



## REALIZING QUALITY EDUCATION AS A GOAL OF THE SDGs IN INDONESIA

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### ABSTRACT

Received:

February 6, 2023

Revised:

November 24,  
2024

Accepted:

November 25,  
2024

*Quality education is an important foundation in the development of a country. Quality education is a national goal stated in the preamble of the 1945 Constitution, which is to educate the nation's life. In addition to being a national goal, quality education is also a goal that must be achieved in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations (UN), which is the fourth goal. Indonesia has shown strong commitment to achieving these SDGs through various policies and programs. However, there are still many challenges to be faced, such as educational disparities between regions and among social groups, as well as the need for sustainable improvement in education quality. According to various reports, such as the Sustainable Development Report 2023, Indonesia's ranking is still relatively low. Similarly, the results of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2022 released by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) show that Indonesia's scores are still declining and far from the global average score. Considering this situation, Indonesia needs strategies to achieve higher quality education.*

**Keywords:** Strategies for education, SDGs, overview of education, schools, educators

## INTRODUCTION

According to Law Number 20 of 2020 on the National Education System, education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning environment and learning process so that students actively develop their potential to have religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and the skills needed by themselves, society, the nation, and the state. Quality education is a crucial foundation in the development of a country. In Indonesia, the effort to achieve quality education is a national goal enshrined in the preamble of the 1945 Constitution (UUD 1945), which is to educate the nation's life. The 1945 Constitution also mandates the Indonesian government to strive for and organize a national education system as stated in Article 31 of the 1945 Constitution.

Besides being a national goal, quality education is also an objective that must be achieved in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations (UN). The SDGs themselves represent a global and national commitment to improving the welfare of society, encompassing 17 global goals and targets for 2030 declared by both developed and developing countries. One of the SDG goals, the fourth goal, focuses on education and aims to ensure inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all and to promote lifelong learning opportunities for everyone.

Indonesia has shown a strong commitment to achieving the SDG goals through various policies and programs. These include free education policies, improving the quality of teachers, implementing more relevant curricula, using technology in learning, and efforts to increase access for children with special needs. Despite these efforts, many challenges remain, such as educational disparities between regions and social groups, and the need for continuous improvement in education quality.

According to the Sustainable Development Report 2023, Indonesia ranks 75th out of 166 countries globally with an index score of 70.16, an improvement from 2022 when it ranked 82nd out of 163 countries with an index score of 69.16. In Southeast Asia, Indonesia is ranked 4th, below Thailand, Vietnam, and Singapore. Of the 17 SDG goals for Indonesia, there are three goals where achievements are on track or can maintain their progress, one of which is the fourth goal, which is quality education.

The quality of education in Indonesia remains a significant concern for the government. According to data released by [worldtop20.org](http://worldtop20.org), Indonesia's education ranked 67th in the world in 2024, the same as in 2023 and 2022. This ranking is based on five educational levels: early childhood enrollment rate, elementary school completion rate, middle school completion rate, high school graduation rate, and college graduation rate. According to World Population Review data, Indonesia's education ranking was 54th in 2021.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) released the results of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2022, an international assessment program that tests and measures the knowledge, skills, well-being, and equity of 15-year-old students. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology stated that Indonesia's ranking improved by 5 to 6 positions compared to the 2018 PISA results. However, the scores in each research subject showed a significant decline compared to the global average.

The World Population Review's report titled "Average IQ by Country 2022" indicated that the Intelligence Quotient (IQ) level of Indonesians is relatively low, ranking 10th out of 11 countries in Southeast Asia and 130th globally. This highlights the need for continuous improvement in the quality of education in Indonesia.

## **METHOD**

The method used in the research is a qualitative descriptive method. Through a descriptive approach, it is expected to obtain an overview of efforts to develop quality education as one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Indonesia. Data collection techniques are carried out through literature studies by gathering secondary data from publications by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs, as well as other relevant publication sources.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

