

## Policy (In)Coherence in Early Child Development – Learning from the Case of Indonesia

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### Abstract

This article analyzes the issue of policy coherence in early childhood development (PAUD-Pengembangan Anak Usia Dini) by taking the case of Indonesia. The analysis focuses on the implications of the issue of policy coherence on the achievement of PAUD program and how this issue of policy coherence encourages the Indonesian government to minimize policy incoherence. In this case, PAUD program is seen as an integral part of the effort to develop human resources to support sustainable development. By using narrative analysis techniques of qualitative data generated from interviews with high-ranking central government officials, expert staff of international institutions, and Koalisi PAUD Nasional, this study finds that policy incoherence has occurred in PAUD program and hampers the achievement of high program performance. The government responded to this incoherence issue with several mechanisms which attempt to foster cross-sectoral coordination. This finding illustrates that the issue of policy implementation, especially in the aspect of coordination and harmonization of program realization, is still a serious problem in PAUD program or on a macro scale, human resources development policy. Various approaches in PAUD and human resources have also been applied, but the case of program realization in Indonesia shows that these approaches are less effective due to the issue of policy incoherence. This reflects that considering or integrating the concept of policy coherence in the approach is very important.

**Keywords:** early childhood development; human resources; policy coherence; cross-sectoral; program coordination; Indonesia

### Introduction

In the last three decades, developing countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America have developed early childhood development (ECD/PAUD - Pengembangan Anak Usia Dini) programs with the aim of fulfilling children's basic rights to develop optimally

and to support the development of quality human resources (Abboah-Offei, et.al., 2022; Lim, et.al. 2023; Peacock, 2022; Premand & Barry, 2022; Bonner Septien, et.al., 2024; Sun, et.al. 2024; Venter, 2022). Governments in many countries have realized that child development is very important for human resources develop-

ment. However, many of these countries still face serious challenges in achieving satisfactory results so that the program is less successful and in turn, human resources development policies also face obstacles. One of the fundamental problems which causes this problem is the government's limitations in providing basic childcare services which ultimately disrupts child growth (Blimpo, et.al., 2022; Peacock, 2022; Premand & Barry, 2022; Bonner Septien, et.al., 2024; Venter, 2022). In the long term, this will disrupt human resource development efforts in these countries.

In addition to the problem of government capacity in providing adequate basic services for children, another very serious problem faced in many countries is the issue of policy coherence in PAUD program. This coherence issue is significant in the realization of PAUD program because it is related to the fundamental character of PAUD programs, that is multi-sectoral programs, which involve the roles of multiple ministries and government institutions. This coherence issue threatens the success of multi-sectoral programs because the emergence of this issue will result in fragmentation of cross-sectoral work. In real form, this can arise in classic cases such as the emergence of overlapping programs, which occur due to incoherence in program realization. This occurs, for example, in the form of limited coordination of cross-sectoral work.

In Indonesia, PAUD program is a quite complex issue. This program is intended for newborns up to six years old children (Kusumawardhani, 2022). In the last two decades, the Indonesian Government has made serious efforts to realize various forms of initiatives to improve the quality of PAUD program (Nakajima, et.al., 2021; Zaenab, 2022). The Indonesian Government states that every child has the right to grow and develop at an early age. To realize this right, in accordance with the holistic and integrative principles of PAUD, every child has the right to obtain several

very important service components, including (i) health, (ii) nutrition, (iii) care, (iv) nurturing, (v) protection, (vi) welfare, and (vii) educational services which are carried out simultaneously, systematically, comprehensively, integrated, and continuously. However, like other developing countries, the Indonesian Government also still faces serious problems in meeting children's basic needs and the problem of policy incoherence in PAUD program.

To respond to these issues, the Indonesian government developed an early childhood education program approach known as Holistic-Integrative Early Childhood Development (PAUD HI - Pengembangan Anak Usia Dini Holistik-Integratif). PAUD HI was implemented starting in 2013, based on Presidential Regulation No. 60/2013 concerning PAUD HI. This regulation defines holistic-integrative early childhood development as an effort to develop early childhood which is carried out to meet the diverse and interrelated basic needs of children simultaneously, systematically, and in an integrated manner. The objectives of implementing a holistic-integrative PAUD program include efforts to meet children's needs, specifically (i) fulfilling the essential needs of early childhood in their entirety, (ii) protecting children from all forms of violence, neglect, mistreatment, and exploitation, then (iii) implementing integrated early childhood services.

In general, this PAUD HI approach is in line with PAUD program approach developed by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2018 (Jeong, et.al., 2022). PAUD approach developed by UNICEF and WHO is nurturing care framework (NCF). NCF was designed by the two international institutions for PAUD with an age range of newborns to children aged eight years (WHO, 2018). UNICEF and WHO recommend this NCF as an approach for many countries to develop programs and

services in PAUD (Jeong, et.al., 2022; Pierce, 2021).

