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### Alternative of Troubleshooting Inclusive Education in Kindergarten

*Alternativa para solucionar problemas de educación inclusiva en el jardín de infantes*

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#### RESUMEN

Este estudio tuvo como objetivo proporcionar una alternativa para solucionar problemas de implementación de la educación inclusiva en el jardín de infantes. El estudio es una investigación cualitativa, con un enfoque de estudio de caso, en RA. An-Nahl, Yakarta. Las técnicas de recolección de datos utilizadas en este estudio fueron observación, entrevistas, discusiones de grupos focales y documentación que luego se analizan descriptivamente con un modelo de análisis interactivo. Los resultados obtenidos fueron cinco problemas comunes encontrados en la implementación de la educación inclusiva en el jardín de infantes y para superar estos problemas RA. An-Nahl llevó a cabo esfuerzos.

**Palabras clave:** Educación inclusiva, Jardín de infantes, Problemas, Resolución de problemas.

#### ABSTRACT

This study was aimed to provide an alternative to troubleshooting the implementation of inclusive education at the Kindergarten. The study is a qualitative research, with a case study approach, in RA. An-Nahl, Jakarta. The data collection techniques used in this study were observation, interviews, focus group discussions, and documentation which is then analyzed descriptively with an interactive analysis model. The results obtained were five common problems encountered in the implementation of inclusive education in kindergarten and to overcome these problems RA. An-Nahl carried out efforts.

**Keywords:** Inclusive education, Kindergarten, Problems, Troubleshooting.

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## INTRODUCTION

Every child has the right to education and teaching, including early childhood with special needs, in an inclusive education system in kindergarten, without distinguishing children from an ethnic background, race, social status, economic ability, political status, language, geography, sex, religion/belief, and differences in physical or mental conditions. The word "Inclusive" in English means including and including, simply inclusive education is defined as putting children with special needs into regular school along with other normal children (Wijaya: 2019). Yet, inclusive education is not another name of education, inclusive education using different approaches in identifying and trying to solve the difficulties that arise in the school (Poernomo: 2016, pp. 144-150).

However, in reality, not all schools or teachers can implement inclusive education programs, because in its application requires teacher competency skills that can manage inclusive classes, in addition to the availability of adequate facilities and infrastructure to accommodate the needs of all students in implementing effective learning (Harfiani: 2020; Ahmad & Ahmad: 2019, pp. 746-778). The development of inclusive education in Indonesia is indeed a bit left behind compared to the progressive implementation of inclusive education in other countries. Whereas, inclusive education requires well equipped, knowledgeable and competent teachers who can foster the required values, confidence, and support in disabled students, thus preparing them to become capable citizens (Marimuthu & Cheong: 2015, pp. 317-322). Teachers' positive attitude towards inclusive schooling is also fundamental to develop real inclusive education.

Data obtained from the Central Statistics Agency in 2017 on the number of children with needs in Indonesia is 1.6 million. Efforts to provide access to education carried out by the Ministry of Education and Culture, among others, are to motivate schools to organize inclusive education, and to build new exceptional educational institutions. Of the 1.6 million children with special needs, only 18% have received services in inclusive education (Azzahra: 2019).

Studies in Zimbabwe revealed the limited capacity of teachers in teaching practices in inclusive classes, as well as the lack of training for teachers on the inclusive curriculum. While studies in Greece showed that teachers were less positive attitude towards inclusive education indicated increased stress at work. It was also found that there were significant differences between urban and rural schools that implementing inclusive education in terms of accessibility issues in Chile (Tamayo et al.: 2017, pp. 110-116).

Educators' concerns and objections to inclusiveness are mainly based on diversity in learning disabilities and lack of teacher confidence in teaching in an inclusive environment, so policymakers must target training and education, and increase funding for educators. Rejection on the practice of inclusive education related to non-availability or lack of preparation of teachers (Ahmad & Ahmad: 2018, pp. 44-49; Mngo & Mngo: 2018, pp. 1-13; Villalobos & Ramirez: 2018, pp. 1012-1587; Villalobos et al.: 2019, pp. 65-77; Annia et al.: 2019, pp. 1357-1372), teachers do not feel prepared to do responsibilities in the classroom inclusive and often teachers are not sure with what to expect socially.

The supporting factors for the implementation of inclusive education are the beliefs and values of inclusive education practices in schools, namely the involvement and coordination between school, teacher, parent, and community resources. All of those stakeholders should work and in hand to create a quality inclusive education at schools. The importance of implementing effective inclusive education to ensure sustainable community development requires assessment management that will help create a high-quality inclusive education environment in educational institutions and increase the effectiveness of inclusive education. Success in the implementation of inclusive education is the need for a thorough understanding of the philosophy of inclusive schools and facilities organizations, social, and academic adequate (Ahmad & Sahar: 2019, pp. 1540-1543; Sigstad: 2017, pp. 767-783).

