



**COUNTRY REPORT  
ON EDUCATION PROVISIONS FOR  
THE CHILDREN WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES  
IN INDONESIA**

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### A. Introduction

Indonesia is the largest archipelago in the world and is situated between the two continents, Asia and Australia and between the oceans, the Pacific and the Indian oceans. About 6,000 of the 13,667 islands and islets are inhabited by the population of 210 million. Today, it is estimated that there are about 1,460,333 children with disabilities or who need special education services (about 3% of school-age children population). However, only 0.13% of these children are served by special schools or inclusive schools.

The first special school in Indonesia is the school for children with visual impairment in Bandung, West Java established in 1901. In 1927 another special school was established, catering for the educational need of children with mentally retarded. Three years later, in 1930 a special school for children with hearing impairment was also established in Bandung. Later, other special schools for children with special needs were established since the independence of Indonesia in 1945.

Within the Ministry of Education and Culture, in 1965 a section of special education was established. This section was later expanded into a division and in 1975 into a sub-Directorate for Special Education under the Directorate of Primary Education. The role of this sub-Directorate was to provide guidance and supervision for the development of public and private schools. The government of Indonesia is currently giving more emphasis on the development of special education as indicated by expansion of the sub-Directorate into the Directorate of special education in the year 2000. The Directorate has to expand its responsibilities by providing education for all children with special needs, including the gifted and talented children, children with learning difficulties, and autistic children.

Besides the schools under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of national education, the Office of the Ministry for social affairs has some training centers for training of people with special needs. Vocational skills are also provided at these centers to give them the opportunity to become independent and be able to earn for their living.

### B. Universal Nine-Year Basic Education

From our national education perspectives, out of 217 provisions of the Declaration and Action Program on the Durban Conference, 47 paragraphs addressed the issues of education and human rights education. All provisions are mutually reinforced to address four fundamental problems of education. *Firstly*, the conference addressed a quantitative issue which mandates the need to increase participation rate at all levels of education from kindergarten to university level, especially at primary and secondary levels. For Indonesia, this provision constituted a paramount importance parameter to promote

UNYBE to combat various manifestations of exclusion and discrimination which still exist in our society.

*Secondly*, the Durban conference with its 47 provision on education and human rights education addressed a qualitative issue on the need to improve the quality of primary and secondary education. From our national perspective, the provisions address the need to put primary and secondary education as primarily human investment to a developed and democratic Indonesia. Faced with this highly segregated and underdeveloped primary school system and after independence, the country's founding father insisted on full access to education to every Indonesian citizen. As it was declared during the independence, that we want to intellectualize the life our nation, promoting general welfare, contributes to the creation of a just, peace, and social justice.

*Thirdly* is the Durban conference addressed the need to improve the relevance of the provisions to our national context. Against discrimination, backwardness, and various forms of intolerance, was developed to improve our people. In this respect, basic education and continuing education through functional literacy programs were developed to cater basic education drop outs and adult illiterates. As a reference, in 1945 some 95% of the total population was illiterate. About 26 years later, in 1971, 39.1% of population of ten years and older was still illiterate. During the subsequent 24 years, while the population was rapidly rising, this number was reduced to about 13.7% or 20.9 million people, as measured by 1995 census, and reflecting a continuing decline in the absolute number of illiterate.

In 1973 President of Republic of Indonesia, Soeharto started making a significant investment on primary six years basic education through SD Inpres (Presidential Instruction) Program. Between 1973-1974 and 1978-1979, 61,807 new schools were constructed. Through the Inpres policy, a six-year universal primary education could be declared compulsory in 1984. This was a monumental step of Indonesia to endorse the commitment which made UNESCO honored Avicenna Award to President Soeharto in the following year. Just ten years later, on May 2, 1994, a universal nine years basic education (UNYBE) was consecutively declared to be implemented covering six years primary and three years lower secondary education.

### **C. Special Education System**

Special education is provided at the primary and secondary education level and is a part of the national education system in Indonesia. There are two types of special education, namely (1) Special school, consisting of kindergarten, primary school, junior high and senior high school and (2) integrated or inclusive schools.