This article aims to discuss the issue of policy coherence in PAUD program in Indonesia. To achieve this goal, the authors wish to answer three basic questions which are quite important regarding the topic, to be specific (i) What are the basic problems which occur in policy coherence in the implementation of PAUD program in Indonesia? (ii) What are the implications of the policy coherence problem on the achievement of PAUD program? (iii) What policy responses are made by the Indonesian government to minimize the issue of policy coherence? The article is divided into several parts. The next part will discuss a conceptual review of human resource development and early childhood. This discussion is followed by an explanation of the research methods used in this study. The next part discusses human resource development policies followed by a discussion of the performance of PAUD program. The next part, which is very important, discusses the issue of policy coherence in the PAUD program. The last part, this part explains the conclusion.

## **Human Development and Early Childhood – Literature Review**

### *Human Development and Its Approaches*

Human development is a global issue which is committed to almost all governments in various countries to realize it (Chen, et.al., 2024; Duong & Pham, 2023; Fernandes, 2024; García-Pardo, et.al., 2023; Greve, 2023; Nayyar & Malhotra, 2023; Oztruk, et.al., 2024; Stylianou, et.al., 2023; Telleria, 2023; Tissaoui, et.al., 2024). Human development is defined as the process of expanding the choices individuals have and efforts to improve the welfare which has been achieved (Nayyar & Malhotra, 2023; Robeyns, 2017). With this concept of human development, economic development

programs in many countries are approached with a more humanistic face. In this case, the concept of human development can be seen as a strategy to position humans at the center of activities or programs related to politics, society, and the economy, so that the core focus is no longer on how to expand economic achievements, but more on how these achievements impact the quality of human life (Chen, et.al., 2024; Mariano, et.al., 2015; UNDP, 2022). In this case, the human development paradigm helps to cover all aspects of development by emphasizing humans as the most important economic resource (Chen, et.al., 2024).

The commitment of the global community to the realization of the idea of human development can be seen from the support of governments in various countries in the implementation of the concept of human development adopted by the global institution under the United Nations (UN), that is the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1990 (Duong & Pham, 2023; Fernandes, 2024; Nayyar & Malhotra, 2023; Oztruk, et.al., 2024; Telleria, 2023). The concept of human development is applied with a measure called the human development index (HDI) (Fernandes, 2024; Nayyar & Malhotra, 2023; Oztruk, et.al., 2024). HDI is a composite to measure the achievements of human development which have been carried out by governments in many countries, especially regarding the achievements of health, education, and living standard sector programs. HDI is often seen as a mechanism helps the government determine the level of development of a region or country by considering health conditions, education, and per capita income (Chen, et.al., 2024). UNDP routinely publishes human development reports. This report is the result of UNDP's documentation of government performance in various countries in realizing the concept of human development. Each country is assessed for its performance in HDI, and each country is ranked based on that performance (Telleria, 2023).

In human development, HDI is seen as a multidimensional measure of human development (Oztruk, et.al., 2024; Telleria, 2023). HDI is built with the aim of describing the capabilities of individuals in a society (Zambrano, 2014). HDI includes several dimensions such as health, knowledge, and standard of living, which are considered capable of describing performance achievements in human development. These dimensions are built using indicators for example life expectancy, expected years of schooling, average years of schooling, and per capita expenditure (Oztruk, et.al., 2024; Telleria, 2023). Life expectancy is used to measure the level of health, while expectations and average years of schooling are used to measure a person's knowledge. Meanwhile, for per capita income, this indicator is used as a proxy to measure the standard of living (Oztruk, et.al., 2024).

HDI is derived from an approach known as the capability approach (Duong & Pham, 2023; Fernandes, 2024; Nayyar & Malhotra, 2023; Oztruk, et.al., 2024; Telleria, 2023). In this approach, human development is interpreted as a series of systematic efforts aimed at expanding the opportunities and capabilities of individual in choosing and acting (Telleria, 2023). Expanding a person's capabilities allows that person to develop their freedom to obtain functions which are commensurate with their capabilities. Expanding capabilities provides opportunities for everyone to be active and independent in developing welfare and supporting the lives of others. As a result, people will become the main actors, not passive recipients in the human development process. In such a situation, they will be able to develop and carry out their functions well in various positions and activities in society (Duong & Pham, 2023).

The concept of capability that underlies HDI is relatively macro (Duong & Pham, 2023; Fernandes, 2024; Nayyar & Malhotra, 2023). This concept covers a broad range of issues, so that HDI does not actually cover all of these issues (Duong &

Pham, 2023). At the operational level, the scope of this issue represents the sectors involved in the practice of human development policies. In practice, many countries seek to realize human development policies with a quite diverse approach and variation in sector involvement. Almost all countries involve the education and health sectors. Outside of this sector, they also involve several other relevant sectors such as population, economy, and social protection.

