performance in achieving organizational goals (Elbarky, Abdrabo, & Hassaan, 2024). At the individual level, capacity development focuses on the recruitment, deployment, and utilization of personnel who are both managerially and technically competent. Key activities include recruitment systems, employee competency mapping, training, placement, work environment management, incentive systems, and performance evaluation mechanisms (DeCorby-Watson et al., 2018).

At the organizational level, institutional strengthening targets the improvement of management instruments to enhance the performance of functions and tasks across all organizational lines, including the refinement of micro-level structures (Healey, 2022). Activities include restructuring organizational frameworks, revising work mechanisms, improving decision-making processes, strengthening internal and external communication systems (communication networks), leadership systems, incentive systems, and the optimal use of personnel (Elbarky et al., 2024).

At the environmental level, reform is directed toward policy transformation—altering the "rules of the game" within the institutional framework to facilitate the effective and efficient achievement of goals (Lundqvist & Biel, 2021).

Conceptually, the theory proposed by Milen (2001) appears to be highly relevant to the context of the present study. Therefore, the stages of institutional development as outlined by Milen will be employed as an analytical framework to explore the problem landscape under investigation. This theoretical foundation is consistent with recent scholarly perspectives that stress the need for multi-level capacity frameworks in analyzing public sector reforms (Brinkerhoff & Morgan, 2020).

To illustrate the relationship between the research focus and Milen's institutional development theory, the researcher presents the following research paradigm, which is aligned with empirical studies that emphasize institutional dynamics as a crucial driver of development performance, especially in decentralized systems (Andrews, Pritchett, & Woolcock, 2017; Ang, 2020), the researcher presents the following research paradigm:

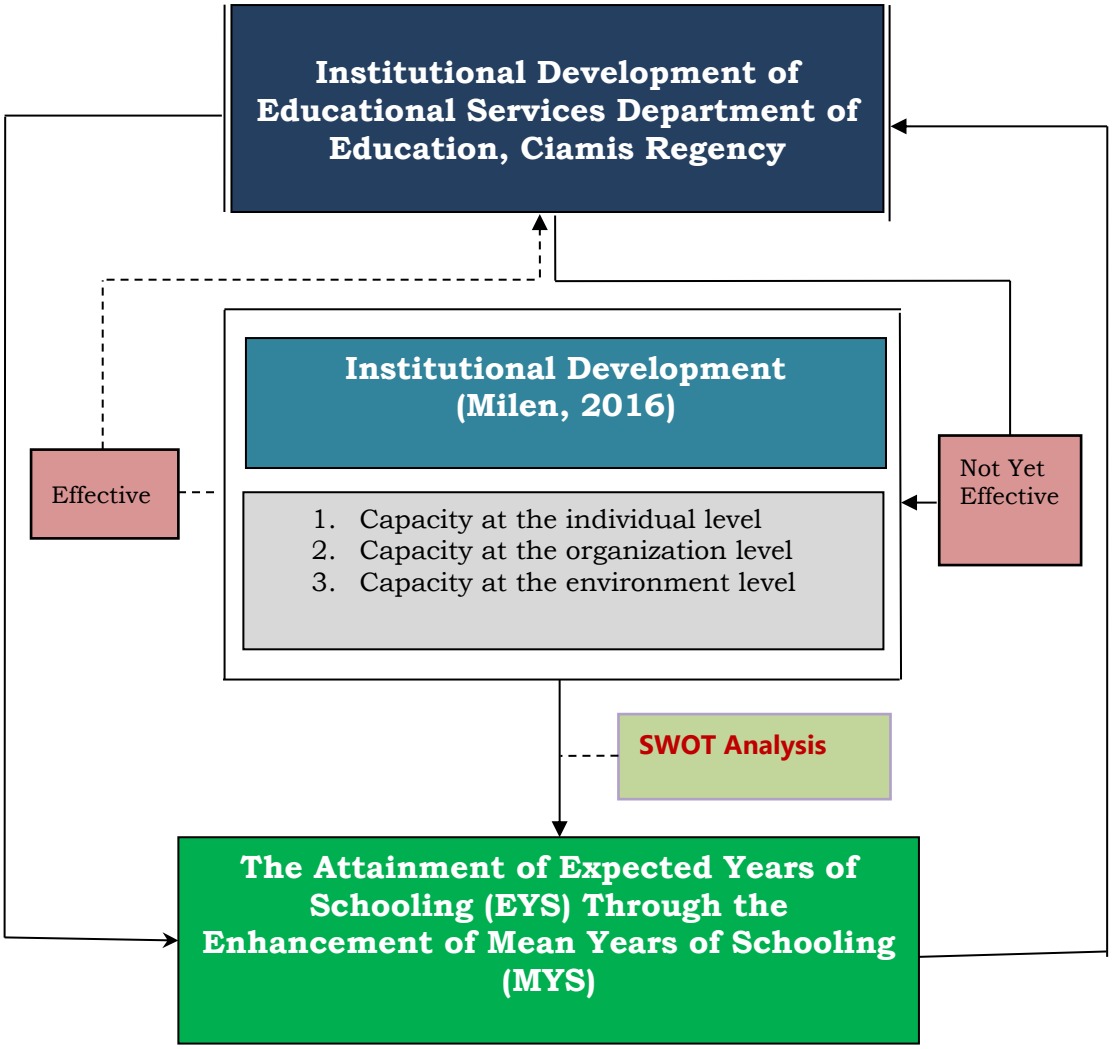

Figure 4 Research Thinking Framework

METHOD

The research method employed is descriptive analysis with a qualitative research approach. Data collection was conducted through observations, interviews, literature studies, and focus group discussions (FGD). The informants in this study, who provided key information, include: the Regional Secretary of Ciamis Regency, the Head of Bappeda, the Head of the Department of Education, the Head of the Department of Community Empowerment and Village Affairs, the Head of the Population and Civil Registration Office, the Head of the Central Statistics Agency, subdistrict heads, village heads, academics, and community leaders. Data analysis was carried out using qualitative data analysis through the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (1992).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Overview of the Human Development Index (HDI) in Ciamis Regency

The report published by UNDP in 1990 not only introduced the concept and definition of human development but also provided a framework for measuring it. This measurement framework is known as the Human Development Index (HDI). In its report, UNDP explained how people can access the outcomes of development in the form of income, health, education, and other aspects of life. The report introduced three core dimensions of the Human Development Index: longevity and a healthy life, knowledge, and a decent standard of living. These dimensions are represented by four key indicators used in calculating the HDI: Life Expectancy at Birth (LEB), Literacy Rate, Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER), and per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The index is calculated using an aggregation method, specifically the arithmetic mean (UNDP, 1990).

In 2010, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) introduced revisions to the calculation of the Human Development Index (HDI) while maintaining the same three core dimensions. However, changes were made to the indicators used, namely: (1) the aggregation of Literacy Rate and Gross Enrollment Ratio was replaced by the aggregation of Mean Years of Schooling (MYS) and Expected Years of Schooling (EYS); and (2) the indicator of per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was replaced with per capita Gross National Income (GNI). Additionally, the aggregation method for calculating the HDI shifted from the arithmetic mean to the geometric mean, addressing concerns about substitutability among dimensions (Klugman, Rodríguez, & Choi, 2011).

The education dimension of the HDI is represented by two indicators: Expected Years of Schooling (EYS) and Mean Years of Schooling (MYS), both reflecting the population's access to education. EYS represents the expected number of years a child entering the education system at age seven will spend in formal education, while MYS reflects the average number of years individuals aged 25 and above have spent in formal schooling. EYS is calculated based on the population aged seven and older, whereas MYS is based on individuals aged 25 and above, assuming that most formal education is completed by this age. EYS serves as a short-term indicator of educational achievement, while MYS functions as a long-term development output indicator. Together, these indicators offer a comprehensive picture of the progress and quality of human resource development across regions (Barro & Lee, 2013).

From 2010 to 2020, both indicators—Expected Years of Schooling (EYS) and Mean Years of Schooling (MYS)—showed a consistent upward trend. However, from 2014 to 2020, the growth rate began to slow down. Between 2010 and 2014, the increase was 0.31 percent (equivalent to 0.04 years), while from 2014 to 2020, the increase was only 0.23 percent (equivalent to 0.03 years). The rise in EYS in 2020

was influenced by the increase in School Participation Rates (SPR) across all age groups, including those aged 7–12, 13–15, 16–18, and 19–24 years. Naturally, the improvement in MYS is closely related to the increase in SPR within the 19–24 age group. In this regard, efforts to enhance the education dimension should focus on increasing the SPR of the 19–24 age group, as it can simultaneously boost both the Expected Years of Schooling and the Mean Years of Schooling indicators (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2020).