Various researches on efforts to overcome the problem of implementing inclusive education have also been carried out by schools, such as a case study in an international school in Hong Kong running a partnership program with parents strongly supports the success of inclusive education. In Africa, a constructive

partnership program has proven to be able to have students in overcoming difficulties and social, emotional, and behavior at school. In London, program guidance and counseling have a role and effect in helping students during the learning process and in addressing environmental problems inclusive education (Flannigan: 2017, pp. 842–857).

## **METHODS**

This type of research qualitative is a case study, in which the authors focus on special cases that occur, both at the individual, group, culture, programs, processes, events, or activities of life. It is defined as an immersive exploration method of realities, presenting investigative nature (Minniti et al.: 2017, pp. 373-377). The case study appears to be the most widely used empirical methodology for social learning research across all bodies of literature reviewed (education, participatory democracy, and natural resource management). In this case, what was observed was a program run by RA.An-Nahl in overcoming the problem of implementing inclusive education. The purpose of using case studies in this research is to explain how and why the case occurred.

Qualitative research chooses deliberately and fully planning the participants and research locations that can help researchers understand the problem under study. The location of this study is Raudhatul Athfal An-Nahl, which is located at Jl. Jeruk Manis IV / 9 Kebon Jeruk, West Jakarta. The time set in conducting this research is in the 2019/2020 school year. The main informants of this study are headmaster as controllers of policy, coordinator for inclusive education as the responsible party, the teacher as the executor of the implementation of inclusive learning children aged early, psychologists, and specialized personnel to handle children with special needs.

Data Collection Techniques are carried out by: first, observation, the researcher goes straight to the field to observe the behavior and activities of individuals at the research location; second, interview the researchers conducted a face-to-face interview with the informant, and also interviewed by telephone (Creswell & Clark: 2011); third, documentation which the data were collected in the form of documents that support the research issues of inclusive education, and fourth, focus group discussion which is designed to collect data using a discussion forum with the themes that have been prepared from the beginning by the researchers.

The data analysis technique used is a qualitative analysis using the Miles and Huberman interactive analysis model, with four sets of analytical activities that continue to exist during the analysis process. Data analysis components, including data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusions (Miles et al.: 2014). The data validity test is done by triangulation techniques, either triangulation or a triangulation method informant. In addition to the model triangulation, also reached by way of extending the observation period.

## **RESULTS**

Based on observations known special services for children with special needs in RA An-Nahl, including examination and control of the development of psychologists, mentoring from special staff, having a companion teacher for students who need assistance, routine therapy performed outside of school by doctors experts and therapists, individualized education programs for children with special needs, team teaching in each class, and establishing partnership relationships.

One of the special services provided RA An-Nahl is the Individualized Education Program (IEP), initiated by Samuel Gridley Howe in 1871, which is one form of education services for children with special needs. Individual education programs are provided specifically for children who need out of regular school hours, after school hours.



**Figure 1.** Individualized Education Program at RA.An-Nahl

This research provides program findings that have been carried out by RA. An-Nahl as an effort to overcome the problem of implementing inclusive education in kindergarten institutions, the program includes:

### **The teacher's up-grade program**

The most common problem is the problem of teacher unpreparedness in educating children with special needs in inclusive classes. In this case, RA An-Nahl provides a workable solution that is by conducting regular training to improve teacher competency.

Based on observations and information obtained from informant-1, routine training at RA An-Nahl is commonly called the "Teacher Upgrade" activity. The teacher upgrade activities at RA An-Nahl are conducted once a week, every Thursday after the completion of learning activities in class, starting at 13:00 until 15:30 WIB. An-Nahl Foundation invites competent resource persons to fill these activities, such as psychologists, therapists, creators of learning media, and resource persons from educational experts from universities and ministries involved in curriculum formulation and so on. The invited speakers were adjusted to the Human Resources Development program that had been designed at the beginning of the school year.

A common problem faced by inclusive schools is the unavailability of shadow teachers for accompanying students with special needs. This occurs due to the inability of parents in funding and no time to accompany their children because they have to work to make a living. The solution made by RA An-Nahl for this case is to continue to establish communication with parents so that they can participate together in their children's education. Suggestions and appeals are routinely and continuously carried out by psychologists and teachers, so parents have more understanding and attention towards their children with special needs; this was revealed by informant 2.

