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## Growing Public Concern Towards The Implementation Of Inclusive Education

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### Kata Kunci:

Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus, Penelitian Aksi Partisipatif, Pendidikan Inklusif

**Abstrak:** Di dunia ini terdapat anak-anak yang berkebutuhan khusus dan mengalami kelainan atau penyimpangan yang signifikan dalam perkembangan fisik, mental, intelektual, sosial, dan emosional dibandingkan dengan anak-anak lain seusianya. Akibatnya, mereka memerlukan layanan pendidikan khusus. Pendidikan inklusif merupakan jenis pendidikan khusus yang dirancang untuk memenuhi kebutuhan unik anak-anak berkebutuhan khusus. Prinsip yang mendasari konsep pendidikan ini adalah mengalihkan fokus dari mengadaptasi siswa agar sesuai dengan kebutuhan sekolah, menjadi mengadaptasi sekolah atau sistem pendidikan untuk mengakomodasi kebutuhan anak-anak. Peneliti melakukan pengabdian kepada masyarakat dengan mensosialisasikan pendidikan bagi anak-anak berkebutuhan khusus di sekolah inklusif TK ABA 5 Probolinggo. Fokus pengabdian kepada masyarakat tersebut adalah "Menumbuhkan Kesadaran Masyarakat terhadap Pelaksanaan Pendidikan Inklusif." Sekolah inklusif tersebut menggunakan Participatory Action Research untuk memfasilitasi sosialisasi pendidikan bagi siswa berkebutuhan khusus. Hal ini dicapai melalui berbagai cara seperti presentasi, ceramah, percakapan, dan kegiatan praktik. Hasil utama dari acara ini adalah bahwa pendidikan inklusif menawarkan layanan pendidikan yang mencakup integrasi anak-anak berkebutuhan khusus ke dalam kelas reguler, di mana mereka belajar bersama teman sebayanya yang seusia. Ketika masyarakat mengakui keberadaan anak-anak berkebutuhan khusus, akan lebih memungkinkan untuk mendirikan lembaga pendidikan yang inklusif.

### Keywords:

Special Need Children, Participatory Action Research, Inclusive Education

**Abstract:** There are children in this world who have special needs and experience significant abnormalities or deviations in their physical, mental, intellectual, social, and emotional development compared to other children of the same age. As a result, they require special education services. Inclusive education is a specialized kind of education designed to cater to the unique requirements of children with special needs. The underlying principle of this educational concept is to shift the focus from adapting

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students to fit the requirements of the school, to instead adapting schools or educational systems to accommodate the needs of children. Researchers did community service by socializing education for children with special needs at the ABA 5 Probolinggo Kindergarten inclusive school. The focus of the community service was "Growing Community Awareness of the Implementation of Inclusive Education." The inclusive school employs Participatory Action Research to facilitate the socialization of education for students with special needs. This is achieved via many ways such as presentations, lectures, conversations, and hands-on activities. The primary outcome of this event is that inclusive education offers educational services that encompass the integration of children with special needs into regular courses, where they study alongside their peers of the same age. When society acknowledges the presence of children with special needs, it will become more feasible to establish an inclusive educational institution.

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## INTRODUCTION

There are children in this world who have special needs and experience significant differences in their physical, mental, intellectual, social, and emotional development compared to other children of the same age. As a result, they require special education services. Therefore, if a kid exhibits certain anomalies or aberrations that are not serious enough to necessitate special education services, they are not considered a child with special needs. However, despite the absence of apparent physical, mental, intellectual, social, and emotional impairments, a child is considered to have special needs if they require specialized educational assistance (Lebeer et al., 2012, p. 71).

The inclusion of children with special needs in the educational setting is crucial. The growth of children with special needs is closely linked to the awareness and advancement of our culture. Children with special needs, formerly referred to as handicapped children. youngsters with special needs are individuals who possess distinct qualities and features that set them apart from typically developing youngsters. Comprehending the characteristics of children with special needs is essential for this situation (Rodrigues et al., 2015, p. 310).

