We were not given access to proper education

Marthin Senandi

Papua lags behind in education because we have not been given equitable access to education programmes. This is not because we were incapable. We were capable, but we were excluded. Yes, maybe the available education funds were used up by our cousins from other regions. And education really is important because without education, governance cannot run smoothly.

So, if autonomy is granted, we will accept it if there really is no other option so that our children can be directly sent to learn. It will not be too difficult if we want to see to it. If we want to send our children to study in schools of higher learning abroad, we will be able to. I think they too can learn, because they too have brains.

For example, before, we worked ourselves half to death to teach the children in the interior, but now they can learn. I see this in the area of arithmetic. Originally, we on the coast only used to count to five. Just think of how counting is done in our local languages: we count up to five, then add one, and another one, and so on, up to ten. Beyond ten you have to keep on adding ones. But in the interior, the Ekari counted from one to ten in their tribal language. So their brain power was already strong. It was only that they and all of us had not yet been given an opportunity! Compared to our brothers and sisters elsewhere, we are not that far behind. We have just not been given the opportunity.

Educational institutions already exist here. But not many academic institutions are available; they are still very limited. There are already a lot of public schools, but there is also a lot of unemployment. There is academic-level education in places such as Jayapura and Manokwari. You could say that the locations of the universities are the same as they were before (in the Dutch period). Formerly, to go to junior high school (PMS) we had to go to Hollandia. And now, it is high time that our chil-

dren should be able to attend the existing universities. And this is what is not yet going well.

Actually, there are a lot of people from the younger generations who can take over our positions in the world of government administration, but they are limited to certain positions only. This is the problem. If they were given the opportunity to lead, they would certainly be able to implement all the programmes, and everything could work well. But when they are controlled, it is not possible for them to act freely to create programmes in the interest of government here.

NATIVE SONS ARE MARGINALIZED

The young generations of Papua are educated enough, only in applying for jobs, for example, when they take civil service tests, they do not get passed. The newcomers, because they have relations with the leaders, are the ones who get hired instead. I have experienced this a lot, since I am often involved in civil service personnel affairs. I see that there are games that cause our children to be unemployed. I went through this situation myself right here in Nabire after I was transferred here from Manokwari. I was placed in the personnel division in order to try to ensure that local young people could receive help, but the plan did not succeed because of the power games blocking them. I saw that they were no different from me. Because I was struggling in the interests of our people, I opposed the detrimental policies. But ultimately, I left the government to become a member of the Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah (DPRD, Regional Council of People's Representatives), so they continued without further opposition. Thus, many of our children are still unemployed. The immigrants may only have been here for a short time. They too take the tests, and they are the ones who pass. But if you were to measure their intelligence, I do not think you would find any difference.

I think this is one thing that should be given attention to ensure that the situation we are experiencing now does not continue any longer, since these are the ones who could not possibly do things to harm the public. But because they are dissatisfied, they do bad things, such as burning things down here and burning things down there. A few years ago, the DPRD buildings in Nabire were burned by the masses because of the manipulation of civil-servant job applications.

That happens because people feel dissatisfied with the existing policy. If you just urge politely, yes, your message is not likely to be received. Do you have to do something extraordinary to get attention? You may need to burn down a parliament building, until it is destroyed, or burn down shops, for that attention. Since the aspirations the people express are not received, so be it, just to open the government's eyes. This is why you must implement good governance, to assure that the interests of the people, from the cities all the way to the villages, are well served.

Take, for example, the road to Sima in the west. It would be easy to build a road to reach there, but the road has not yet come through. However, the road to Lagari (in the east) has already been paved, because transmigrants from Java live there. These are the kinds of discriminations we see all the time, although other people may not notice them. So people want to try out alternative programmes. For instance, there are both newcomer transmigrants and local transmigrants. But to place the two groups together in one location would be difficult. I have thought about and attempted that, but it cannot work yet, the road is blocked.