Some literature mentions that the practice of human development policies is based on the life-course approach (Banati, 2018; Benner & Mistry, 2020). The life-course approach views the development of individual's life as experiencing a development phase from childhood, adolescence, productive age, and old age. This approach views each phase as containing important elements in the form of cognitive, and psychological elements as interconnected. Human life development is seen as an interconnected development trajectory and has several critical transition points which are influenced by several important factors such as ecological constellations, structures, and sociohistorical contexts (Benner & Mistry, 2020).

The life cycle approach includes four important components, specifically [1] time and place, [2] social roles, [3] dependence on others, and [4] the role of agency in decision-making (Heinz, et.al., 2021). The first component, that is time and place, reflects the impact of a person's birth time and how sociohistorical events influence one's life course. The second component believes that a person's social role influences the course of his or her life. The different roles in which a person plays can influence his or her life differently, depending on the stage of development occurs in his or her life. The third component assumes that a person's life is interdependent with others. The difficulties and advantages which a person experiences throughout his or her life



journey affect 'his or her social relationships. The fourth component refers to a person's ability to make choices influencing the trajectory of a person's life journey. However, a person's life journey is often limited by social structures, which include regulations, laws, and policies legally adopted by the government (Heinz, et.al., 2021).

To achieve optimal human development, each stage of the life cycle development phase requires social investment. The concept of social investment refers to a policy in which the government allocates a budget to finance social programs aimed at developing the knowledge and skills of its citizens (Dräbing and Nelson, 2017). In this case, social investment can be seen as a strategy to develop the capabilities of each person to improve the socio-economic conditions of families and the economy of a country (Hemerijck, 2017). The term social investment emerged in the 1970s. The concept of social investment can be traced back to academic works written by T.H. Marshall and R.H. Tawney (Smyth & Deeming, 2016). Several literatures (Fleckenstein and Lee, 2017; Sumarto, 2020) state that the concept of social development has been applied in several economic development practices in developing countries in East and Southeast Asia. During the economic growth from the early 1970s to the mid-1990s, several countries, such as Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and Taiwan allocated their social expenditures to education and health policies as social investments to support the government in achieving high economic growth (Fleckenstein and Lee, 2017).

#### *Early Childhood Development and the Importance of Policy Coherence*

Studies on PAUD show that developing countries have developed various forms of PAUD programs because the governments

of these countries have realized the importance of meeting basic needs and health and education services for early childhood (Abboah-Offei, et.al., 2022; Lim, et.al., 2023; Peacock, 2022; Premand & Barry, 2022; Bonner Septien, et.al., 2024; Sun, et.al., 2024; Venter, 2022). However, many of these countries still experience various forms of obstacles so that the program has not been able to run properly. Most of the problems faced are due to limited access to children's services which are mainly caused by poverty and government limitations and providing basic needs services for child growth. These basic needs services include, for example, the provision of health services for children, decent housing, the provision of nutritional needs, health services, and pre-school education services. Limited facilities and access to the provision of basic needs for early childhood can ultimately interfere with the physical, mental, and social growth of children (Blimpo, et.al., 2022; Peacock, 2022; Premand & Barry, 2022; Bonner Septien, et.al., 2024; Venter, 2022). Several studies have shown that to help meet these basic needs, several countries have developed PAUD programs with conditional cash transfer programs (Boo & Creamer, 2019; Molina Millán, et.al., 2020; Sudfeld, et.al., 2021). This program provides opportunities for early childhood to obtain nutrition, access to education, and health services (Sumarto, 2023).

In response to this issue, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO) have attempted to realize the most basic social rights of children to survive and thrive through an approach known as NCF in 2018 (Jeong, et.al., 2022). The concept of NCF refers to a condition built by policies, programs, and services, which facilitate communities and caregivers to ensure children receive adequate access to health services, nutrition, protection from threats, and early learning (WHO, 2018). NCF includes five components which are

essential for children's growth and development, that is (i) good health, (ii) adequate nutrition, (iii) responsive caregiving, (iv) safety and security, and (v) opportunities for early learning (Abboah-Offei, et.al., 2022; Jeong, et.al., 2022).

One of the most important points in the principles to be implemented in the NCF is that the PAUD program is multisectoral, covering child health programs, meeting nutritional needs, caregiving, child safety, and early learning (Jeong, et.al., 2022; Pierce, 2021). For this reason, the NCF emphasizes the importance of multi-sector collaboration, or the realization of policy coherence, in meeting children's needs (Abboah-Offei, et.al., 2022; Jeong, et.al., 2022).