Informants-3 explains for parents of students with special needs themselves are willing to become a teacher assistant, RA An-Nahl provides initial training for 4 days full, from 09:00 until 15:30 for parents to be able to handle children with special needs, parents not only as an ordinary companion but also as a special teacher. Activities include theory and direct practice of children with special needs. The materials taught include early detection of children's problems, management of children's problems, how to cope with children with special needs, and how to develop children's potential. It also needs to be given an understanding that no creation of God fails, every child is special, and they carry different potentials. The belief that Allah SWT created humans with weaknesses and strengths will strengthen parents that their children are the most beautiful gifts and can be proud of.

Based on observations it is known that the activities of teachers at RA An-Nahl in the teaching and learning process at school start at 07.00 until 11.00. After that, the teacher implements an individual learning program, then, the teacher conducts a daily evaluation process, tidy up the class, making learning preparations for tomorrow, midday prayer, and lunch together. Lunch for teachers is provided by the school every day, as well as morning snacks provided by the school every 10:00 hours for teachers and all students. From Monday to Friday, RA An-Nahl's teacher will carry out his activities until 15:00. But on Thursday the teacher left at 16.00 because he was obliged to take part in the teacher upgrade activity. Saturdays and Sundays are school holidays so that teachers also have the opportunity to be with family or take part in other free activities, such as social activities, activities carried out by teacher organizations, teaching, and training to increase insight.

### **The parental involvement program**

One important problem in implementing inclusive education is parental support. According to informant 4, the role of parents is a very big influence on children's development. Parents have the responsibility of providing education to their children. However, the lack of parental understanding of children's education can lead to errors in parenting, which causes children to have problems in social and emotional functioning, meaning that wrong parenting can be one of the reasons children become special needs.

To overcome this, RA An-Nahl implemented a parent involvement program, according to informant-1 three things became the program, namely: first, the participation of parents in every socialization activity, training, or parent meeting; second, parents' active participation to involve their children in every activity held by the school, where parents also play a role as student companions, and thirdly, parents' active roles as teacher assistants, for those who have children with special needs. Parents must be willing to actively communicate and consult with the school, psychologists, and therapists, and routinely provide reports on children's development obtained from the therapist's results.

Based on interview results with Informant-5 it is known that RA An-Nahl in running an inclusive education program cannot be separated from collaboration/synergy with parents of students, especially for those who have children with special needs. Collaboration activities can be done inside and outside the school. Activities in school, for example, children need to get special remedial every day, children also get individually handled from the appointed teacher for several hours/day. While activities outside of school that can be done for children with special needs are children undergoing routine therapy, as well as children undergoing certain additional activities that support them.

According to informant-1, in the beginning, RA An-Nahl had difficulty convincing parents that children with special needs in this school would provide great benefits because they felt that normal children would not be able to focus on learning and could be disrupted. But now all been very supportive, even students in classes have become accustomed to the presence of students with special needs. They have all begun to feel the benefits of inclusive education.

### **Practical application of inclusive program**

One of the important things in implementing inclusive education is having inclusive education-based school management. RA An-Nahl offers a practical application in implementing an inclusive program.

In summary, can be described as follows:



**Figure 2.** Practical Application of Inclusive Program at RA An-Nahl

Figure 2. explains the practical steps that schools can take in applying for an inclusive education program, for more details, informant-1 explains in detail as follows:

(1) Map of Student Characteristics.

The first step to do is mapping characteristics of students, performed at the beginning of the new school year, the start of new admissions to the first two months of the implementation of education at the school. At the time of registration, the teacher who serves as the admission committee for new students will make early detection of child growth. With this early detection tool for child growth and development, the teacher will map into three groups of children, namely: children who are suitable for development, children who are late in development and children who are at risk of special needs.

Then the teacher will visit the entire student home, or RA An-Nahl teachers used to call it a "home visit ". During the first two months of the start of the new school year, the teacher at RA An-Nahl is tasked with visiting all students to their homes, to find out the condition and background of the student's family, as well as the pattern of fostering, so that the teacher gets an overview of the student's character and can provide interventions right during the teaching and learning process that takes place in class. The teacher also explains the role of parental involvement in the success of their children's education.

Documentation about guidance on how to detect children early is very helpful for teachers in trying to know and understand children's behavior needs to get special attention, be it the development phase or special conditions of the child. The information needed is; first, prenatal information, such as genetic disorders, chromosomal abnormalities, transformation, pregnancy infections, maternal age, poisoning during pregnancy, abortion and premature birth; second, information during the birth process, such as prolonged, premature birth, lack of oxygen, birth with assistive devices, pregnancy for more than 40 weeks, and third, information after birth, such as a bacterial infectious disease or a virus, lack of food (nutrition), accidents, and poisoning.