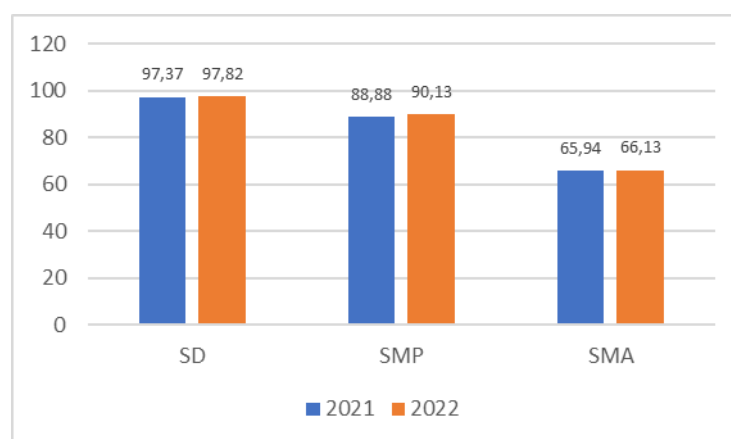
### **Overview and Achievements of Quality Education in Indonesia**

Education is one of the essential pillars in the development of a country. In Indonesia, education has experienced significant progress in recent decades, marked by increased access, participation, and quality of education. Education is one of the government's priorities in

continuing sustainable development. Quality education, as one of the SDG goals, has many indicators that illustrate the achievement of this goal. Generally, education in Indonesia still has many shortcomings, especially in the outer and remote areas.

The proportion of children and adolescents in Grade 5, Grade 8, and age 15 who achieve at least a minimum proficiency level in reading and mathematics is one of the indicators of quality education. The proportion of children in Grade 5 and Grade 8 with proficiency in reading and mathematics in 2022 was 61.53 percent and 58.98 percent, respectively, showing an increase compared to 2021, which was 53.47 percent and 50.78 percent. However, reading proficiency for Grade 11 experienced a decline from 52.1 percent to 49.52 percent.

The completion rate of students is one of the important indicators in education. The completion rates for elementary school (SD or equivalent), junior high school (SMP or equivalent), and senior high school (SMA or equivalent) increased in 2022 compared to 2021 at all levels. This indicates an increasing level of education that students can complete. However, a point of concern is the percentage of students completing senior high school (SMA or equivalent), which was only 66.13 percent in 2022.