To realize a multi-sectoral program approach, such as the NCF, policy coherence is required (Cejudo & Michel, 2017). Policy coherence is a form of work alignment between implementing units of a policy. Policy coherence is used to analyze the alignment between policies used to achieve comprehensive and complex indicators, which require alignment efforts (OECD, 2016). Policy coherence consists of vertical and horizontal coherence (Guerrero & Castañeda, 2021). Horizontal coherence focuses on the interaction between policy issues and how to achieve different policy goals and issues simultaneously. Meanwhile, vertical coherence is the relationship between policies at different levels of government: central, regional, and local. Policy coherence can be analyzed at the design stage and the implementation stage. The design stage is the stage of formulating policy priorities by analysts and policy makers. However, the realization of the potential for achieving goals effectively through effective policy design can only be met if the policy is implemented properly. Policy implementation depends on the level of coordination, institutional capacity, and other contextual factors.

## **Research Methods**

This study is qualitative research using narrative analysis techniques supported by document reviews. Narrative analysis techniques are used to analyze data from in-depth interviews with central government officials and social policy experts at international institutions. Meanwhile, for document reviews, this method is used to analyze government documents containing PAUD policies. This multi-data analysis technique provides the author with the opportunity to triangulate data. Data triangulation, which refers to the use of multiple data sources to understand the topic being studied (Morgan, 2024; Natow, 2020), helps researchers minimize biased analysis and increase the validity and accuracy of data analysis (Mohiya, 2024; Morgan, 2024).

The authors conducted in-depth interviews with nine informants from ministries, international institutions, and non-governmental organizations. The informants from the ministries covered seven high-ranking officials at the Coordinating Ministry for Human Development and Culture (Kemenko PMK), the National Development Planning Agency (Bappenas), the Ministry of Social Affairs, and the Ministry of Home Affairs. The informant from the international institution worked at UNICEF as a social policy specialist. Meanwhile, for the informant from the non-governmental organization, the authors interviewed the deputy director of Koalisi PAUD HI Nasional. All informants were selected using a purposive informant selection technique. The informants were selected based on the consideration that they were directly involved in PAUD program so that they mastered information about the program. Before the interview was conducted, the authors always provided verbal consent to all interview informants to ensure that their participation was voluntary and their identities were kept confidential. This consent request is very important to comply with the principles of research ethics that aim

to ensure the confidentiality and safety of informants. After the interview, the authors collected government documents from the informants. These government documents include government regulations, PAUD program planning, and program reports.

### **Human Resource Development Policy in Indonesia**

Human resource development (HRD) policy is a central issue in general development policy in Indonesia. This can be seen in the National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN - Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional) which places HRD development as one of the important agendas for achieving economic development goals in Indonesia. HRD development agenda is in the form of improving the quality and competitiveness of HRD, that is healthy and intelligent, adaptive, innovative, skilled, and characterful people. The Indonesian government will achieve this HRD development agenda through seven priority programs which include (1) population control and strengthening population governance; (2) strengthening the implementation of social protection; (3) improving health services towards universal health coverage; (4) increasing the distribution of quality education services; (5) improving the quality of children, women, and youth; (6) poverty alleviation; and (7) increasing productivity and competitiveness. The seven programs for achieving the HRD development agenda show the complexity of the sectors involved in HRD development which include the population, employment, social protection, food, health, and education sectors.

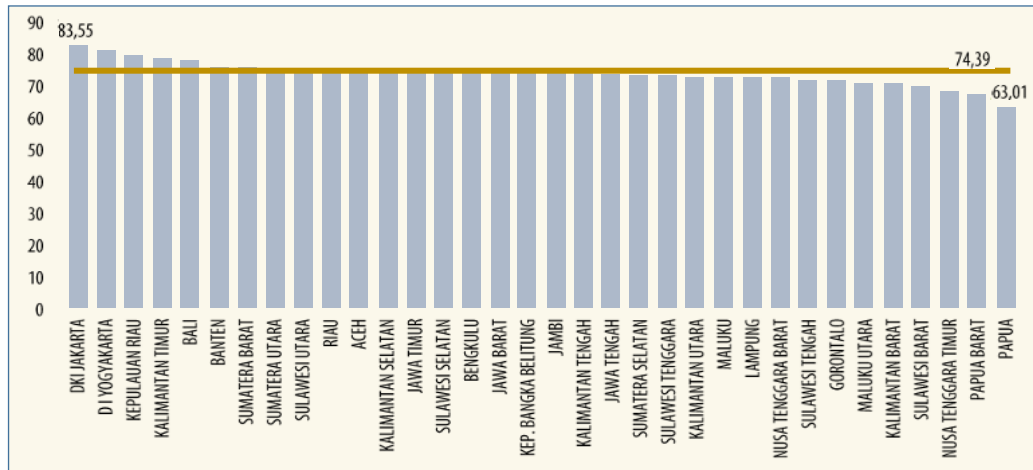
The Indonesian government has set targets and objectives for all priority programs in the 2020-2024 RPJMN. However, until 2024, several of these targets have not been achieved properly. The problems causing this problem are quite

complex. Some fundamental problems which cause this problem include the integrity and harmony of the design of human resource development, limited government budget, efficient use of the budget, and limited regulatory support. In achieving the target of the priority social protection program, for example, several targets of this program have not been realized due to problems with limited government funds, efficient use of the budget, and regulations that are less supportive. The need for regulatory support in efforts to meet the priority targets of the human resource development program is very high. Compared to other development agendas, the need for regulatory support in this human resource development agenda is in the highest position. The human resource development agenda requires additional support from 10 Laws, 20 Government Regulations, and 24 Presidential Regulations.