For instance, take the Wanggar location: You want to place the Ekari people there together with the Javanese, but their ways of life are too different. The Javanese generally work paddies to grow rice, while the Ekari generally breed pigs. They contradict one another. The Javanese do not want to see any pigs around, whereas keeping pigs is precisely what the Ekari do for a living. Similar difficulties have arisen for the people of the villages of Makimi, Mor, or Napan on the coast who were told to move to Lagari. They used to live as fisher folk, but now in Lagari they have to learn to live as farmers, working the paddies to grow rice. I think growing rice is heavy work compared to pounding sago, which is lighter. That is the situation today. We would actually like it if settlements could be developed around each kampung, with a ratio of 75 percent in-migrant and 25 percent indigenous residents. That way, the house construction could all be done there and all the rations given to newly migrated households by the government could be sent there, and not to other places.

Regarding regional revenues, we see that all the regional revenues must be sent to the central government, whereas the region may only get 10 percent. But the pressure we are applying now is for the region to receive 80 percent, or if possible, 90 percent. So that we can use that money to develop the region. I would like to compare Nabire now with

Kebayoran Baru in Jakarta. If we truly set out to develop Nabire, it could become like Kabayoran Baru. In 1963-1964 Kebayoran Baru was not as developed as it is today. But if Nabire is not developed, Nabire will remain just as it is, whereas Kebayoran Baru is already very advanced and constitutes a busy centre. That is the injustice in development today. And that is what is raising a public clamour today. But how are we doing now?

It would be possible for the regional autonomy that is granted to be a truly real and accountable regional autonomy. But in fact it is not! And the government has now given this region special autonomy. Ah, will it be able to work here or not? Because in the past, regional autonomy was once granted, a regional autonomy that was real and accountable. But in reality it did not work out! Probably these are the things that make our people dissatisfied, to the point that all the different circumstances that exist today have arisen.

EXPERIENCE AS A GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATOR

Yes, I have had many experiences in running the government, but let me describe the few that I think might be regarded as essential. In running the government, we administrators or civil servants acted as coordinators in every field. So, formerly, we served as coordinators, whether it had to do with shipping, cash cropping, horticulture, teachers, or religious teachers. If there was no teacher or priest, we could also teach and give sermons. In this way we managed to succeed in developing society. Beyond that, we ran the administration that was there.

From my perspective, today it is as if the situation of the government is in such a rut that it is stagnant and does not run smoothly. Formerly, there was specialization in every field of work. People who worked in plantations, yes, let them work in their plantations. Those who fished were fisher folk. If someone was a teacher, let him teach at a school. But in the free world today, everything runs according to the rules of autonomy. The meaning of the term autonomy is that each region with its own regional head acts on its own. Among the employees who are hired, a medical orderly can also work in the government. A plantation foreman can also become a fisherman. In the end their jobs cannot run well, because they do not know the techniques for implementing them. This is one thing that I see in government today. For example, a fisher-

man is placed in the office of a sub-district head to take care of the administration process. Well, this brings trouble, since his only expertise is his ability to catch fish in the sea. However, that is what you will find in the government now. So what we want is something along the lines of my past experience, namely, 'the right man in the right place'. This is what we really want, so that all the jobs can run as they should.

In this country, Pancasila is applied as 'the way of life'. However, in Papua in particular, we Christians regard the Bible as 'the way of life'. So it is as if the government today is no longer focused. It should be that in government, things are arranged in such a way that everything can be focused.

Regarding democracy, we commonly agree that democracy already existed here in the past. And what is known as *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation or aid) existed here. Indonesia came to apply *gotong royong*, but in a different way than the way known in the lives of the people here. In a village, for example: people want to build a house. Okay, the whole community is mobilized to build the house. But this is also true when you want to clear a garden or field. Almost everyone in the village comes to help work on it. Meanwhile, the person who owns the garden or field prepares food and drink for the people who come to work. So that is how the mutual aid found here works.

The situation of the government today, compared to the past, is that many people are positioned in the wrong places. The same is true in the legislature. Many members of the DPRD sit there, but what do they come there to say? At most, what they do, as expressed in the commonly used term, are 'the Five D's': *datang, duduk, dengar, diam, duit* (come, sit, listen, keep quiet, get money). So it is meaningless; the only reason they want to sit there is money. But they cannot contribute ideas to develop the region. They lack the experience or the knowledge required.