Of course there is a special type of education for children with special needs, namely what is called inclusive education (Ediyanto et al., 2017, p. 105). The fundamental concept of the inclusive education paradigm is to embrace and accommodate teachers who are open and accepting. A welcoming teacher might be understood as a kind teacher. A friendly teacher encompasses more than just being kind and courteous; it refers to a teacher who is capable of catering to the pupils' requirements. In general, student requirements may be categorized into three domains: cognitive, emotional, and psychomotor development needs. Education frequently neglects the emotional requirements of individuals and typically prioritizes meeting their intellectual demands. Furthermore, teachers often lack an understanding of an individual's cognitive abilities. What frequently occurs is that teachers significantly impair children's cognitive development (Liasidou & Antoniou, 2013, p. 495).

The crux of inclusive education lies in a shift in viewpoint on the placement of pupils. The current practice of prioritizing the dominant group and excluding marginalized groups, which persists today, is no longer sustainable when it comes to education. It is imperative that education also caters to underprivileged groups, especially children with disabilities. The philosophy has undergone a transformation from the notion of "altering children to conform to the requirements of the school" to the idea of "altering schools or systems to accommodate children," or in simpler terms, "modifying the system, not the children." Without this shift, the objective of compulsory education will remain unattainable due to barriers that impede children's access to education (Akbarovna, 2022, p. 249).

To enhance the level of engagement in education in East Java, particularly with regards to knowledge and involvement in inclusive education in Probolinggo City, it is imperative to include the community, particularly parents, schools, and village authorities, in the school environment. In accordance with Regulation No. 70 of 2009 issued by the Minister of National Education, inclusive education refers to an educational system that enables students with disabilities and exceptional intellectual or special talents to engage in learning within the same educational setting as their peers without disabilities (Gama et al., 2023, p. 58).

Inclusive education seeks to offer equal educational opportunities to students with physical, emotional, mental, and social disabilities, as well as those who possess exceptional intelligence or talents. It aims to provide high-quality education tailored to their individual needs and abilities.

Additionally, inclusive education promotes diversity and ensures that all students are treated fairly and without discrimination. Students with disabilities encompass a range of conditions, such as blindness, deafness, muteness, intellectual disabilities, physical disabilities, emotional disabilities, learning difficulties, slow learning abilities, autism, motor disorders, multiple disabilities, and those affected by drug abuse, illegal drugs, and other addictive substances (Abosi & Koay, 2008, p. 9).

Inclusive education is not only a pedagogical style or strategy, but rather a manifestation of a philosophy that acknowledges the variety of individuals who share a common goal of collectively constructing a more improved existence. The objective of inclusive education is to ensure that every individual, regardless of any limitations or differences, has equal access to education. While persons with impairments may possess some benefits, it is important to acknowledge that every individual, regardless of ability, will also face certain barriers, as perfection is not inherent in any living being. This is demonstrated by the implementation of an inclusive education system that facilitates socialization and interaction among students from varied backgrounds, therefore fostering an attitude of tolerance and mutual respect (Pandit & Mishra, 2017, pp. 665–666).

Inclusive education is not only a teaching method, but rather a reflection of a philosophy that recognizes the diverse range of individuals who all strive to collaboratively build a better world. The aim of inclusive education is to guarantee equitable educational opportunities for all individuals, irrespective of any constraints or disparities. Although those with impairments may have some advantages, it is crucial to recognize that every person, regardless of their abilities, will also encounter specific obstacles, as perfection is not innate in any living being. This is exemplified via the establishment of an inclusive education system that promotes socialization and contact among students from all origins, therefore cultivating an attitude of tolerance and mutual respect (Fachri et al., 2022, p. 331).

## RESEARCH METHOD

The researcher conducts Participatory Action Research (PAR), which entails direct engagement with the individuals being studied. Therefore, researchers must actively participate in fieldwork to conduct Participatory Action Research (PAR). In Participatory Action Research, a more extensive refinement characteristic is employed. When faced with this scenario, doing research on communities can employ Participatory Action Research as a framework to effectively guide, enhance, and assess their decisions and activities by systematically addressing an issue (Datta et al., 2015, p. 582). This technique enables the complete engagement of all partner components in the mentoring process. Active engagement in the mentoring process ensures the smooth operation of the process, hence addressing issues pertaining to educational services for special needs students in inclusive schools.