The complexity of this problem, as seen in Graphic 1, has resulted in inequality in the achievement of human resource development as shown by the disparity in the human development index (HDI) between provinces in Indonesia. HDI is a statistical indicator used to understand the development of the quality of human life in a country, which includes three dimensions, to be specific (1) longevity and healthy living, (2) knowledge, and (3) a decent standard of living. In general, the average value of HDI in Indonesia reaches 74.39. Graphic 1 shows that the inequality is very clear between provinces which have fairly high regional income and good infrastructure, such as DKI Jakarta and provinces which receive relatively limited income with limited infrastructure, that is East Nusa Tenggara, West Papua, and Papua. In 2023, DKI Jakarta achieved the highest HDI figure of 82.46, while East Nusa Tenggara, West Papua, and Papua were in the lowest positions with HDI respectively, 62.25; 66.66; and 66.68. This deep inequality will give rise to inequality in achieving human

resource development targets in Indonesia. Regions with high HDI have a greater chance of achieving human resource

development targets, compared to regions with low HDI.



Source: BPS 2024

**Figure 1.** Human Development Index Achievement by Province, 2023

Efforts to realize the human resource development plan, as explained in the document of RPJMN, are a series of activities which are quite complex and face serious challenges. Referring to the president's direction regarding human resource development above, for example, to build human resources, cross-sectoral work is needed in a relatively long period of time. Producing hard workers who are dynamic, productive, skilled, mastering science and technology, as conveyed by the president, requires serious commitment and significant contribution from ministries or government institutions working on population, food, health, and education issues. From the worker's side, their capacity is determined since they were born, the growth and development of children, and the education they receive. From the government's side, government capacity, the quality of implementation of human resource development policies, and the policy infrastructure that supports it, greatly determine the results of the quality and capacity of the workforce.

For this reason, a comprehensive and harmonious policy design is needed so that human resource development policies can be realized optimally. The integrity of this policy design covers many dimensions, including inter-sectoral dimensions, inter-temporal dimensions, and inter-governmental dimensions. The integrity of inter-sectoral dimension policy planning includes cooperation between government institutions involved in human resource development. The integrity of the inter-temporal dimension includes human development planning in the span of childhood growth, education, working age, and old age. Meanwhile, for the inter-governmental dimension, this is closely related to the integrity of work and coordination between the central government and local governments. If this comprehensive and harmonious planning can be realized, coupled with the support of adequate financial resources and infrastructure support, then the target of human resource development and the president's direction in achieving human resource development can be realized.



However, the integrity of the design, infrastructure support, and financial support are still serious challenges. The central government and local governments face these challenges simultaneously. In a situation like this, the real problem of the emergence of inequality in the achievement of human resource development as reflected in Figure 1 above is difficult to avoid. 'If this challenge is not resolved immediately, the president's targets and directions in human resource development that have been planned in RPJMN will be difficult to realize.

### **PAUD Programs in Indonesia and Its Achievements**

PAUD program is an important component of human resource development policy in Indonesia. The 2020–2024 RPJMN document states that PAUD program is a national priority program, which includes education, health, care, and social protection. PAUD program focuses on the development of the qualified and holistic integrative PAUD institutions (PAUD HI), with a target of 10,000 qualified PAUD institutions and 1,200 PAUD HI by 2024. The implementation of PAUD HI program is based on Presidential Regulation No. 60/2013 concerning the implementation of PAUD HI. This regulation was issued with an understanding of the importance of healthy, intelligent, and productive human resources as assets of the nation and state, and that improving the quality of human resources in achieving optimal growth and development is largely determined by the quality of child development during the early age period, namely from the fetus to the child aged six.

PAUD HI is a form of PAUD program which seeks to ensure optimal child growth and development through synergy of various complementary services. This strategy is expected to create superior human resources as the foundation of long-term national development. The general objective of PAUD HI is the implementation of PAUD

HI services towards a healthy, intelligent, cheerful, and noble Indonesia, while the specific objective is to fulfill the essential needs of early childhood in their entirety including health and nutrition, educational stimulation, moral and emotional development and care. The comprehensive approach referred to as holistic integrated emphasizes comprehensive and integrated education and PAUD services including education, health, care, child protection, and child welfare.

The integrated holistic approach requires coherence of policies and programs across sectors (horizontal coherence), and across national and regional government levels (vertical coherence). This policy coherence is very important because the realization of PAUD program involves key sectors, that is health, education, child protection, and social protection. These sectoral policies are implemented by different ministries and government institutions so that coordination between them is an important element in the realization of PAUD program. In the last ten years, strategic plans and action plans from these sectors have been formulated that are related to the achievement of PAUD HI target in providing direct services to the community.