According to Statistics Indonesia (BPS), Indonesia's Human Development Index (HDI) in 2022 grew by 0.86%, an improvement from 0.49% in 2021 and significantly better than the minimal growth of 0.03% in 2020, which was largely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The highest HDI achievement in 2020 was recorded in the Special Capital Region of Jakarta (80.77), while the lowest was in Papua Province (60.44). Compared to the national average, West Java Province's HDI in 2020 was 72.09, placing it in the "high HDI" category, with an average annual growth of 0.86% from 2010 to 2020. For that year, the Expected Years of Schooling (EYS) stood at 12.05 years, while the Mean Years of Schooling (MYS) was 8.55 years (BPS, 2021).

Similar to the variations among provinces, HDI achievements across districts and cities in 2020 also varied. A total of 22 districts/cities (4.28%) were categorized as "low," 267 districts/cities (51.95%) as "medium," 189 districts/cities (36.77%) as "high," and 36 districts/cities (7.00%) reached the "very high" human development category. In this context, the HDI of Ciamis Regency in 2020 was recorded at 70.49, placing it in the "very high" category, with an average annual growth rate of 0.14%. The Expected Years of Schooling was 14.06 years, while the Mean Years of Schooling stood at 7.70 years (BPS, 2021).

Table1 Comparison of the Human Development Index (HDI) of Ciamis Regency, West Java Province, and the National Average in 2020

No.	Indicator	Region		
		Ciamis	West Java	National
1	UHH	71,83	73,4	71,47
2	HLS	14,06	12,50	12,98
3	RLS	7,70	8,55	8,48
4	Expenditure	9,288	10,845	11,013
	IPM	70,49	72,09	71,94

Source: BPS Data 2021

Furthermore, to observe the growth of the Mean Years of Schooling (MYS) in Ciamis Regency during the 2015–2021 period, the following explanation is provided:

Table2 RLS Ciamis Growth Table 2015-2021

No.	Year	Value	Growth
1	2015	7,45	-
2	2016	7,55	0,10
3	2017	7,59	0,04
4	2018	7,60	0,01
5	2019	7,69	0,09
6	2020	7,70	0,01
7	2021	7,90	0,20
Average Growth			**0,07**

Source: 2022 Research Results Data

The table above illustrates that, in comparison to West Java Province and the national average, the Mean Years of Schooling (MYS) in Ciamis Regency remains lower, even though its Expected Years of Schooling (EYS) is significantly higher. The low MYS has been acknowledged by the Ciamis Regency Government and identified as a key issue in the education sector. The root causes of this low average are recognized as follows: first, limited access to educational services—both formal and informal—particularly for low-income or impoverished communities; and second, the suboptimal implementation of equivalency education programs (Packages A, B, and C), mainly due to funding constraints

Based on the current conditions of the Mean Years of Schooling (MYS) and the identified challenges, the Ciamis Regency Government, through the Department of Education, has formulated various programs aimed at improving the MYS. The government has even set a quantitative performance target, aiming to reach 8.05 years by 2024.

Table3 RLS Ciamis Growth Target Table 2021-2024

No.	Year	Value	Growth
1	2020	7,70	-
2	2021	7,81	0,11
3	2022	7,88	0,07
4	2023	7,96	0,08
5	2024	8,05	0,05
Average Growth			**0,08**

Source: Ciamis Regency LAKIP Data 2023

The target for increasing the Mean Years of Schooling (MYS) in Ciamis Regency during the 2021–2024 period—averaging 0.08 years annually—will be difficult to achieve, given that the average growth rate from 2015 to 2020 was only around 0.05 years. Moreover, the 2021–2024 period was still affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which continued to impact overall HDI growth due to the ongoing recovery in the economic, health, and education sectors. Therefore, a specific strategy is required to achieve this target, one of which involves mapping the MYS at the sub-regency level—including districts, villages, hamlets, neighborhood units (RWs), and community units (RTs)—so that educational interventions can be directed precisely at residents in their respective localities

Based on the targets outlined in the table above, it is noted that the Mean Years of Schooling (MYS) target for 2024 was set at 8.05 years. However, this target was already exceeded in 2023, when the MYS in Ciamis Regency reached 8.09 years. This achievement was largely attributed to an innovative program launched by the Department of Education in 2022, namely the "Massive Implementation Program: Community-Based Village 25+ School Enrollment Movement" (Program Implementasi Masif Masyarakat Ayo Sekolah Berbasis Desa 25+). Despite surpassing the target in 2023, it is expected that the MYS in 2024 will significantly exceed the 8.05 benchmark and surpass the 8.09 figure achieved in 2023.

