

Voices of Community

What's happening in East Java and NTB?

UNICEF Surabaya Newsletter

is prepared monthly in order to share views / concerns of beneficiaries with partners and to develop common understanding of how UNICEF-assisted projects bring about positive changes in day to day life of community.

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Amid Limitation, A Struggle Over Inclusive Education

At that day when VoC reporter visited SDN-03 Pakuwesi in Bondowoso, Ibu Wahyuningsih was teaching poetry for 5th grade students. Every child has the opportunity to read their poems in front of



One of them is a student with special needs. Can you identify?

the class while others will respond to their friend's work. Everyone was silent, as Ni'mat raised his hands, volunteered himself to read out his own poem. With confidence and no fear, Ni'mat stepped forward to the front of the class and started to read out the poem. He read out his poem with such confidence and expression, inspiring all the class, even with the sound came out of his mouth sounded just like: "...ah ... a' ... ah ... a ... h! Uh ... uh ... u!". However all class gave him a round of applause to appreciate his efforts.

Ni'mat is a mute child who enrolled in this school that has implemented inclusive education since 2001. Ibu Tri who was the teacher at that time explained: "At first, we don't know that what we've done is inclusive education. After receiving AJEL training funded by UNICEF in 2007, we become aware that we have already implemented inclusive education in our school".

Inclusive education actually has become government's program since 2003 by providing education for children with special needs in a mainstreaming school. However, many schools are not aware how to conduct inclusive education. Some schools rejected children with special needs to enroll. "We have no clue on how we can apply inclusive education in our school. We are just learning by doing", said Bapak Wahyuwidiana, Principal of SDN-1 Sumbersari, Malang who has 15 students with special needs. Most of schools are doing the same thing but there are several key points to make inclusive education successful, as stated by Bapak Hazani, Principal of SDN-1 Dasan Griya, Lombok Barat: "Key success factors in implementing inclusive education are being patient, sincere, and working together with all stakeholders, including children".

The points raised by Bapak Hazani are important to avoid anxiety among some parents of students without disabilities and special needs who expressed concerns about whether the need of the students with disabilities and special needs would interfere with their children's education. A few parents of students with special needs also worried that their children were being ridiculed by others. So, Principal and teachers should convince both sides to gather better understanding on education services needed for our children.

Community participation also plays an important role to ensure that there is sufficient staff to manage the classroom. In inclusion setting, each classroom should be managed by two teachers, one of them has task

to assist children with special needs in the learning process. Nevertheless, some schools find difficulties in providing sufficient teachers, especially schools in remote areas. However, another solution is by performing AJEL (active, joyful, effective learning) in classroom that would help students with special needs to optimize their abilities to learn.

Ibu Aida, the 5th grade teacher in SDN-01 Dasan Griyawas interviewed about her approach to teach students with special needs and replied: "Using AJEL approach has helped children to perform well in the learning process since they can interact with other children and also will increase their self-esteem when their work are acknowledged". In addition, the usage of learning materials in the learning process helps students a lot. They can understand the subject easier and participate in the learning process.

Aside from that, AJEL approach in inclusive setting has also benefited children without disabilities and



special needs in increasing their social skills. As explained by Ibu Dyah Anggraini, a 5th grade teacher in SDN-3 Beji, Tulungagung who had a student with autism assigned to her class: I explained to other students that we have to be more tolerant and help their friend with special needs in class, especially when working in a group. As the results, they are more mature and have no prejudice in dealing with differences".

At last, the hope from inclusive schools is attention of government and other stakeholders to build capacity for schools to implement inclusive education. "Many schools are willing to apply inclusive education, but many of them don't have the capacity to do so", said Bapak Fauzi, staff of District Education of Lamongan. With that limitation and learning by doing through School based management (SBM), some schools in East Java and West Nusa Tenggara have started to provide education for all children irrespective of their ability. With an estimated 7.3 million children in Indonesia (Balitbang, 2004) qualifying for special education, similar struggles are playing out around the country.*****



An autistic child was involved in a drama with his group

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