To realize the idea of policy coherence, Presidential Regulation No. 60/2013 also mandates the formation of PAUD HI task force to ensure horizontal and vertical policy coherence, chaired by the Coordinating Minister for Human Development and Culture. The implementation of PAUD HI is seen as the responsibility of ministries and government institutions at the central and regional levels. The implementation of PAUD HI development in the regions is carried out by the regional government by acknowledging the policies set by the task force, and can collaborate with the government, universities, professional organizations, community organizations, religious organizations, non-governmental organiza-

tions, the business world, and community members.

In order to strive for harmonious coordination between the central government and regional governments, the central government issued Action Plan of PAUD HI National as an elaboration of Presidential Regulation No. 60/2013. PAUD HI was launched in 2020 until 2024. The document states the goal of early childhood human development to create healthy, intelligent, cheerful and noble Indonesian children to achieve the sustainable development goals of 2030 and the golden generation of 2045. PAUD HI Action Plan provides guidelines for coordination, synergy, and mutual-cooperation of stakeholders at the national level, and serves as a reference for district/city governments in preparing Regional Budget Plan (RAD – Rencana Anggaran Daerah) for PAUD HI RAD. PAUD HI Action Plan outlines the targets, programs, output and outcome indicators used as a reference by the government in providing PAUD HI services and monitoring impacts. Table 1 shows the specific objectives, service areas, and target achievements of PAUD HI service area.

To support the implementation and evaluation of PAUD HI, Indonesia plans to adopt the National Conceptual Framework (NCF) introduced by UNICEF and the World

Bank. NCF is important as a reference in developing indicators that are aligned with the sustainable development goals (SDGs), especially SDG 4.2 which requires children aged 0–5 years to be on the appropriate development path. By referring to NCF, Indonesia can ensure that national indicators can contribute to global data reporting, avoiding data gaps in international commitments such as Countdown 2030. This approach is expected to align the national measurement system with global standards while strengthening the accountability and effectiveness of PAUD HI policies.

The results of various government efforts to encourage PAUD programs to achieve high achievements show that the program has not been able to achieve such satisfactory achievements. The achievements of PAUD program are described in Table 1. In general, PAUD achievements are measured by five indicators, specifically health, nutritional fulfillment, responsive caregiving, early learning, and safety and security. These indicators are broken down into several sub-indicators. Table 1 shows that almost all indicators show low average values, except for the average achievement values of the responsive caregiving and higher education indicators which reach relatively high numbers.

**Table 1. National Early Childhood Development Achievements 2019-2023**

PAUD Variables	Year		
	2021	2022	2023
<b>1. Health</b>			
a. Neonatal mortality rate*	11.7	11.6	11.0
b. Infant mortality rate *	17.2	16.9	16.85
c. Infat under 5 years mortality rate*	22.17	19.83	
d. Childbirth assisted by health workers	95.93	95.79	95.69
e. Complete neonatal home visits	96.3	91.3	90.8
f. Complete immunization**	61.09	63.17	63.58
<b>2. Nutritional Fulfillment</b>			
a. Low Birth Weight ***	17.0	17.1	15.9
b. Children with Stunting***	21.1	18.4	16.0

c. Children with Wasting***	7.1	7.5	7.7
d. Overweight***	3.8	3.5	4.2
<b>3. Responsive Caregiving</b>			
a. Onwership of KIA^	98.86	98.63	92.41
b. Exclusive breastfeeding ^	71.58	72.04	73.97
<b>4. Early Learning</b>			
a. Elementary School Participation Rate ^^	97.72	97.78	97.86
b. Junior High School Participation Rate ^^	80.47	80.82	81.28
c. Senior High School Participation Rate ^^	61.47	61.73	62.36
<b>5. Safety and Security</b>			
a. Population under Poverty Line ^^	9.71	9.57	9.36

Note: \*: per 1000 births; \*\*: age 12-23 months%; \*\*\*: Age<=5 years, %; ^ age 0-59 months, %; ^^ (%).

Source: BPS 2022, 2023, 2024; Health Ministry 2022, 2023

High achievement, especially in early learning indicators, and low achievement of other indicators are caused by two things. First, high achievement in education indicators occurs because the government prioritizes early education programs over other programs. This can be seen from the government's budget allocation, which is quite high for the program, while the allocation of other budgets is below the budget for early education programs. Second, the government's efforts to realize policy coherence in the form of coordination across ministries and government institutions implementing PAUD programs have not been realized properly. Ministries and government institutions prepare and implement programs without strong cross-sectoral cooperation so that the programs implemented are less complete and run mutually reinforcing each other.