The aim is to promote awareness and understanding of special needs children's education services in inclusive schools by utilizing Participatory Action Research. This will be achieved via various means such as presentations, lectures, debates, and hands-on activities. The community service partners consist of teachers and parents who are responsible for children with special needs. The mentoring method involves offering training assistance to partners to enhance their comprehension of the significance of inclusive education. The mentorship takes place at ABA 5 Kindergarten, which is situated in Jl. Mastrip No. 163A, Probolinggo City. Details of the implementation of the activity are as follows:

### Preparation phase (early January 2024)

At the beginning of January 2024, observations were conducted at TK ABA 5 Probolinggo. In this initial observation, the researcher personally watched the research subject in order to get a thorough comprehension of the field. The researcher utilized open observation, a method in which the individuals actively consented to the observer witnessing the events and were conscious of being observed. This enabled the researcher to delve into the complexities of the area. During the initial observation, the researcher collected data indicating the presence of 11 special needs kids. This information was used to determine the appropriate number of parents and teachers to invite to the socializing event, which aimed to address educational services for special needs children in inclusive schools. Furthermore, the researcher addressed the issues that arose inside the school, leading us to adopt the subject "Growing Community Awareness of the Implementation of Inclusive Education". Next, we decided on the items that we would present at the socialization at TK ABA 5 Probolinggo. Once the content was created, the subsequent task was collaborating with the school to determine the specific type of community service activities that would be implemented, namely through the means of socializing.

### Implementation Stage

On March 24, 2024, community service activities were conducted at ABA 5 Kindergarten. These activities involved socialization through seminars to raise awareness in the community on the implementation of inclusive education. On March 25, 2024, community service activities were conducted from 09:00 to completion. Activities were conducted within the designated time frame of the school day. The strategy employed for socialization was:

#### 1. Lectures vary

The selection of this strategy was made in order to effectively communicate crucial concepts that need to be comprehended and proficiently acquired by the participants undergoing training. This technique relies on the premise that combining the lecture method with visual aids such as graphics, animations, and displays allows for the efficient delivery of substantial quantities of information in a concise, rapid, and accessible manner. The contents supplied include three key components: (1) an elucidation of special needs children, (2) an explication of inclusive education, and (3) an examination of the societal role in inclusive education.

#### 2. Question and answer

Following the presentation by the expert, a question and answer session took place between the participants and the expert. The discussion focused on the material presented and any issues or challenges faced by the participants in providing educational services for children with special needs in inclusive schools.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### RESULTS

Stages of socialization activities at ABA 5 Kindergarten with the theme "Growing Community Awareness of the Implementation of Inclusive Education" what is done is:

1. Delivery of educational materials to all participants encompassing the notion of inclusive education, the principles and challenges of teaching children with special needs, and the societal role in facilitating inclusive education.
2. The question and answer session provided an opportunity for participants of community service activities, such as teachers, parents of children with special needs, and local officials,

to ask questions about aspects of inclusive education that they still did not fully comprehend. The participants shown great enthusiasm in articulating their inquiries, while teachers expressed challenges encountered while working with children with special needs in the classroom. Additionally, parents actively communicated a range of difficulties their children confront in their home learning environment.



Figure 1.

**Socialization public concern at ABA 5 Kindergarten with the theme "Growing Community Awareness of the Implementation of Inclusive Education"**

From the community service activities that have been carried out at ABA 5 Kindergarten, the following results are described:

1. Enhancing participants' understanding of the inclusive education paradigm
2. Enhancing participants' understanding of their responsibility in promoting inclusive education
3. Enhancing participants' understanding of children with special needs, as well as the importance of acceptance from their surroundings for children with special needs.
4. Enhancing parents' understanding of their responsibility in supporting children with special needs in their home learning, as well as the necessary cooperation and collaboration with teachers at special needs schools.

**Obstacles During Activities**

This community service activity is inherently intertwined with both support and challenges. The support in this activity is characterized by the team's ability to operate cohesively, with each member of the team of lecturers fulfilling their assigned responsibilities in this community service endeavor. The team of teachers can effectively distribute the information based on their abilities and expertise. The school also offers a suitable space for facilitating sociability. Participants wholeheartedly engaged in the community service activity from beginning to end with great excitement. However, this activity is also hindered by various obstacles. One of these obstacles is the discrepancy between the planned implementation time and the actual time, as many participants arrived late. Additionally, due to the late arrival of participants, several questions from participants could not be addressed during the discussion.