Based on the research findings on the Mean Years of Schooling (MYS) in Ciamis Regency conducted by Endin Lidinillah in 2021, it was found that the MYS stood at 7.92 years. This indicates that, as of 2021, the average educational attainment of Ciamis residents aged 25 and above was equivalent to the second year of junior secondary school (Grade VII).

Institutional Development in the Strategy to Increase Mean Years of Schooling

The efforts to improve the Mean Years of Schooling (MYS) by the Department of Education of Ciamis Regency represent a form of educational service delivery and a commitment to achieving the performance target of 8.05 years by 2024. In pursuing this goal, capacity enhancement is required as a strategic step to implement structured changes in resource management to achieve organizational objectives. According to Wheelen and Hunger (2012), institutional capacity building involves three critical components: organizational structure, work culture, and resource allocation. An effective structure allows for efficient coordination and clear task division, while a supportive work culture encourages innovation and collaboration.

These strategic components must be implemented through a holistic and collaborative approach, involving local government, educational institutions, civil society, and the private sector. Consequently, improving MYS is not merely a statistical goal, but a reflection of collective commitment toward educational quality and human capital development at the regional level (Yanti, 2020).

a. Development at the Individual Level

The individual level represents the smallest unit within the system and refers to the organization's human resources, whose abilities, professionalism, knowledge, competencies, skills, and work ethic must be enhanced to improve the quality of services provided by the Ciamis Regency Department of Education. In this context, the Department has continued to make improvements in advancing the education sector throughout 2022. Furthermore, the Department has prepared a range of programs to improve the quality of human resources, particularly among teaching and educational staff, including through workshops and training initiatives.

The 2024 target set by the Regional Government Work Plan (RKPD) of Ciamis Regency—achieving a Mean Years of Schooling (MYS) of 8.05 years—requires civil servants who are genuinely committed to improving education quality. The human resources within the Ciamis Regency Department of Education, as implementers of institutional capacity building efforts to enhance the Expected Years of Schooling (EYS), have been selected based on their competencies.

The Head of the Department of Education, as the top management figure in educational development, plays a key role in determining and setting institutional program targets and objectives, particularly in pursuing the 2024 Mean Years of Schooling (MYS) target of 8.05 years. Active leadership participation is essential to mobilize all available resources and drive collective efforts.

Various efforts have been undertaken to improve the Education Index and the Mean Years of Schooling, including optimizing the roles of school supervisors, government institutions, and non-formal education institutions such as Community Learning Centers (PKBM) and Learning Activity Centers (SKB), which serve as providers of equivalency education programs (Packages A, B, and C). Individuals who are not served by formal education institutions—such as elementary (SD/MI), junior secondary (SMP/MTs), and senior secondary schools (SMA/MA/SMK)—may pursue or continue their education through non-formal institutions such as PKBM and SKB.

b. Development at the Organizational Level

At the organizational level, institutional development refers to efforts aimed at clarifying management systems in order to better define the tasks involved in program implementation. In this context, the Regent of Ciamis has prioritized increasing the Mean Years of Schooling by encouraging the public to complete interrupted or unfinished education. This is formalized through Regent Regulation No. 73 of 2022 concerning the Guidelines for Implementing the Village-Based Equivalency Education Movement 25+, and Regent Decree No. 800.05/Kpts.789-Huk/2022 concerning the establishment of the Implementation Team for the Village-Based Equivalency Education Movement 25+. These legal frameworks clearly reflect the leader's vision of placing education as a top development priority. Visionary leadership and decision-making are key to the success of program implementation, serving as a concrete expression of responsibility and leadership participation in addressing existing educational challenges.

The Head of the Department of Education, as the leader and direct executor of educational services, has firmly instructed the SPNF SKB and PKBM—non-formal education providers—to actively collaborate with village governments in delivering educational services at the village level, particularly by facilitating tutors and mentor teachers. Active leadership is essential to drive the functioning of the overall system. Participatory leadership can foster consistent and goal-

oriented implementation of programs, ultimately leading to the achievement of the intended educational objectives

The standard operating procedures for accelerating the improvement of the Mean Years of Schooling through village-based services and a general curriculum refer to several regulations: Ministry of National Education Regulation No. 14 of 2007 on Content Standards for Equivalency Education, Regulation No. 3 of 2008 on Process Standards for Equivalency Education Programs (Packages A, B, and C), and Regulation No. 44 of 2009 on Management Standards for Equivalency Education in Programs A, B, and C. These are further supplemented by local content on life skills education, which equips learners with practical competencies upon completing their equivalency education. The existence of these standard operating procedures as part of education policy provides assurance for citizens. In addition to receiving formal diplomas, learners also obtain skill certificates as part of their educational outcomes.

c. Development at the Environmental Level

Institutional development at the environmental level concerns the broader system, particularly policy support and the involvement of stakeholders in education service programs aimed at more effectively increasing the Mean Years of Schooling. Environmental capacity refers to the conditions and context necessary to support these efforts. Elements at this level include formal institutions (laws, policies, decrees, regulations, and membership rules), informal institutions (customs, culture, norms), social capital, social infrastructure, as well as the capacity of individuals and organizations.