There lies the problem with the implementation of government today. The legislature, which is supposed to carry out supervisory tasks, is, on the contrary, driven by the executive. Because there are no experts with a mastery of different areas of development, they are at best driven by the executive. If the executive says 'do this', yes, they just go along with it! If the executive has programmed something with its funding, it just remain for the legislature to approve it. Agree, agree! This is its weakness. This is different from the situation in the past, for example, in the Nieuw-Guinea Raad (New Guinea Council). There, everything was debated until they arrived at the best and most appropriate solution. The

executive could say: 'Do this!', but the legislature could say: 'No, it should be like this!' Yes, that was how government was back then.

WE HAD TO KNOW THE SITUATION OF THE PEOPLE

I have described my experience inside the government. Now let us turn to the community. We had to get to know the community first. We had to first find out what the circumstances of the people were, how they lived, and approximately how we were going to develop them. Because we might not necessarily be able to apply the theories from school. We might have to learn their language first, so we could would we know what they used there, for example, related to bride wealth and other things. For example, people around Hollandia used beads and stone axes as bride wealth, but for us here in Wandamen such articles would not be favoured. I once went to Depapre, and at the time, people were in the middle of making bride wealth payments. I thought that if they considered that a certain type of stone axe was not number one, it would be better for me to just throw it away since I figured it would not be of value. But they told me: 'Don't throw it away, Sir, leave it. It is still popular as number two.' So those were the problems.

If I look at the current situation regarding *adat* law and everything related to it, *adat* is no longer adhered to the way it was in the past. Nowadays people follow the market. So when the prices of vegetables in the market, or the cost of clothing in the kiosks, rise, then the value of the bride wealth rises, and fines also grow increasingly more expensive. This has no basis at all in *adat* law. I see a lot of this happening in the community.

Regarding the continuity in government down to the villages, yes, someone can be appointed as the village head because he has had a good education. Yet he may not necessarily have influence on the community there. So no matter how smart he may be, whether he is a graduate of high school and so on, or however fluent he may be in speaking Indonesian, it does not necessarily mean he will succeed in governing the community, unless he has strong influence. So this weakness affects the smooth turning of the wheels of government, in the villages as well as in the sub-districts.

Just take, for example, our current situation in Indonesia. There is chaos everywhere. They say that it is caused by inter-religious conflicts. In my opinion, they are not inter-religious conflicts. No! In Christianity we are taught that we are forbidden to kill anyone. The same is true in Islam: killing people is forbidden. Rather, there are sponsors – known today as ‘provocateurs’ – at play. Agreements have been reached by certain people to do so. All the parties should be involved in the process of resolving the existing conflicts.

However, the only ones involved are the people appointed by the government, and not by the community, and they have no influence. For instance, take us, in Nabire. Here we have *kepala suku* (lineage or clan headmen). But these days they are not appointed by the community. They are appointed by the government. Hence, they have no influence in the community. They talk to the people, but the people do not want to listen to them. Or take, for example, the *kepala suku* in the interior: the people do not want to know anything about them, because they are appointed by the government.

There are a great many issues that we are facing in the government right now. A scheme for the resolution of all the problems must be sought so that things can be good again, as they were in our past experience. In fact, we realized at the time that we could not move by ourselves. It was as if we had been lulled to sleep, since all we had to do was to stay put to receive all sorts of benefits. That was also one of our mistakes. Ah, maybe people are now saying: ‘That’s how it was back then!’ In the past, there were things, such as regional revenue, which we could not seek on our own. We just received it from the Netherlands. All the citizens there were obliged to pay taxes, whereas all we had to do here was receive the revenue. But now we must make efforts to find our own sources of regional revenue.

DEMOCRATIC LIFE

Regarding the provincial and regional Councils of People’s Representatives, or DPRD, you could almost say that they function democratically. But there is no working relationship between the district-level DPRD and the provincial-level DPRD – they are disconnected. The regional DPRD only works with the executive in its own area. As

for the representatives of the regions who sit on the provincial DPRD, do they represent the people of Papua or not? Because, what I have seen when I attend their sessions is that those present have been appointed by people with whom they are closely associated. What they discuss there is not the voice of the people. In the working relationships between the district DPRD and the provincial DPRD, you can see that they are institutions that are supposed to control regional government, yet in reality that's not how it works.