**Figure 2.** Coloring Activities Involving Parents

### **Measuring Community Participation**

We achieved quite good outcomes in the activities conducted at ABA 5 Probolinggo Kindergarten. The activities we conducted were first approved by the Principal, Mrs. Siti Umamah, S. Pd., M.Pd. The principal also supported us in preparing the room for the socializing event, including tasks such as opening the classroom and arranging the seats. Other teachers also provided assistance. The principal's support is evident through his efforts to invite the parents of the child with special needed, representatives of parents from groups A and B, village officials, village heads, and other invitees to participate in the socialization process. This is measured by the principal's successful presentation of approximately 42 participants, including representatives of parents and education personnel. In this instance, the school's facilities and infrastructure are prepared to assist us in ensuring the event proceeds efficiently and without any issues.

Throughout the implementation of the activity, we were provided with several anecdotes and accounts from the board of teachers and representatives of parents of children with special needs. They posed inquiries and many of the teachers and parents expressed considerable interest in the content delivered by the presenter. Here are a some of the questions that have been submitted:

1. How to handling of children with special needs for teachers who do not have a background in special education/special education. While the school has not provided a special assistant teacher.
2. How to assigning grades to children with special needs, and determining teaching and learning activities for children with special needs.
3. How to identify children with special needs.

From this, it is evident that the level of participation of teachers at ABA 5 Probolinggo Kindergarten can be assessed by observing the curiosity of teachers and parents in seeking clarification on how to handle children with special needs. Additionally, the teachers demonstrate a genuine appreciation for and utilization of the allocated time for discussion sessions, where they actively inquire about and share school-related cases.

Therefore, via organizing this socialization activity, the researchers from the presenting team express their gratitude for successfully delivering information on the significance of inclusive education in schools. From an educational standpoint, researchers observe that the school demonstrates proficiency in acknowledging and teaching children with special needs.

Teachers at the school recognize that these children enhance the skills of educators and promote inclusive learning in the classroom.

## DISCUSSION

### Improving the Quality of Inclusive Education

There is no doubt that the application of traditional teaching methods leads to more effective and efficient learning. The teacher-student ratio remains a topic of ongoing controversy without a consensus being achieved. Typically, in Indonesia, a single teacher is responsible for teaching all pupils in a given class. Conversely, several education experts argue that quality education entails the presence of a minimum of two teachers in a single classroom responsible for teaching students. Especially if in one class there are children who need special attention because they have learning disabilities (Asmar & Delyana, 2020, p. 1).

Studies that focus on efficiency and effectiveness frequently disregard the quality of education, the capacity of teachers to manage students, and other factors that are associated with the quality of education. Economic factors, energy efficiency, and time efficiency are frequently the sole considerations in studies on efficiency and effectiveness. Consequently, it is not uncommon for a single teacher in Indonesia to supervise a class of 45 pupils, and in certain educational institutions, the number may exceed 45 (Evarist, 2018, p. 175).

In several nations that have successfully implemented inclusive education, such as Australia and Norway, a single class is assigned a minimum of two teachers to accommodate about 20-25 children. That is the accepted norm for age. If there are pupils in the class that exhibit challenging behavior, it may be necessary to assign more than two teachers to manage them (Spandagou, 2021, p. 2).

The philosophy of individualized services in inclusive education environments is designed to accommodate pupils who are unable to engage in traditional learning methods. Students who are unable to engage in traditional learning receive personalized educational assistance. The students who receive the most individualized services are those classified as children with exceptional needs (Florian, 2008, p. 2).

Individual services are not limited to children with permanent special needs, but can also be provided to children without permanent special needs or those with temporary special needs (Reilly & Platz, 2003, p. 791). Youngsters with transient special needs are those who have transitory learning difficulties that, if appropriately addressed, can enable the kid to engage in learning activities similar to typically developing youngsters. If the kid has reverted to displaying typical childlike behavior, then the youngster is no longer classified as having special needs (Gavín-Chocano et al., 2024, p. 484).