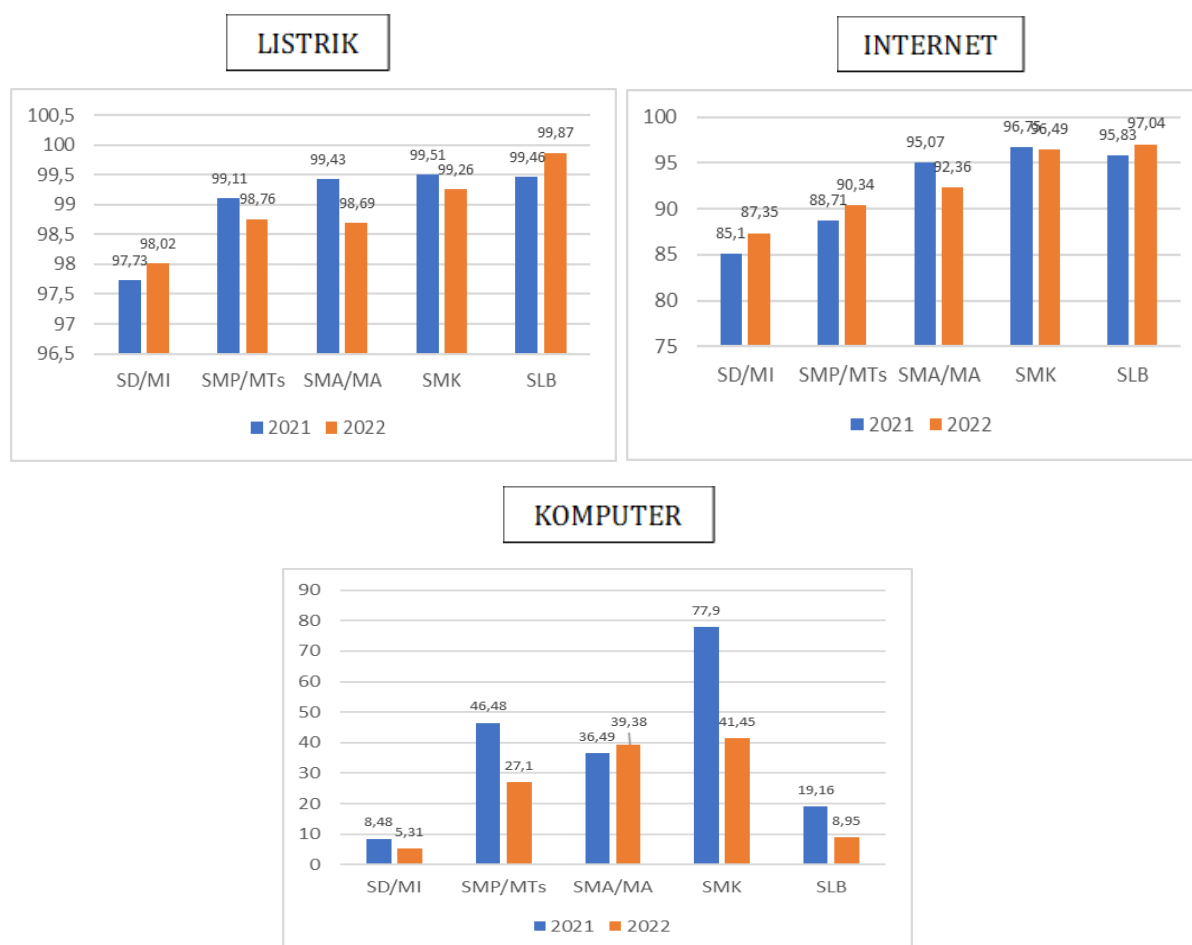


Graphic 1. The Percentage of Students Completing Primary, Junior High, and Senior High School or Equivalent Education Levels.

Source: Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS), processed independently

Basic education for children is a crucial indicator in enhancing the human resources of the population for future development. According to data from BPS, there were still 0.61 percent of children not attending elementary school (SD) in 2022. This is quite concerning as it indicates that there are still children who have not experienced basic education, although this figure decreased from 0.65 percent in 2021. Additionally, there were still 6.94 percent of children not attending junior high school (SMP or equivalent) and 25.52 percent not attending senior high school (SMA or equivalent) in 2022.

Literacy is the ability to recognize letters and read. According to data from BPS, the literacy rate in Indonesia for people over 15 years old was 96.35 percent in 2022. This is an improvement compared to 2021, when the rate was around 96.04 percent. However, this situation is still concerning, as approximately 3.65 percent of people over the age of 15 are still unable to read.

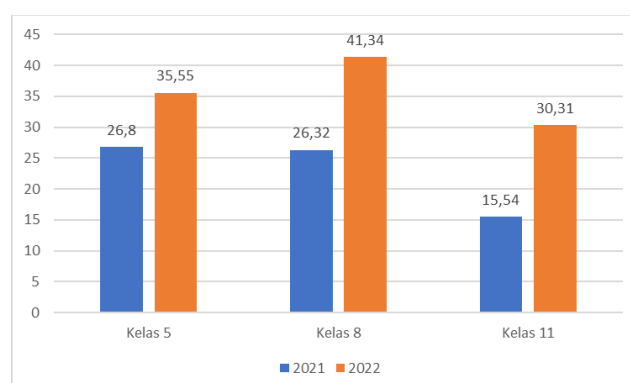


Graphic 2. Proportion of Schools with Access to Electricity, Internet, and Computers by Education Level, 2021 and 2022

Source: Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS), processed independently

Access to electricity, internet, and computers in schools is a key factor in supporting the quality of education. With technological advancements, the education sector is also expected to keep pace. According to the data, the proportion of schools with access to electricity and internet is already quite high. However, access to computers remains relatively low, with less than 50 percent of schools having access to computers in 2022.

Bullying is another issue that frequently occurs, particularly in schools and among teenagers. Bullying in the school environment can hinder the creation of quality education. The learning process for children who are victims of bullying can be significantly disrupted. According to data from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, the incidence of bullying among students in grades 5, 8, and 11 increased in 2022 compared to the previous year. This issue needs special attention from the government, as bullying can impede the national education goals aimed at achieving quality education.



Graphic 3. Percentage of Students Who Experienced Bullying in the Last 12 Months, 2021 and 2022

Source: Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS), processed independently

The success of an education system is closely tied to the role of teachers. Enhancing the human resources of teachers cannot be overlooked. Teachers who possess high competency and advanced education levels are expected to be the spearhead of success towards achieving quality education. According to data from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology and the Ministry of Religious Affairs, only about 31.67 percent of teachers had teaching certificates in 2022. This issue should receive serious attention from the government to improve teacher resources through the certification process. In terms of teacher education, around 82.61 percent of teachers have at least a bachelor's degree (S1) or a diploma 4 (D4) qualification. However, the percentage of teachers with such qualifications is still low at the kindergarten/early childhood education (TK/RA) level.