There is no contact with the people, since they are not appointed by the people, but by political parties. Therefore, what they fight for are only things in the interest of the parties and in the interests of the party leaders. These are different from the interests of the people. That is the situation we have today. I think that representation through a district system would be more appropriate, so that the people's representatives would come carrying the voices of the districts they represent.

As for the National Parliament or Council of People's Representatives (DPR), compared with the liberal democracy applied in Europe, what is applied here is guided democracy based on Pancasila. So it would be better if a district system were used in the elections for the DPR, so that the people could directly elect the people they want to carry their voices to the DPR. However, if a political-party system is used, representation is confined to the regency level. In practice, up to now, the leaders of the political parties only nominate people who get along well with them to serve as their representatives in the DPR. For example, if Marey were a director on the board of a political party, at most those included would be members of his own family or friends. If I were in that position, perhaps I would have someone from the Senandi family put in the DPR, because I was the leader of a political party. But it would not be a reflection of what the people want! So it would be good if a district system were used in the next general election, so that it could encompass the aspirations of all of the people who take part in the general election. Because like it or not, the people's representatives would have to return to meet with the people who elected them. If this system were used, the members of the DPR would work in a more accountable manner.

Right now, for example, if we just listen in, not by attending the sessions there, but just by following the news on television, the members of the national DPR are not voicing the interests of the people. They are only advancing their own arguments, which do not concern the interests

of the public at all. That is what we see in the capital, as well as in the provinces, and what is more, in the *kabupaten*. If the DPRD in a district only discusses what the district government wants, then the DPRD cannot exercise its regulatory function properly. In the event that the members of the DPRD could exercise their functions properly, they would be able to create their own regulations. But currently they cannot! Until now, the one generating all the ideas for district regulations has been the executive body. They come up with ideas and pass them to the DPRD, which is left only to approve them. The DPRD is unlikely to object. How can they object if they know nothing! The executive has already taken care of it: 'This is how it should be!' It remains for the DPRD to receive it and hold a session about, and for all the members to agree! So they are unlikely to take issue with the existing tradition. It is what we are used to. And I have experienced many examples of this myself while serving as a council member.

As someone who has been a DPRD member, I have personally experienced such things. There is no separation between the executive and the legislature. The executive has a greater role in district government than the DPRD. The legislature does not play the role it is supposed to play. For just one example, take the election of the *bupati*, or district heads. The executive has prepared the candidates on its own. The executive will play the game. The members of the DPRD are given money along with instructions: 'Later, you should choose this person to serve as *bupati*.' That is the ongoing practice here. But the election of the members of the Nieuw-Guinea Raad in the past – now that was what you call democracy.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Indeed, there is some physical development in progress, only it does not suit local needs. Physical development is undertaken because the expenditures budget needs to be fully spent. And not in the interests of the region!

There are some cases we can see. I can give you one example. Here there is a satellite for television. It was arranged for in Jakarta and brought to the province. And the province, as the project leader, undertook the project so that we could receive television broadcasts over here.

But then they said that we had run out of funds, so the project could not be completed. What are we to do? If we complain about it we will be blamed. It is, in fact, the duty of the DPRD to do so, but its sphere of control does not extend that far, despite the fact that this is part of the job of the administration. These are the kinds of things we can see happening here. As an observer, I just sit and watch, and it hurts. Actually there is no need for things to get jammed up, because I think that education is proceeding smoothly and many in today's generation are better educated than we were in the past, yet we are experiencing setbacks.

There are the unsettled matters of things that we saw happen in the past. Yesterday we had the Kongres Pelurusan Sejarah (Congress to set the Historical Record Straight). Actually the participants could tell the truth openly. But because they could not frankly address what had happened, they only told it in an oblique way. Because we still remember the implementation of the Act of Free Choice. A referendum was not held like the one held in East Timor. There was no free campaign here. At the time, they – the members of the Election Consultative Council, or DMP – only carried ballots and were ordered to read them aloud: agree or disagree! After that they just remained silent. At the time we tried to fight back in unison, but unfortunately, not everyone wanted to fight back. Finally those of us who were opposed were arrested and detained. That was the treatment of our people here. Back then the roads of Nabire were not paved as they are today. Beer was given away and encouraged to make the crowd drunk. The members of the DMP for the Act of Free Choice were each given Shag 'Warning' tobacco and a Sony radio. And they voted by acclamation.