Special education in Indonesia covers all kinds of disabilities, such as: education for visual impairment, hearing impairment, intellectual disabilities, physical handicapped, emotional-social disturbances, multiple handicaps, and gifted and talented. Luckily that special education for intellectually handicaps has the most number of students. Because, there are 24,369 persons, meaning

that the number of intellectually disability is almost a half of the total number of handicapped students (57,449 persons) in 2005.

At present there are about 239 public special schools and about 1,000 private schools. Private schools are established and run by foundations or individuals. Their condition performs so various, from very good condition and very poor condition. Everything is back to their capability. Some private schools have a very big number of students and have permanent and complete building and facilities. These schools usually belong to the established foundation. In other side, there are some private schools which have a very small number of students and do not have permanent and less building and facilities. In addition, some schools are located in a garage of a house. These small schools are usually initiated by parents who have children with special needs and are not willing to send their children to the existing special schools.

Schooling system for intellectual disabilities is just designed and addressed to the mildly intellectual disabilities and the moderately intellectual disabilities. Usually the special schools for mentally retarded serve both of them. This system was created especially for serving them more effectively and efficiently, because the schools can use the common personnel and facilities.

To improve the quality of education for the intellectual disabilities, in 1980-s, the Directorate of Special Education built some model special schools for all kinds of disabilities, including for the intellectual disabilities whether at the national or provincial levels. The directorate always gives technical supports including curriculum development, teacher professionalism development, educational facilities improvement, increasing effectiveness of school management, and supporting of educational funds. Of course, the directorate does not only support the operation of models special schools, but also support the operation at other types of special education.

#### **D. Employment In Relation To Children with Intellectual Disabilities**

It is aware that children with intellectual disabilities have some potentials and limitations related to the work life. The ideal aim of education for children with intellectual disabilities is how to make them be economically independent. Even though it is realized that factually there are so limited numbers of children with intellectual disabilities who are economically autonomous.

In Indonesia, there are some kinds of work can be done by children with intellectual disabilities, for example: handicraft art, creating batik, ceramics, motor services, embroidery, cleaning services, etc. Usually these works can easily be done by the mildly intellectual disabilities.

Indonesia Government declared the law for handicapped people in 1997. One of the articles states that every factory should give minimally 1% of all workers for handicapped children. However, up to now most of the factories do not give enough opportunities for them, especially for the intellectual disabilities. The number of intellectual disabilities who are accepted as workers in the factories or other job places is much less than physically handicapped.

### **E. Schooling system to prepare the intellectual disabilities for employment**

Basically schooling system for the intellectual disabilities is intended to support the children with intellectual disabilities to be economically independent and independent in daily activities. To be economically independent means that the children with intellectual disabilities take some works which can earn money for fulfilling the needs of their own daily life.

There are many ways to prepare the intellectual disabilities for employment. *Firstly*, the schooling system creates the structure of curriculum that gives more hours for increasing vocational skills, especially at the junior higher level. By having more times, the school has enough opportunities to develop some alternatives of vocational skills. Because of that every students have more choices of skills which are related to their potentials and interest.

*Secondly*, every school should have the workshop center for any practices. If a school has its own workshop center, then it can take care of any activities whenever it is needed.

*Thirdly*, extra curricular programs are developed for improving students vocational skills which are conducted out of learning hours. Even though there are many extra curricular programs can be created, but the most important thing for the mild intellectually disabled is the programs for enhancing many related vocational skills.

*Fourthly*, every school is expected to establish the cooperative works with factories or business worlds which can be manifested by apprenticeship. By involving students in the apprenticeship, it is hoped that the students can master real skills which are very beneficial for the students after finishing their studies.

*Finally*, students who have finished joining the structured vocational skills have rights to accept a certificate that is very valuable for them when they will be back to the community.

### **F. Conclusion**

Basically every Indonesian citizen has a right to education, including the children with intellectual disabilities. The main aim of education for children with intellectual disabilities is enabling them to be economically and socially independent, especially for the mild intellectual disabilities. To support them, the schooling system is designed to develop intra curricular and extra curricular programs. Those programs are focused on increasing vocational skills for them. Many ways schools can create to improving vocational skills, such as: operating more hours for vocational activities, building the workshop place, establishing the cooperative works with factories or business worlds which can be manifested by apprenticeship, etc. By implementing these programs, it is expected that finally children with intellectual disabilities will be autonomous.

