

The Strategy to Encourage Mainstreaming and Inclusion for Children with Visual Impairment in Jakarta

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I. Challenges

The Indonesian state philosophy (Pancasila) and motto (unity in diversity) are based on humanity and appreciate diversity. Yet crucial problem in economy make most people in Indonesia appreciate more to citizen regarded having potential to be productive and in the same time ignoring the rights of the ones regarded not having the particular potentials, including children with special need (CWSN).

Concerning education, such people regard the best school is the ones that succeed in making all the students pass the national examination with better achievements instead of the quality of the process. No wonder, each school will only enroll children having such potency.

When they are required to implement mainstreaming or inclusion, they will say that they are not prepared to serve children with special need (CWSN) and the existence of CWSN will lower their rank and image. Thus, the challenges of inclusion are misperception and negative attitude toward CWSN and lack of expertise and facilities.

From the facts above, we understand that the new idea of inclusion requires:

1. Change of attitude
2. Expertise
3. Educational support system
4. Accessible facilities, equipment, and environment
5. Supporting policies and regulation
6. Financial support

II. Strategies and programs

Mitra Netra Foundation (MNF) is a non-profit organization whose field of endeavor is education and development for people with visual impairment (PVI). To encourage mainstreaming or inclusion for children with visual impairment (CVI) in Jakarta, MNF applies strategies that can answer the above challenges and requirement to implement inclusion as follows.

1. Making efforts to change the attitude

MNF has done 2 things to change the attitude of most people in Jakarta especially the ones from regular schools and local government.

a. Doing socialization formally and informally to provide information on:

- The right of all children and CVI
- The importance and benefit of mainstreaming or inclusion
The socialization does not only provide information on the benefit of mainstreaming and inclusion for CVI but also for other children, and the regular schools themselves. They should be convinced that inclusion which gives the opportunity for CWSN to interact with the other children learning to respect one another can insure the development of more democratic generation. And the challenges can enrich the teaching and learning strategies or increase the quality of the regular teachers.
- The existing policies and regulation supporting mainstreaming or inclusion
Information on the state philosophy and the motto of the nation as well as the existing policies and regulations supporting inclusion and the commitment of the nation to the relating international convention, may make them aware of their obligations as good citizens.
- The potency of CVI
To eliminate misperception on the potency of CVI, MNF provides information on the achievements of PVI in various fields by holding seminars, exhibitions and setting up news online and mail list on its website managed by PVI.

b. Encouraging the issuance of necessary policies and regulation

In cooperation with other organizations, MNF urges and supports the local government to issue policies and regulations to build up the system, and to provide umbrella for the preparation and implementation of mainstreaming and inclusion in Jakarta.

2. Making efforts to get and disseminate needed expertise to implement inclusion

a. Holding research and development on teaching and learning strategies

To provide guidance for teachers of both special and regular schools, in cooperation with Helen Keller International of Indonesia, MNF has held researches on the strategies of teaching mathematics and chemistry and writing the result in the form of:

- Handbook on teaching mathematics for primary and junior secondary school students with visual Impairment
- Braille module on chemistry for SVI, equipped with student's guide in the form of cassette and illustration.

b. Joining needed courses or trainings

MNF always takes the opportunities to send its staff to join courses or trainings which provides needed expertise to implement inclusion.

c. Holding training

After succeed in doing research and development and having the needed expertise from trainings or courses, MNF always makes efforts to share them to other relating organization through trainings.

3. Setting up resource centre as a model of educational support system

To support students with visual impairment (SVI) and regular schools applying mainstreaming and inclusion, MNF sets up resource center which can also be used as a model of educational support system for mainstreaming and inclusion.

The resource center provides the following services.

a. Rehabilitation services:

- Peer counseling especially for newly visually impaired and their family
- Reading and writing Braille
- Orientation and mobility

b. Socialization for regular teachers concerning visual impairment and the impact on the teaching-learning strategy

c. Accompanying services:

- Guidance and advocacy to enter school/university
- Reading service for doing school assignment and testing

d. Tutorial

The tutorial is held for subjects, which need special strategy or equipment, among others:

- Mathematics
 - Physics
 - Chemistry
 - Arabic
- e. Courses
To provide knowledge and skills for student with visual impairment (SVI) to enter regular school (sighted world), the resource center provides courses on:
- Abacus (as calculating aids and a process to mental arithmetic skill)
 - Ten-finger typing course (prerequisite to computer course)
 - Computer
- f. Talking and Braille book library
- g. Talking computer and Internet café
4. Developing and distributing equipments
In cooperation with other organizations, MNF have developed some equipment for teaching-learning and for producing Braille books, among others:
- Mitra Netra Braille Converter (MBC), software that can convert Indonesian text into Braille format, both in full writing or contraction. MNF developed it in cooperation with Bina Nusantara University.
 - Mitra Netra Electronic Dictionary (MELDICT), an electronic dictionary of English-Indonesian and Indonesian-English for intermediate and advanced learners. MNF developed it in with Citibank.
 - Tactile Graphic Software, software that can be used to make picture or graphic in computer to be embossed. MNF developed it in cooperation with Bina Nusantara University
- After developing the equipments, MNF distribute them to other relating organizations and train their staff how to use or to operate them.
5. Producing and distributing accessible books
To provide accessible books, MNF produces and distributes:
- Braille books (priority given to subjects not suitable to be recorded like math, chemistry)
 - Analog and digital talking books
6. Encouraging cooperation among relating organization
Realizing that no single organization can cope with all challenges to implement inclusion, MNF make initiatives to encourage cooperation among relating organizations with the following steps:

- Identifying organizations having the potential to contribute to the preparation or implementation of inclusion.
- Encouraging their participation by disseminating the vision of inclusion to the particular organizations
- Providing consultation or training if necessary.
- Building networking.

One of the example of this strategies is the initiative of Online Braille Library called “KEBI” established by MNF to encourage cooperation among Braille Producers in Indonesia through online (for more information see another paper for this conference **“Strategy of Mitra Netra Foundation to Build up Cooperation among Braille Producers in Indonesia”** by Bambang Basuki)

7. Mobilizing resources

It needs a lot of financial resources to prepare and to implement mainstreaming and inclusion. Being aware of the limited fund in the foundation and other relating organizations to provide needed expertise, equipments and personnel, MNF makes efforts to invite cooperation from local and international donors, universities, companies and other implementing organizations having expertise as well as volunteers. One of its strategies to invite support for certain project is to convince them that it is feasible. Before asking for support, MNF will do the strategic part of the project using its own resources as a model or prototype. If it works, MNF will, then, show it to the prospective partners or send the proposal.

As mentioned above, most of MNF’s programs are held in cooperation with other organizations.

III. Conclusion

It needs a lot of hard works and process to implement inclusion. Big challenges will hinder the way especially the one relating to attitude. It is unwise to let the government face the burden by itself.

Realizing that, MNF sets up strategies mentioned above. Some of them have worked and others are still in process.