The envoys from Nabire were many; I do not remember the precise number. From Nabire Beach, maybe the old man Sembor himself, and many from the interior. When the time came to vote they had already agreed. So when they voted, all of them had to agree. Thus, I cannot blame them! Because indeed, all of us were deceived back then. I still remember the time when I was brought to Jakarta. We went there in several groups. We were fooled into signing a statement: 'Reject the Act of Free Choice!' We should have refused then and there!

At the time we were at the Department of Foreign Affairs in Jakarta. The Minister of Foreign Affairs then was Subandrio. I asked: 'Why hasn't Indonesia taken Malaysian Borneo first? Why is West Irian being taken now?' Well, politicians are used to speaking easily, but I could

not find an answer. What he said was: 'That's something right in our backyard, isn't it, so it's easy for us to take it. But we are taking the one that's far away first.' That was the way he talked. But I made a statement at the time, and the situation was that if I signed the statement that day, I would be sent home immediately! I still remember one friend from here. He used to be the local government head (KPS) of Ilaga. We both signed the statement, and the same day we were flown out of Jakarta to return home to Biak. If we had not, we would have been left to wander around in circles over there. So that is how we were driven to do it. In Jakarta there was the Sarinah department store building. When President Soekarno inaugurated that building, he said: 'Brothers of West Irian, this is the capital city, the micro-buses are all ready, whatever difficulty there is we shall look for a solution'.

THE PROJECTS DO NOT MEET THE PEOPLE'S NEEDS

I look at the men who were taken to serve as members of the DMP. Those of us from the coast might have still talked, but the people from the highlands, once they were given a carton of cigarettes, what is more, Shag 'Warning', and a Sony radio, what more could one expect? These are the things that make us unhappy. The way the administration works is also unsatisfactory. Yes, we have been passed over in all areas! Therefore, it is clear we are not satisfied. And this is what has now become a popular demand.

In carrying out our civil service duties during the Dutch period, financial matters were of the greatest concern. When we collected taxes back then, we could be punished for the loss of even one cent. Any officials who did that had to be removed from their posts and sent to another place. But it is not like that for today's district head or *camat*. Instead, as long as he has the opportunity to serve as *camat*, he enriches himself. He uses the development funds that come in to pay for taxis or other valuables for himself and his family.

Today's *camat* are like the *districtshoofden* in the past. Except that there are so many of them. Yet, based on my observations, not too many of us Papuans get to serve as *camat*. Perhaps this is because we are seen as too stupid to do the work or because of religious considerations. But for our other brothers from other areas, everything goes smoothly. It remains for

us to look at this situation and note the differences. In the Dutch era, if you embezzled even one cent, you could be charged. So in this government, when it ran as it was supposed to run, yes, everything could be kept in order. Now we have a reform era, only I see that it is facing difficulties. People are free to speak their minds, but often, their views are not good, but rather destructive. Because one wants to fight for one's own ideas, one goes along as one likes with one's own organization. If people are unwilling to listen to the opinions of others, ultimately this can lead to chaos in Indonesia. These are the things that we worry about, but we leave to the future generations who will take over from us.

Regarding regional autonomy, whether it is what was formerly called real autonomy, or special autonomy, I do not think it makes any difference, it would be the same. In fact, in my opinion, there is no point. Because the aim, after all, in the future, as in the past, is: practically speaking, local government that is real and accountable. So, special autonomy, along with its funds, will still aim in that direction too. Because autonomy means that we stand on our own, in cultivating the proceeds of our own region to guarantee funds from there are used to develop the region itself, although I think that all the funds will end up going to the centre as well. So there will be a lot of games! If we were to go for federation, it might be better than regional autonomy! But not much better – perhaps it is only the words that are different. Because it is the implementation of development that is unfair! This is what makes us feel unsatisfied. I think this is unlikely to change in the near future either!