(2) Setting Learning Objectives and Targets

The second step taken by the teacher is setting goals and learning targets. Preparation of learning plan for early childhood based on inclusive education in RA An-Nahl, based on the characteristics of the students, to the teachers and psychologists, have to do the mapping characteristics of students first, it is important to do so in the provision of learning according to the needs and stages of child development, and assisting

teachers in setting learning goals and targets according to children's abilities, designing reporting standards for student development, and designing specific activities in the learning process.

### (3) Flexible Learning Materials

The third step that the teacher must take is to arrange flexible learning material. This means that inclusive learning material is material provided by the abilities and development of children. Similar to set learning goals and targets, the choice of material is also based on the results of the detection of child development. The provision of material is not rigid and monotonous but adapted to students' conditions and is flexible.

### (4) Monitoring and Evaluation

The fourth step in the application of inclusive programs is monitoring and evaluation. This activity is carried out by the principal in the form of supervising the learning process in inclusive classes, examining learning achievements, and evaluating teacher performance in the management of inclusive classes. Monitoring and evaluation are also carried out by psychologists who understand the child's development. Also, because RA An-Nahl is under the management of the Ministry of Religion, of course, the monitoring and evaluation of the monitoring team will still be carried out. The results of the learning money will then be delivered, analyzed, and evaluated in the teacher's up-grade activities conducted every Thursday. Then the results will be submitted to parents as a child development report.

### (5) Co-Teaching

The fifth step is to establish good cooperation with educational consultants or to consult with each other in the learning process (co-teaching). RA An-Nahl has psychologists and special staff who are very helpful and also act as assessors (Monev), as well as consultants in overcoming various problems of inclusive learning. Also, there is good cooperation and communication between class teachers / central teachers and accompanying teachers, and parents of students. This activity gave birth to an intense communication system in establishing relationships between school principals, psychologists, class teachers, teacher assistants, and parents, especially in the delivery of child development reports (progress report).

### (6) Resources

Based on information from informant-1 it is known that in preparing resources in a broad sense, which can support the running of inclusive education programs. He said:

... While this resource still consists of, which from the inside is the determinant of madrasa strategic policies namely the foundation and management team, implementing an inclusive team in the field, namely teachers, psychologists, and therapists. While from the outside, in the form of partnership, namely the Ministry of Religion, child development clinic, campuses majoring in educational psychology, resource persons, and professional organizations...

## **Open Day" community outreach program**

RA An-Nahl made an effort to an activity called "Open-Day", where the community received counseling, especially people in West Jakarta, about children with special needs, their causes, and how to handle them.

This open-day activity is routinely carried out every year, by inviting competent speakers in their fields. Alhamdulillah, now the surrounding community has begun to open up to receive students with special needs. As stated by informant-3 who said:

...related to the role of collaboration between parents and schools, in An-Nahl, the community especially parents have begun to be open for counseling and consultation about handling ABK. I act as a provider of recommendations and advice on what parents and the community should do...

To conduct socialization to the community is not easy it needs the support of many parties to be able to convince the community that children with special needs are also human and they are not something to be avoided, they need affection like normal humans. Also, the community must be made aware not to underestimate and exclude children with special needs. Indeed, their intelligence seems lacking, but maybe we can judge them from another perspective.

### **School potential empowerment**

As an Islamic educational institution that organizes inclusive education programs, which in this case has not received much attention from the government in its management to date, RA An-Nahl must prepare everything to minimize the problems encountered during the implementation of the program.

Preventive steps taken are adjusted to the potential of the school, including those undertaken by RA An-Nahl are: first, knowledge of children with special needs, meaning RA An-Nahl seeks to understand various types of children with special needs and how to handle them; second, determine the types of students with special needs who can be accepted and handled in RA An-Nahl based on the ability of managers, teachers, and infrastructure. During this time, RA An-Nahl has been a child with hearing loss who uses hearing aids, children with visual impairment with visual aids, slow learner or borderline, autism hypo, hyper autism, ADD, ADHD, mental retardation, note physical aids with iron shoes; third, create SOPs for admission and management of special needs students with clear flow and clear division of tasks, both for class teachers, teacher assistants (if any), psychologists, parents, and the community; fourth, carrying out the three main requirements for handling ABK, namely accurate observation, strong support from all parties and appropriate interventions according to the diagnosis; fifth, making IEP, providing optimal interventions, accurate supervision and precise and clear evaluations, and sixth, holding regular and incidental regular meetings for parents, teachers and inclusive teams to discuss further children with special needs development, changes and targets, and determine the next steps based on the results of the evaluation.