Some examples of individual services carried out in inclusive education classes at ABA 5 Probolinggo Kindergarten are:

1. When a blind student is studying numbers, the other students learn using pictures as is customary. However, the blind student learns using numbers that can be touched, specifically those that will provide information about the image of the number when contacted with the hand.
2. During the implementation of inclusive education for mentally impaired children, for instance, a teacher is teaching students in mathematics up to the number 20. As it turns out, the mentally impaired child is only taught up to the dozenth, and his education continues in the classroom with the assistance of a special auxiliary teacher.

## Community Care Overview

Based on field observations in inclusive education at TK ABA 5 Probolinggo, there are still some who are unfamiliar with children with special needs. Children with special needs are labeled as disabled and incapable of doing anything, causing many parents to feel ashamed to integrate their children into society. Here, researchers provide an understanding of children with special needs, that they are actually the same as other humans who want to be treated properly as human beings.

To achieve this, it is imperative to cultivate public consciousness regarding the realm of education and broaden the community's perspective on inclusive education. This process should commence with self-reflection, as we must personally embrace the notion. Additionally, the community ought to demonstrate acceptance and sensitivity towards the presence of children with special needs in our surroundings. In order to promote inclusive education and change the community's perception of children with special needs, it is crucial that we embrace and welcome these youngsters (Haug, 2017, p. 205).

Parents have the responsibility to acknowledge and embrace the unique qualities and uniqueness of their children, even if they have some limitations or deviate from the norm. It is important for parents to remain open and sensitive to their child's condition. If parents choose to isolate themselves or are not attentive to their children, it can negatively affect the child's educational services. This lack of parental support can result in suboptimal intervention, causing delays in addressing the child's needs (Kandel & Merrick, 2007, p. 1802). This will have a subsequent effect on children, namely in terms of the provision of educational services. Parents have the responsibility of acquainting their children with the community, enabling the community to connect with and assist children in accessing educational resources. Prior to promoting inclusive education to parents, individuals should cultivate a greater openness in both the immediate environment and the school setting. This will facilitate early identification of any obstacles faced by their children, allowing for timely intervention and ensuring comprehensive support for their education, be it inclusive or specialized (Baquedano-López et al., 2013, p. 149).

There are two main points of analysis in the development of inclusive education from Participatory Action Research at ABA 5 Probolinggo Kindergarten, namely:

1. Society is comprised of individuals who coexist and contribute to the development of a shared culture. The presence of children with special needs is heavily reliant on the support of society. However, not all communities possess a comprehensive understanding of the existence of these children within their surroundings, thereby hindering their ability to foster inclusivity. If there are individuals who still lack comprehension on this matter, it indicates that the level of care for children with special needs remains significantly inadequate, hence impeding the progress towards achieving an inclusive society. To foster an inclusive society, it is essential to collectively nurture inclusive assistance and engage in societal development without regard to distinctions, recognizing that children with special needs are integral members of the community who need help.
2. The educational environment must uphold the rights of every child to get an education and recognize variations in interests, talents, and learning requirements. In the educational setting, it is essential for both teachers and staff to embrace all pupils unconditionally, regardless of their individual circumstances, especially those with special needs. If there is a genuine concern inside the school about accepting the situations of every student, it will promote the development of an inclusive school.

Inclusive education is the provision of educational services that enable students with special needs to study alongside their classmates in normal courses. Once the community acknowledges the presence of children with special needs, the establishment of an inclusive school will become more feasible. Community support and engagement are essential for the successful implementation of inclusive education in schools. The community, including parents, family members, and community leaders, must actively contribute to the creation of an inclusive society. Their support is crucial in promoting inclusion, and collaboration within the community is essential in achieving this goal (Zidniyati, 2019, p. 322).

## CONCLUSION

Socialization activities that are associated with educational services for children with special needs in inclusive institutions. The results of the event, which was conducted on March 25, 2024, at ABA 5 Probolinggo Kindergarten under the theme "Growing Community Awareness of the Implementation of Inclusive Education," were quite satisfactory. Inclusive education is the primary outcome of this event, as it offers educational services that enable children with special needs to participate in regular classes alongside their peers. It will be simpler to establish an inclusive school once the community acknowledges the existence of children with special needs. In order to advance the school, the implementation of inclusive education necessitates community support and involvement. The involvement of the community, which includes parents, family members, and community leaders who are still within the community's scope, is essential for the establishment of an inclusive society. Their support will elevate the concept of inclusion as the name of sustainable collaboration between the community and schools.

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