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Principals' Perceptions Pertaining to the Policy Engagement of Driving Organizations (NGOs) in Advancing Education Quality: Curriculum Reform Study

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ABSTRACT

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have assumed a prominent role within the academic landscape of numerous countries. Recently, governmental authorities have granted authorization for NGOs to actively participate in augmenting the quality of educational endeavours. The present research aims to delve comprehensively into the perspectives of school principals regarding the active engagement of NGOs in elevating educational standards within the context of Indonesia. Employing qualitative research methods, the study conducted in-depth interviews with a cohort of five elementary school principals located in Surabaya. This investigative approach underscores the acknowledgment of a multifaceted, dynamic, and contextual reality, marked by inherent subjectivity and fluidity, intertwined within the socio-cultural and political milieu. Employing inductive processes, the research employs techniques of data condensation, encoding, categorization, and theorization to facilitate the analysis of the collected data. The resultant findings from this empirical inquiry have revealed the emergence of three overarching thematic constructs: firstly, the formulation of partnership policies involving driving organizations or NGOs; secondly, the cultivation of shared educational responsibilities; and lastly, the discernible benefits stemming from the active involvement of NGOs. The unfolding of an innovative model, borne out of the collaborative policy framework with NGOs, serves as a distinctive political and institutional approach that facilitates the orchestration of collective efforts. This model notably substantiates its efficacy in fostering mutually beneficial collaborations, thereby introducing novel paradigms, methodologies, and educational resources.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In positing advancing education, formal organizations such as schools are mandated to forge partnerships with external entities, including the community, as the latter's involvement has been shown to exert an influence on education (Maisyaroh et al., 2021; Olumade & Olatoun, 2015). Over the past few decades, civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have progressively assumed greater responsibility in education programs, actively trying to achieve government-designed educational objectives (Ball, 2013). They have been determining and implementing education policy (Ball & Youdell 2008) and have further substantively influenced educational content. Neoliberal ideology has been implicated in the growing prevalence of NGOs involved in education. This is connected with the amplification of decentralization and privatization and the commercialization of the education system, specifically in Indonesia.

Engaging non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to enhance education quality has been a practice spanning decades across numerous Western countries like the United States, England, New Zealand, Australia, Sweden, and Germany (De Saxe et al., 2020). These countries acknowledge that forming partnerships and collaborations yields positive outcomes for both students and educational institutions (Tkachenko, 2019). The challenges faced by education policymakers go beyond the feasibility of private sector involvement; they must also encompass the oversight of external entities by governmental bodies. Key inquiries arising include the program's objectives and advantages; the educational benchmarks setting the intervention apart from the official curriculum; its impact on schools and policy implementation; and the pertinence of these initiatives to educational establishments.

This scholarly article endeavors to examine the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or what is referred to as Driving Organizations (DOs) in the enhancement of education quality, a responsibility that has recently been delegated to them by governmental authorities. The article seeks to delve into the manner in which these entities execute their programs, extend interventions to school principals, assess the magnitude of their influence on educational institutions, and capture the viewpoints of these principals. In order to grasp the initiatives of these prominent establishments, a thorough analysis of the challenges and intricacies they confront within the context of educational reform becomes imperative. The central contention posited is that this novel policy shift has yet to be actualized. Over the past three decades, discernible patterns have materialized within Indonesia's educational framework, characterized by processes of privatization and decentralization, alongside heightened involvement from parents, NGOs, and civil society organizations.

The expanded engagement of Indonesia within the global economic arena has not only fostered competitive economic expansion but has also elicited substantial transformations in the nation's societal fabric. The global dissemination of democratic ideals through the international open market has catalyzed modifications in Indonesia's sociopolitical framework (Antlov et al., 2005). As observed in many sovereign states (Ahmed & Potter, 2005), the Indonesian variant of democracy extends augmented avenues for non-state actors to partake in the ongoing advancement of their society. Among these actors are non-governmental organizations (NGOs), engaged in a diverse array of community-based undertakings with social and economic underpinnings, inclusive of initiatives to enhance educational quality through specialized programs and training (Antlov et al., 2005).