### **DISCUSSION**

The parent engagement program implemented by RA An-Nahl is an effort to increase parental understanding, knowledge, and support for ABK and inclusive education. Parents must be involved and responsible for children's education. According to (Chan & Yuen: 2015, pp. 86-97) partnership programs with parents strongly support the success of inclusive education. Collaborative interaction between teachers and parents is fundamental for a successful inclusive classroom. The participation of parents in preparing Individualized Education Program planning in inclusive schools is needed. It was also identified that active family involvement and support were the key elements to the success of inclusive education, especially in early childhood. The parents, as social actors whose involvement is related to positive outcomes of learners with exceptional needs in inclusive settings (Afolabi et al.: 2013, pp. 373-401).

The practical application of inclusive education offered by RA An-Nahl in overcoming the problem of weak school management in the delivery of inclusive education can be used as an alternative for schools that experience difficulties in implementing inclusive education. Also, the guidance and counseling program has a role in overcoming the problem of inclusive education. Furthermore, the success of inclusive education requires support from all levels of the organization in schools, school management, all staff, and teachers (Sigstad: 2017, pp. 767-783). The inclusion movement to prevail schools also must be equipped with multi and multidisciplinary teams adequately prepared to answer to the inclusion demands of disabled students.

Community outreach to children with special needs is carried out by RA An-Nahl on open-day activities. It cannot be denied that community discrimination also affects the decline of children with special needs. For this reason, awareness-raising is an important thing that must be given to the community. It is because, the factors supporting the success of inclusive education are the involvement and coordination between resources, namely schools, teachers, parents, and the community (Lamtur & Gathoo: 2017, pp. 809-822). A collaborative and systematic effort between universities and educational systems is also warranted to ensure a cohesive transition from undergraduate teacher preparation to becoming a competent and effectively trained inclusive teacher which potentially improves the quality of inclusive education implementation. The cooperation of experts and parents to help the teacher became important not only with the diagnosis of pupils, but especially with the definition of special educational methods, procedures, and forms of education, in



assessment and content modification or during the creation of other appropriate physical and psychosocial conditions of their development (Kratochvílová & Havel: 2014, pp. 337-341).

RA An-Nahl is trying independently to be empowering the potential of the school. This means that schools are expected to be independent without too much hope in government assistance since the government lacks a role in supporting facilities and infrastructure. Therefore, policymakers (the government) should target training and education for teachers and increase funding for inclusive education (Pappas et al.: 2018, pp. 1-15). There is an indication that the special needs of children's education in inclusive schools have not received appropriate educational services based on their needs. As an integral part of education for all, inclusive education should be considered the same as other formal education by the government, so the quality of inclusive education will potentially have a bright future. Also, to improve the quality of the instruction, the integration of current technology is important to be done in the future. It is because integrating technology into the classroom is proven to be effective in improving students' achievement and could make the teaching and learning process more attractive (Dalle & Ariffin: 2018, pp. 1779-1783).

## **CONCLUSION**

Problems encountered in organizing inclusive education in kindergarten; first, from the teacher aspect, namely, teacher unpreparedness, lack of accompanying teachers, lack of competence and understanding of teachers in dealing with children with special needs, difficulties in classroom management; second, from the aspect of parents is the lack of understanding so that they feel ashamed to have children with special needs; third, weak school management; fourth, the general discrimination against children with special needs and inclusive education, as well as the fifth, the lack of government attention to the inclusive school.

Alternative problem solving offered by RA An-Nahl are: first, the teacher's upgrade program, which is aimed at class teachers and teacher assistants, as an effort to improve teacher competence in managing inclusive groups and handling students with special needs; second, the parent involvement program, which is the participation of parents in each activity, socialization, training, and active role of parents as a teacher assistant, for those who have children with special needs; third, the practical application of inclusive programs, as an effort to overcome the weaknesses of school management, which consists of six steps namely mapping the characteristics of students, setting goals and learning targets, flexible learning materials, monitoring and evaluation, implementing co-teaching and utilizing resources; fourth, community outreach programs 'open-day', which is done in an effort to provide counseling to people friendly to children with special needs and inclusive schools, and a fifth, of empowering schools, an effort that the school became independent without much hope of government assistance. The potential of each school is certainly different, the most important is that the school can explore its potential and be able to develop it.

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