

Editorial: Why Teachers Certification is necessary

Friday, 24 August 2007

Jakarta (Suara Pembaruan: (22/08/07) The government is currently preparing the draft of the Government Regulation (RPP) on Teachers which provides the details concerning the Law No 14 / 2005 on Teachers and Lecturers. There are many interesting issue in the draft regulation that we should observe as they concern the efforts to improve education quality in Indonesia.

The draft regulation has a good intention, and it should not make life more difficult for teachers. Because we have to admit that our teachers are still living in deplorable situation.

Education is an important sector for our nation development. Therefore, education has to be handled by certified professionals. Not anyone can become teachers so easily. Besides having a vocation, teachers should fulfill certain set of standards. Otherwise, we will run our education without any clear standards. We will have to suffer the consequences if we let education run by unqualified persons. Being a teacher should not be the last option of those who cannot find any other job.

Under the Dutch administration and until the beginning of our independence, not anyone can become a teacher. Teacher candidates should be students having outstanding academic achievement. They also had to possess a certain talents like singing. Why? Because music is part of human life, music is a tool of education that sharpen intellectuality. The situation has changed now. The best students have been recruited by the industry, business and universities. Those who chose to become teachers are usually not the best students. Formerly, many Malaysians and Singaporeans were studying in Indonesia. They sent their students to Indonesian because our teachers were great. Now, it is on the contrary, we are learning from them.

There's no other way to improve education quality than to carry out education standardization through certification and academic qualification. As a regulator, the government has to be firm in setting out the rules. Like in the medical world, a doctor cannot open a clinic without having a license. The license will be issued if he fulfills certain requirements. Education also needs such standardization. The draft regulation on should be perceived from this context.

There has been criticism saying that the regulation poses many problems for teachers, for instance, they are required to fulfill a certain academic qualification using their own financial means. This has raised concern that only teachers having financial means will get the benefit of the welfare provided by the government. While those having limited financial capacities might be indebted if they insist on pursuing higher education to fulfill the requirement and certification which needs a lot of money. There is also another concern that this might prompt manipulation and irregularities as teachers are busy pursuing formal education diplomas, or 'buying diploma' if necessary .

Despite those negative effects, all of us agree that the regulation was set out to improve education quality. If this country really wants to improve its education quality, the government has to improve teachers "chance" both their salary and certification. Teachers are agents of changes. As long as we ignore teachers, there would never be any improvement in our community. Our teachers are so unfortunate. Don't let this situation persists.