Subsequent to the dissolution of the "New Order" in 1998, a surge in both capitalism and democracy unfolded in Indonesia, consequently amplifying the endorsement and influence of local NGOs within the public domain of the nation, as posited by Antlov et al. (2005). Consequently, the interplay between NGOs and the Indonesian central government underwent alterations. Consequently, NGOs garnered more space and recognition as collaborative entities with the national administration, rather than being positioned as antagonists (Antlov et al., 2010). Ahmed and Potter (2006), in a more explicitly delineated manner, delineated the metamorphosis of NGO-government relations into an exemplary model of collaboration (Antlov et al., 2010).

The involvement of local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the advancement of education in Indonesia has witnessed a noticeable upsurge in recent years (Antlov et al., 2005). The government,

with a determined focus on decentralizing and privatizing the education framework, is actively facilitating the integration of these entities within the educational sector (Mok, 2004). Analogous trends can be observed in other nation-states as well (Carnoy, 1999; Carnoy & Rhoten, 2002; McGinn, 1997). Moreover, the global economic landscape has exerted a significant influence on the trajectory of decentralization and privatization within Indonesia's educational landscape. Indeed, this wave of educational reform is predominantly impelled by the principles of free market capitalism (Reid, 2005), emphasizing the pivotal role of competition within an environment where government regulations are minimized, thereby propelling economic growth (Reid, 2005).

To substantiate this theoretical stance, the government has devolved substantial authority over the education sector to district administrations and private entities (Amirrachman et al., 2009). However, a pivotal policy shift occurred in 2019, when the government embarked on an unprecedented course of action: officially engaging NGOs/DOs and allocating funding to amplify the caliber of education. This initiative involved the allocation of substantial financial resources and the selection of specific DOs to intervene in educational institutions, primarily conducting training sessions for school principals and educators (Kemendikbud, 2019).

The fundamental concept underlying the reform of the curriculum centers around the idea of core proficiencies. This aligns with the global trend of emphasizing competencies in education, a framework championed by institutions like the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), as well as countries including Singapore, Finland, China, and the United States. During the decade commencing in 2000, Indonesia underwent a shift in its educational aspirations, prioritizing scientific and thematic learning while continuing to underscore the cultivation of character traits. Indonesia's overarching aim is to equip individuals for forthcoming life and vocational roles (Mustofa et al., 2021; Qoyyimah, 2018).

Moreover, the reform of the recent curriculum (2019), denoted as "merdeka belajar" (freedom to learn), entails accompanying measures, including the policies of empowering educators and organizations. This curriculum has introduced the concept of a 'Pancasila Student Profile' as a benchmark for educational excellence, emphasizing character development rooted in the guiding principles of the Indonesian state, which serve as a foundation for the nation's affairs (Satriawan et al., 2021). This encompassing notion encompasses moral and intellectual education, along with fostering student growth (Makarim, 2019). Notable changes include the addition of objectives aimed at instilling in students the aptitude to learn how to learn, promoting information assimilation, knowledge acquisition, problem-solving, and collaborative learning skills. This transformation also aims to establish psychological security within the learning process, thereby nurturing a disposition for inquiry, experimentation, and industriousness devoid of the apprehension of failure (Makarim, 2019; Satriawan et al., 2021). The ultimate aspiration underlying this curriculum reform is to imbue students with a Pancasila profile. The government's resolute commitment to realizing this objective compels them to engage in partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and allocate resources for their involvement in schools through principal and teacher training.

The most recent revision, referred to as "merdeka belajar" was introduced in tandem with the proposed policy known as 'driving organizations' in 2019 and subsequently enacted in 2020. In contrast to earlier reforms, educators are endowed with substantial autonomy. Moreover, teachers are encouraged to be active contributors to the curriculum, signifying their possession of the latitude to interpret and encourage originality and inventiveness in educational approaches. They assume roles not solely as executors of the curriculum but also as collaborators in its creation (Makarim, 2019).

To cultivate student accomplishments, educators are required to engage in innovative thinking and formulate distinct pedagogical methodologies (Faiz and Kurniawaty, 2020). These adjustments to the curriculum hold profound significance for the growth of both students and instructors, necessitating diligent implementation to effectuate enhancements (Ng, 2009; Tikkanen et al., 2020; Yuen et al., 2012). However, it is imperative to recognize that curriculum reform does not inherently ensure the

establishment of enduring modifications in everyday educational practice (Cuban, 2013; Tikkanen et al., 2020), nor has it been consistently operationalized within the classroom context (Park & Sung, 2013).