### Coherence Issues in PAUD Programs

Policy coherence in the realization of PAUD HI program is an essential issue which is very important to realize for two reasons. First, PAUD HI program in Indonesia refers to the principles of NCF, which requires cross-institutional coordination to be built harmoniously. PAUD HI and NCF assume that PAUD program is a form of multi-sectoral policy so that this program demands harmony of work between sectors. Second, harmony of cross-sectoral work in Indonesia

is a problematic issue in the realization of policies that have been going on for quite a long time.

The problem of cross-sectoral work alignment mentioned above is quite complicated. The complexity of the issue is clearly visible in classic cases of overlapping programs between sectors. The issue of overlapping programs arises when a program is implemented by a ministry but several important characteristics of the program such as objectives, scope, implementation methods, and recipients are the same or almost the same as other programs. This raises issues of program efficiency and effectiveness because several programs funded by the government respond to issues that are not different, even though in fact these issues can be minimized by one program. This overlapping program occurs because there is a tendency among ministries implementing PAUD HI program to run child development programs without coordinating in sufficient portions. In the real form that occurs in society, the overlapping program appears in the form of the implementation of several similar or identical programs implemented by several ministries or government institutions at the same time.

*'There is overlapping of programs ... Early childhood development programs are carried out by several ministries and institutions, such as the*

*Ministry of Education, now the Ministry of Elementary and Secondary Education, has a PAUD program, the Ministry of PPPA has a SRATA program, the Ministry of Social Affairs has a TAS program ... This overlap occurs in terms of targets, activities, target groups, and possible coverage areas' (Ministry of Social Affairs Official, Interview, Nov. 2024).*

*'The issue of education has become the domain of the Ministry of Education but how come the Ministry of PPPA has its own law on daycare. Well, they literally wrote daycare, to let you know, daycare in Indonesian means childcare. All guidelines for childcare are already in the Ministry of Education ... isn't daycare the same as childcare? Then the Ministry of Social Affairs also has a program like PAUD, called TAS, Taman Anak Sejahtera' (Secretary of Koalisi PAUD HI, interview, Nov. 2024).*

The issue of policy incoherence that arises in the form of overlapping programs causes several complex problems which occur at the technical level of program realization and in the management of PAUD programs. Several similar programs implemented by several ministries or several agencies at the regional level cause confusion experienced by program implementers. This occurs, for example, in the case of overlapping PAUD programs at the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and at the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (Kemen PPPA). The Ministry of Education has ratified regulations on PAUD with its derivative program, that is PAUD accreditation issued by the National Accreditation Agency. On the other hand, Kemen PPPA ratified regulations on childcare (daycare), with Indonesian national standard certification. Both

certifications develop different program realization guidelines and instruments. This causes confusion experienced by program implementers in the regions. Incoherence in the realization of PAUD programs also causes problems in the management of PAUD programs because the lack of work alignment between ministries causes PAUD programs to focus on education sector services. Meanwhile, child services in other sectors, such as health, social protection, and child protection are still limited. This problem creates a very serious problem in the integrity of the performance achievement of all components of PAUD services, which are covered in NCF.

The Indonesian government has attempted to realize the coherence of PAUD HI program policy, although the effort faces relatively complex obstacles. The basic effort which has been made is to formulate performance achievement indicators at the national level. These indicators play an important role in policy coherence because these indicators are a common reference for all ministries and government institutions that are mandated by the government to manage PAUD HI sectoral program. By referring to one indicator at the national level, various sectoral programs managed by other ministries and government institutions will be encouraged to be systematically and completely interwoven.

The preparation of these indicators is carried out through the preparation of PAUD HI index to measure the success of the development of children aged 0-6 years which will be part of the 2025-2029 RPJMN indicators. This index will be derived into derivative indicators. These derivative indicators will be used as indicators for activities to be implemented. The preparation of this index is facilitated by Bappenas. In compiling this index, Bappenas collaborates with the BPS and the ministries implementing PAUD HI program. One of the fundamental challenges in compiling this index is the availability of data. Data on early childhood and the socio-



economic conditions of the household where the child develops are very important in compiling PAUD HI index. The government does not yet have a strong database on children and households which can be used to compile the index as well as become the basis for the realization of sectoral programs supporting PAUD HI program. This data needs to be updated regularly both at the national and sub-national levels, to compile an accurate index and to compile the index.

To encourage the emergence of willingness to develop cross-sectoral coordination, Bappenas has compiled PAUD HI index by involving the ministries responsible for PAUD HI program. This involvement is important to ensure that the index compiled is complete because the compilation process has received input from the ministries responsible for PAUD HI program. In addition, this involvement is expected to foster a commitment to collective work that is integrated across ministries. Coordination in the preparation of PAUD HI achievement indicators is carried out by Bappenas compiling macro achievement indicators, or can be called umbrella indicators, and the implementing ministries of the PAUD HI program are asked to compile these indicators. The preparation of these umbrella indicators is based on a study (background study) which has been conducted. Support from this study is very important to ensure that the indicators compiled are in accordance with the situation in the community and that the indicators are accurate. The involvement of the implementing ministry of PAUD in reducing indicators is significant because it will increase the harmonization of sectoral work programs with general achievements at the national level.