### Strategies Towards Achieving Quality Education as one of SDGs Goal

Quality education is one of the crucial pillars in the development of a nation. When examining the government's efforts and achievements in realizing quality education, there are still many indicators that need improvement. To achieve this goal, the government requires appropriate strategies to overcome the existing obstacles and deficiencies. The government is quite serious about addressing all educational issues in terms of preparing the education budget. According to Law Number 20 of 2003, the minimum education budget is 20 percent of the State Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBN) or the Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBD), excluding teacher salaries and official education costs. However, problems frequently arise related to the education budget. Budget constraints, especially in remote areas, ineffective fund distribution, and frequent corruption of education funds often become obstacles. This hampers the improvement of education quality. Strategic steps needed to address these problems include increasing transparency and accountability in the use of the education budget. This can be done by regularly publishing information on the use of the education budget, making it easily accessible to the public. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of the use of the education budget, both from within the government and through public participation, are necessary to ensure that the budget is used optimally and in accordance with the intended goals.

Primary education is mandatory for citizens. The government is obliged to provide primary education for its citizens in accordance with Article 31 of the 1945 Constitution. The fact that there are still Indonesian children who do not experience primary education remains a significant challenge for Indonesia's education system. It is recorded that about 0.61 percent

of children do not attend primary school or its equivalent, and approximately 6.94 percent of children do not attend junior high school or its equivalent. Improving access to education in remote areas, such as building schools and providing good road access, is expected to increase school participation rates for children. Additionally, raising public awareness of the importance of education can help reduce the number of children who do not attend school.

Improving school infrastructure is crucial for enhancing education quality. Access to electricity for schools must be prioritized, especially in remote areas. Electricity is a fundamental need that supports education quality. Besides electricity, access to computers and the internet is also a focus of the government. The world of information technology has become an educational necessity today. The government is obliged to implement basic infrastructure development programs, including electricity, internet, and computers. Partnering with the private sector can also enhance school access to the internet and computers. In addition to improving infrastructure, the quality of teachers in using information technology devices must also be considered. Teachers' ability to operate computers is expected to integrate technology into the learning process, making it more interactive and of higher quality.

In addition to focusing on students and infrastructure, the quality of human resources among educators also needs to be improved. The fact that there are still teachers with education levels below a Bachelor's degree or equivalent should be a concern for everyone. Besides educational qualifications, the number of teachers with teaching certificates is still relatively low. Enhancing teacher quality is crucial for achieving quality education. The government is expected to improve the quality of educators in Indonesia. Providing scholarships to teachers to continue their education can be a solution for improving their quality. Financial constraints are a significant barrier for teachers to further their education, so scholarships can enable them to continue their studies. Additionally, improving teacher quality can also be achieved by widely opening certification processes and professional teacher training programs.

Facilities and infrastructure are key factors in improving the quality of education in Indonesia. Beyond that, students need to feel safe and comfortable at school. Students should perceive school as a place where they can learn and socialize comfortably, safely, and healthily. However, bullying cases still occur in Indonesia. This can hinder the improvement of education quality in Indonesia. Bullying cases must be given serious attention and addressed firmly. Students have the right to receive education in a safe environment at school. Perpetrators of bullying should be dealt with strictly according to the prevailing laws. Moreover, strengthening the practice of religious values and Pancasila in schools needs to be enhanced to teach and build a school culture that promotes equality, diversity, and mutual respect among students and other school members. Creating a reporting system, both from the school and the police, should be safe and easily accessible for bullying victims so they feel comfortable reporting bullying incidents they experience.

## CONCLUSION

One of the goals of the SDGs, specifically the fourth goal, is quality education. In addition to being an SDG objective, quality education is also mandated by the 1945 Constitution, which ensures quality primary education for its citizens. However, the government still faces many challenges and deficiencies in achieving this. The development of adequate facilities and infrastructure, particularly in remote areas, requires special attention. The allocated education funds must be used appropriately and monitored to ensure transparency and accountability in their use. Additionally, the quality of human resources among educators needs to be improved to ensure the overall quality of education in Indonesia



continues to rise. From the students' perspective, they must feel comfortable and safe while learning at school, especially concerning bullying cases. Clear sanctions and legal actions against bullies must be enforced to create a safe and comfortable educational process in Indonesia.

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