Numerous studies corroborate the pivotal role of school principals and educators in the effective enactment of a robust curriculum (Kirk & MacDonald, 2001; Little, 1993; Park & Sung, 2013). Specifically, comprehending their viewpoints concerning curriculum reform and their convictions is pivotal for the proficient execution of the curriculum within the prescribed objectives. Their insights, beliefs, and perceptions exert a crucial influence on the efficacious implementation of reforms (Park & Sung, 2013). Consequently, the government engaged non-governmental organizations (NGOs), subsequently termed 'driving organizations,' to intervene and provide comprehensive training for school principals and teachers, aiming to ensure the successful realization of reform objectives.

The Indonesian Ministry of Education has taken measures to define and regulate strategies pertaining to the integration of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) into the educational framework via collaborative community initiatives. The present policy has been codified under Regulation Number 32 of 2019, delineating overarching directives for the allocation of governmental support aimed at augmenting the professional growth of educators (Kemendikbud, 2019). The chosen NGOs possess a documented history of effectively executing programs centered on teacher training and mentorship.

The central objective of this scholarly investigation revolves around an exploration of the implementation of the NGOs/DOs Program within educational institutions, coupled with an exploration of principals' viewpoints concerning its ramifications. The research endeavors to elucidate the acquisition and interpretation of the policies within the school community by means of comprehensive interviews designed to unravel their beliefs, perspectives, and behaviors. It is hoped that this study will emerge as a valuable repository of insights for stakeholders within public education, including policymakers, educators, and school principals. This study casts light upon the prospects and challenges inherent in the integration of government-funded driving organizations to enhance the caliber of education

2. METHODS

Employing a qualitative research framework, the current inquiry delves into diverse perspectives and abundant textual resources (Shawer, 2017). Specifically, the study endeavors to comprehend principals' outlooks and delve into the significance they derive from their encounters (Patton, 2002). Rooted in this methodological stance is the acknowledgment of a multifaceted interplay of organized, adaptable, personal, pliable, and dynamic realities, interwoven with assorted connotations and interpretations forged within the realms of political, cultural, and societal contexts (Carr and Kemmis, 2004). In this vein, the present investigation aspires to scrutinize the perspectives, lived encounters, attitudes, and convictions of school principals concerning the participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) - manifested through interventions - in the training and mentorship of educators and school principals.

A diverse or heterogeneous sampling strategy were used to ensure the richness and depth of data collection (Creswell, 2002), selecting principals from various schools. Selected included five principals from schools situated in Surabaya, East Java. These chosen principals boast extensive experience spanning 10 to 20 years and were deliberately selected to exhibit a range of diverse characteristics, aiming to encapsulate a wide spectrum of perspectives (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). This research encompasses both public and private primary schools, using random and distributed selection techniques, with a focus on the elementary level due to the current governmental emphasis on enhancing education quality from the elementary school level onwards (Kemendikbud, 2019).

The data employed in this study emanated from in-depth interviews conducted with school principals. These interviews were conveniently arranged in office and school settings, accommodating the participants' schedules. Prior to the interviews, clarified the research's objectives and scope and obtained participants' consent for the entire interview process. The one-on-one interviews lasted between 45 to 60 minutes, conducted in the Indonesian language ('Bahasa Indonesia'). All interviews were

meticulously recorded and transcribed verbatim (Lodico et al., 2010). These transcriptions were then translated from Indonesian to English by proficient bilingual experts. Furthermore, the principals who were interviewed received transcripts of their responses, granting them the opportunity to review, amend, elucidate, or provide supplementary information (Thyer et al., 2019).

To foster an environment of ease, familiarity, and candidness with participants, it became imperative to cultivate effective communication and establish relationships prior to commencing the interview process (Lodico et al., 2010). Furthermore, the interview initiation encompassed an initial broad inquiry regarding the participants' professional career experiences. As part of a more comprehensive interview, principals were then posed questions aligning with the study's specific objectives, for instance: "What are your perceptions regarding the involvement of NGOs/DOs in education advancement? Within the context of NGO/DO engagement at your school, what roles do you, as principals, play? How do you assess their contribution to the school? How has their training been executed within the school thus far? Have discernible changes emerged? What pivotal aspects have they contributed to that have influenced, transformed, and bolstered the capacities of principals?" These interview queries effectively address the core research focus