*‘Bappenas prepares main indicators ... which must then be cascaded down by ministries/agencies. Ministries/agencies and regions will refer to the umbrella indicators to create cascading down. Indicators*

*are determined by Bappenas through discussions with ministries/agencies. Each ministry/agency already has its main tasks and functions. For each intervention in each age group, there is also a division of tasks from the ministries/agencies’* (Bappenas Official, Interview, Nov. 2024).

Efforts to minimize policy misalignment are also carried out by forming PAUD HI task force. This task force is formed based on the same legal regulations as those used to underlie HI PAUD, that is Presidential Regulation No. 60 of 2013 concerning PAUD HI. Based on these legal regulations, this task force is positioned under and responsible to the president. This task force is chaired by the Coordinating Minister of PMK, with deputy heads of Bappenas and the Minister of Home Affairs. Members of the task force are ministers and heads of government institutions involved in PAUD HI, such as the Minister of Education, Minister of Health, Minister of Social Affairs, and several other ministers/heads of institutions. In order to carry out its duties properly, the task force can develop sub-task forces and task forces at the provincial and district levels.

*‘Indonesia has what is called PAUD HI National Task Force ... The task force is a platform for us to coordinate with related ministries. It has members from ministries ... so not only from the Coordinating Ministry for Human Development and Culture but also from other ministries’* (Secretary of Koalisi PAUD HI, interview, Nov. 2024).

The main task of this task force is to coordinate and synchronize the implementation of PAUD HI program. In addition, the task force also plays a role in monitoring and evaluating the PAUD HI program and mobilizing various forms of socio-economic resources to support HI



program. To realize the coordination and synchronization function, routinely, at least once every three months. The task force holds a coordination meeting, which is usually facilitated by the Coordinating Ministry of PMK.

## **Conclusion**

As stated in the introduction, this article aims to discuss the issue of incoherence in PAUD program in Indonesia, by answering three basic questions. In general, the problem of coherence arises in the form of limited coordination of work across ministries and government agencies. This government limitation gives rise to various forms of policy problems, including the classic issue of policy implementation in the form of overlapping policies. This overlapping policy results in poor performance of the PAUD program. Of the five indicators applied to measure PAUD program, only early childhood learning has achieved a high average performance. Meanwhile, other indicators, specifically the fulfillment of nutrition, child health, care, and child safety, still face serious obstacles. To respond to policy incoherence, the Indonesian Government has developed coordination through the preparation of PAUD HI index. This index is prepared through the following mechanisms: Bappenas prepares a main indicator for the achievement of PAUD HI, while ministries and institutions implementing PAUD HI program reduce the main indicator into derivative indicators that will be used as a reference in the realization of PAUD program in their ministries. The compilation of this index is very important to develop a reference for the realization of cross-sectoral programs which are expected to be able to encourage ministries or institutions implementing PAUD programs to refer to the reference so that program integrity can be created. Another effort is to develop coordination through PAUD HI task force. This task force was formed by the

government specifically with the aim of encouraging the realization of harmonization and synchronization of the realization of PAUD HI program. Through harmonization and synchronization, it is hoped that policy coherence will be realized.

The issue of policy incoherence that emerged in the form of overlapping realization of the PAUD HI program above is contrary to NCF principle, which is the reference for the approach to the realization of PAUD HI program. Since the beginning, the designers of NCF approach, namely UNICEF and WHO, have been aware of the vulnerability of this approach. This approach is multi-sectoral, because NCF includes several components of child services whose fulfillment requires the involvement of multiple ministries and government institutions. Therefore, in the realization of PAUD program, ministries need to coordinate and work together as a whole. However, in practice, this coordination and cooperation are still very limited so that the realization of PAUD HI program experiences obstacles. On a broader scale, demands for strong coordination and cooperation in the realization of policies cannot be avoided because almost all programs or policies realized by the government are multi-sectoral. In a democratic government system, participation and involvement of multiple actors in the realization of a program are considered an ideal mechanism for carrying out policy control and efforts to improve policy achievements. Thus, demands for cross-sectoral coordination and cooperation are reasonable demands.

The findings show that the issue of policy implementation, especially in the aspect of coordination and harmonization of program realization is still a serious problem in PAUD program or on a macro scale, HR development policy. Various approaches in PAUD, for example NCF and PAUD HI have been developed. At the same time, many HR development approaches have also been applied such as the life cycle approach

and the capability approach. These approaches are academically and practically very important. However, it should be underlined here that the case in Indonesia shows that these approaches do not work well when policy incoherence arises. This reflects that considering or integrating the concept of policy coherence in these approaches is very important.

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