The environmental level refers to the context in which government organizations, though operating within different scopes, functions, and responsibilities, remain interconnected as part of the regional apparatus. In this context, harmonization and synergy are essential to maintain a conducive environment. This can be achieved through: (1) the measurable and accountable utilization of available resources; (2) the establishment of clear, consistent, and non-overlapping regulations to ensure long-term sustainability; and (3) the enforcement of laws and regulations that serve as both governance instruments and legal frameworks for implementing programs aimed at increasing the Mean Years of Schooling in Ciamis Regency

The Massive Implementation Program of the Village-Based Equivalency Education Movement 25+ targets individuals aged 25 and above, as this age group is no longer covered by the mandatory nine-year basic education program. Without direct government intervention, public awareness within this age group to complete formal education remains low. To attract participation, learners not only receive formal education but are also provided with life skills training through Community Learning Centers (PKBM) that offer these services. The program is funded by the Ciamis Regency Government through the Regional Budget (APBD), specifically under the 25+ Equivalency Operational Assistance (BOP Kesetaraan 25+) and additional financial

support for vocational training for learners.

The research findings reveal that the Mean Years of Schooling (MYS) has increased with the enrollment of new learners and the number of participants who have completed their respective levels of equivalency education. Learners who graduate from the equivalency education programs contribute to the numerator and reduce the denominator in the calculation of the average years of schooling within their respective regions, thereby directly influencing the overall MYS at the regency level. Through the provision of government support, it is expected that the 25+ Equivalency Education Program will achieve its intended success, ultimately resulting in a significant increase in the MYS of Ciamis Regency and the attainment of the targeted 8.05 years by 2024.

The study also found that the Mean Years of Schooling (MYS) achievement in Ciamis Regency reached 91.62%, indicating a gap of 0.74% below the provincial realization in 2023. In contrast, regarding the Expected Years of Schooling (EYS) indicator, Ciamis Regency outperformed the provincial level, with an EYS achievement that was 1.61% higher than the 2023 provincial realization.

On the other hand, it was also found that the comparison between the 2023 performance realization and the medium-term targets set in the 2019–2024 Regional Development Plan (RPJMD) shows that the Mean Years of Schooling (MYS) performance improved by 0.13%, achieving 101.63% of the target. Likewise, the Expected Years of Schooling (EYS) performance increased by 0.29%, reaching 102.07% of the target. These figures indicate that performance is progressing according to plan. However, when compared to the national realization in 2023, the MYS in Ciamis Regency, at 8.09 years, remains below the national average of 8.77 years, resulting in a relative achievement of only 99.32% compared to the national level. In contrast, the EYS achievement reached 101.14%, indicating that Ciamis Regency surpassed the national EYS realization by 1.14%.

CONCLUSION

The institutional capacity development of the Ciamis Regency Department of Education in achieving the Expected Years of Schooling (EYS) through improvements in the Mean Years of Schooling (MYS) has generally been implemented in accordance with the targets. This is evidenced by the MYS surpassing the set targets for two consecutive years, driven by the innovative program “Massive Implementation of the Village-Based Community Movement for Equivalency Education 25+” (IMMAS GEMAS KARASA 25+), carried out collaboratively with the involvement of stakeholders from local government agencies, academia, professional organizations, civil society groups, and the broader community. Nevertheless, although the MYS in Ciamis Regency has exceeded the established targets, it is still considered relatively low.

The institutional development strategies employed by the Department of Education are reflected in three levels: (1) Capacity development at the individual level, (2) Capacity development at the organizational level, and (3) Capacity development at the environmental level. Third, the root causes of the relatively low MYS in Ciamis Regency include: (1) limited access to both formal and non-formal education services, particularly among low-income and impoverished populations, and (2) the suboptimal implementation of equivalency education programs (Packages A, B, and C), mainly due to insufficient funding.

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