The process of data analysis advanced iteratively (Lodico et al., 2010), with ongoing analyses conducted to intricately illuminate the perspectives of diverse participants (Ralis & Rossman, 2012). The analysis encompassed three distinct phases: condensation, coding, and classification. Condensation aimed at collating comparable data pertinent to the study's objectives, while coding sought to encapsulate the core essence of the data and its contextual significance concerning the participation of NGOs/DOs in enhancing the competencies of principals and teachers (Gibbs, 2007). Additionally, akin statements were grouped together to extract overarching meanings and establish categories (classifications), subsequently refining these categories to harmonize the data with findings that unveiled a comprehensive, harmonious, and cohesive portrayal (Richards and Morse, 2013). Ultimately, discernible patterns and narratives emerged, offering a coherent foundation that holds promise for generalization and further development in subsequent research endeavours.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that school principals elucidate three pivotal motifs: The collaborative policy with driving organizations or NGOs; the collective accountability for education; and the advantageous aspects of NGO participation. These motifs are interconnected and exert influence on the configuration and execution of educational policy.

3.1. The Collaborative Policy with Driving Organizations or NGOs

In broad terms, the policy objective of integrating NGOs into the education system is to enhance the competencies of educators and school principals by enlisting the participation of mass organizations within the educational sector, a measure substantiated by observable improvements in student learning outcomes. The Ministry of Education has formulated the policy of NGO engagement with the purpose of fostering literacy, numeracy, and character development across 34 provinces within Indonesia's educational landscape. This framework has been devised to actualize public objectives through augmented collaborative resources. As validated by the findings of this study, school principals perceive the Ministry of Education's policy concerning the involvement of these driving organizations as rooted in the notion that shared decision-making and joint accountability will yield a workforce dedicated to advancing educational values and objectives. Andi's perspective resonates with this sentiment.

The Ministry of Education leads the partnership process with driving organizations with representatives from various NGOs involved in education... combine strength, knowledge, and resources. . .to achieve educational goals

Mechanisms for implementing the partnership policy with NGOs are evident. Furthermore, from the perspective of school principals, this policy extends beyond merely augmenting the resources available to primary school teachers. The Ministry has, in addition, established innovative, technological, and pioneering approaches aimed at enhancing literacy, numeracy, and character development. According to the principals, these three facets hold paramount importance for students, signifying that students are not solely adept but also possess commendable character traits. All the involved NGOs have actively engaged as partners in intervening with teachers and principals, as the attainment of high-quality student outcomes is contingent upon the competence of teachers and principals. The principal asserts that this collaborative model draws upon the successful experiences of partners who have effectively enhanced the proficiency of teachers in Indonesia. This, in turn, facilitates all stakeholders within the school to make more informed, professional, and authentic decisions. Tatik delineates the process as follows.

The nice thing about the policy is that it's not just a statement of intent... but action... and a means of utilizing technology... pioneering... which allows me to upgrade my knowledge and skills.

Hence, it can be deduced that according to school principals, collaborations with NGOs within the realm of education function as a catalyst for favorable transformation, marking a stride toward instituting a novel paradigm for advancing education quality. This paradigm embodies notions of ingenuity, enterprise, and strategic harnessing of Indonesia's potential to cultivate an enhanced education system and diversify educational approaches. Notably, this policy diverges from the erstwhile conventional bureaucratic structure and the entrenched role of formal education, as it is perceived to possess heightened efficiency, innovativeness, and dynamism. Additionally, it holds sway over the professional growth of teachers, akin to furnishing support, fortification, and accentuating the principal's position as an ongoing learner.

3.2. Shared Responsibility for Education

Collaborations with driving organizations or NGOs within the educational sphere emerge as an outcome of the aspiration to foster collaboration and simultaneously shoulder collective accountability for enhancing education quality, all with the aim of attaining shared objectives, advancing initiatives, or addressing issues. The principal articulates the challenges encountered within education thus far, primarily highlighting the disparity between educational needs and the available resources. Notably, teachers contend with a multitude of administrative requisites necessitated by government regulations, which inevitably curtails the time available for them to translate their ideas into action and nurture their creative capacities (Mustofa et al., 2023). "The Ministry of Education is intensifying its efforts to enhance the caliber of teachers" is a sentiment that underscores the situation.

...Regarding the results, space for creativity and autonomy has been very limited for teachers so far, including teaching that is differentiated is very lacking. . . although there is a need to implement it... this definitely has an impact on student achievement. The existence of this DOs provides new hope for teachers

School principals encounter heightened expectations and requisites both at the broader national and more localized regional levels. According to certain school principals, the government's aspiration to elevate schools in terms of student and teacher accomplishments is attributed to social encouragement and political deliberations, with amplified prominence, promotional undertakings, and public relations endeavors playing a role. This viewpoint is corroborated by Sulis.

Driving schools and driving teachers have become a differentiator. This program is driven to create visibility, academic climate, and improve the image of public education... although empirically we cannot be sure whether this will really have a significant impact on student achievement

From their perspective, the introduction of NGO involvement has elicited feelings of envy among other mass organizations and heightened internal conflicts within both social and educational institutions. Nevertheless, the school principal contends that the substantial financial allocation by the ministry holds significance, as it is meticulously directed towards the targeted endeavor of enhancing teacher competence. Yet, a prevailing challenge pertains to the sustainability of this effort – whether it will establish a lasting impact or remain transient. The principal remarks, "The certainty eludes us, but failure in sustainability would render it all futile." Presently, the ministry is actively championing partnerships with NGOs through training initiatives. In this vein, the Indonesian government upholds its responsibility to fund public education and ensure its accessibility to the general populace by bolstering teacher quality.

3.3. The Advantages of Engaging Driving Organizations/NGOs

The policies related to the engagement of NGOs bear ramifications for the development of pedagogical competence among teachers, particularly concerning their knowledge and instructional skills. They have implemented a pedagogical approach akin to that conceptualized by Olsson (2010), encompassing preliminary observations before instruction involving diagnostic assessments to discern students' attributes and inclinations, as well as to grasp teaching and learning theories. This practice was corroborated during the interview session. Additionally, they strategize their lesson planning to align meticulously with the distinctive tendencies of students, thereby ensuring precise congruence. Moreover, they already exhibit commendable teaching skills. Nevertheless, variations persist among teachers regarding the quality and quantity of their respective competencies. The principal contends that the policies instated by driving organizations (DOs) have substantial implications for enhancing teachers' teaching-related knowledge and skills, particularly encompassing a shift in mindset. The subsequent excerpts, extracted from the principal's interview, are amalgamated into a singular passage due to the similarity of their responses.

...In our opinion, the involvement the NGOs is very positive and significant, we gain knowledge and new insights as well as skills in teaching. The most important thing is to change our mindset, moreover we are school principals, meaning we have the desire to change and move our community at school because skills development will definitely get better over time if we want to change

Pedagogical adaptability constitutes another notable element that yields the learning outcomes facilitated through collaborative resources. An illustration of this is the pedagogical flexibility that empowers principals to navigate diverse educational scenarios. This is exemplified by the "*merdeka belajar*" policy, which now furnishes them with the authority to construct novel agendas tailored to the multifaceted societal, academic, and emotional necessities of students hailing from low socioeconomic backgrounds. For principals, pedagogical flexibility emerges as an indispensable asset, enabling them to exercise autonomous decision-making and address the exigencies of their roles, while concurrently being advantageous for educators. This adaptability epitomizes a form of governmental trust, signifying confidence in their professional capacities and bestowing administrative autonomy that empowers them to actualize the ambitions of NGOs by stimulating initiative, innovation, and creativity. It rests upon precise determinations that facilitate the management of students, time, and locale, akin to the role of a curriculum developer. Eva's perspective resonates with this notion.

...It was my dream to become a curriculum developer even before becoming a school principal, and maybe many teachers so that we can be as creative as possible. Fortunately, our school is also proactive

and does not rely on textbooks, so I took advantage of this to fulfil the government's wish to become a curriculum developer. This is a positive thing that makes us creative and innovative

3.4. Discussion

NGOs exert a direct influence on the essence, content, interpretation, and enactment of educational policies. Governments across various jurisdictions are collaborating with the private sector to align non-governmental endeavors with public-sector education goals. Much scholarly discourse delves into the notion of a "new government" or "new regime," signifying the emergence of an alternative paradigm characterized by distinctive political and institutional modalities for orchestrating collective undertakings (Peters & Pierre, 2006, p. 27). Advocates supportive of NGOs view their involvement in education as an effective strategy for organizing and harnessing the benefits linked to private sector participation in educational endeavors.

As posited by Patrinos et al. (2009), partnering with NGOs introduces novel concepts, methodologies, and resources to the realm of public education. This aligns with institutional theory, wherein institutions, despite their inherent stability, are increasingly susceptible to both incremental and punctuated transformative processes (Rowan, 2006; Yurkofsky, 2017). Institutional theory mandates cooperation between organizations and their external environment. The reciprocal interplay of these two factors engenders an impact on the structures, norms, and traditions of societies and communities, in tandem with their operations and the changes that ensue within them.

The research findings demonstrate that principals firmly hold the conviction that collaborations with NGOs serve as drivers of educational reform by infusing innovation, knowledge, and motivation. This collaborative endeavor functions as a shared instrument to optimize and harness the latent potential within educational institutions (Wohlstetter et al., 2004). In essence, while the interaction between NGOs and the Indonesian education system historically exhibited conflicts, the current trajectory is one of collaborative advancement in education. The adoption of policy reforms grounded in principles of shared decision-making and accountability within education, including the provision of schools' autonomy, would notably attenuate the historical disconnect that characterized the relationship between school principals and policymakers. Such an approach would harmonize the human resources of both systems to cultivate synergistic outcomes.

School principals accentuate another pivotal aspect: their conviction that the policy comprehensively defines their roles, interests, authority, and obligations as they spearhead the implementation of the "*merdeka belajar*" policy. This policy hinges on participatory leadership as its cornerstone for success (Mustofa et al., 2023). Principals perceive this policy as a deliberate endeavor to foster and empower their leadership, extending not solely to school principals but also encompassing teachers as educational leaders both within and beyond the confines of the school environment. This stance serves as a direct affirmation of their active enactment of the "*merdeka belajar*" curriculum reform policy.

School principals maintain the perspective that adeptly managing policies, especially those involving external entities such as driving organizations (Bryson et al., 2006), requires the cultivation of a positive perception by these organizations. Achieving this necessitates the implementation of comprehensive training and assessment mechanisms to avert any perception of ineffectiveness. This entails the adept orchestration of partner responsibilities and accountability to produce discernible educational content and outcomes. Firstly, this entails addressing the Ministry's requisites to enhance teachers' knowledge and competencies. Secondly, it involves navigating the intricate balance between burdens and professionalism. Lastly, it involves grappling with the implications that teacher and school dynamics will undergo post-training.

Nevertheless, educational administrators contend that initiatives jointly funded by multiple stakeholders proved more efficacious, displaying superior effectiveness in addressing the challenge of collective accountability within the academic realm. The effectiveness of incorporating driving organizations into the state's decision-making apparatus is rooted in the Ministry's commitment to

continuous evaluations and requisites. In contrast, programs executed by the Ministry of Education and non-governmental entities aim to fortify principals' leadership capacities, bolster their administrative autonomy and adaptability, thereby fostering initiative, innovation, and creativity (Sagie et al., 2016), all while aiding the realization of the educational potential within the public domain.

4. CONCLUSION

The results of the present study underscore the pivotal role of institutional theory in elucidating the engagement of driving organizations in burgeoning sectors. This engagement aims to facilitate the mobilization of resources and the amplification of intricate undertakings that are challenging to implement. Such collaborations effectively bridge disparities in corporate culture and divergent institutional paradigms, perspectives, ideologies, and values. Hence, it is imperative for policymakers to closely monitor the ramifications of this policy, establish realistic expectations within the bounds of autonomy and responsibility, and conspicuously recognize the need for persistent enhancement of partnerships founded on reciprocal evaluation. Additionally, it is pivotal for all participating entities to adopt active roles in the development, fortification, and sustenance of employed mechanisms, thereby evolving them into standardized components of collaborative educational partnerships. This study offers novel insights into how school principals perceive the participation of NGOs in elevating educational standards through teacher and school principal training. Nevertheless, certain limitations are inherent in this study. Firstly, the participants' scope is confined to the principals' perspectives, even though these perspectives are rooted in factual evidence and personal experiences. Generalization of these findings necessitates further studies conducted within a sociocultural context. Secondly, interviews with school principals were conducted during training sessions. A longitudinal study is essential to explore how school principals' perceptions evolve after years of collaboration with NGOs on diverse projects. Lastly, this study exclusively concentrates on principals' viewpoints. While it provides an initial comprehensive perspective on government-NGO partnerships and collaboration, further research is indispensable to explore the perspectives of teachers, NGO administrators, policymakers, supervisors, students, and parents.

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