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## Social Inclusive Education Project (SIEP) as a Community for Handling Children with Special Needs in Rural Areas

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### ABSTRACTS

Education is for everyone. This indicates that everyone deserves access to education either in urban areas or urban areas. The purpose of this study is to describe the handling of the Social Inclusive Education Project (SIEP) community for children with special needs in rural areas. Data collection techniques are used for observations and interviews with SIEP founders and volunteers. The results show that the SIEP community has carried out various treatments for special needs children in rural areas. An assessment was run by the volunteers before carried out the treatment. The handling is carried out after making the Individualized Education Program for each child with special needs, including down syndrome, motor barriers, specific learning difficulties, visual impairments, and speech delays. The children with special needs are given treatment according to the child's needs such as training to memorize the Qur'an, training in prayer procedures, the introduction of numbers and letters, training in pronunciation of vowels, reading storybooks, writing training, and swimming training. The effort and aid carried out by the SIEP community for children with special needs in rural areas are expected to be a reference for volunteering activities for children with special needs in Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Thailand, and other countries in the world.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education is for all. Education for all implies that no child is denied the access to receive a proper education including children with special needs. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPWD) emphasizes access to education as an important concern to provide adequate accommodation for persons with disabilities.

Regulation Number 8 of 2016 defines that persons with disabilities are those who experience long-term physical, intellectual, mental, and/or sensory limitations, someone who faces difficulties to interact and participate effectively in a social environment. Head of the Center for Data and Statistics for Education and Culture Bastari explained that the types of children with special needs consist of visually impaired, deaf, mild mentally retarded, moderately mentally retarded, mild mentally retarded, moderately deaf, social disorders, speech disorders, hyperactivity, special intelligence, special talents, learning difficulties, victims drugs, indigo, down syndrome, autism and multiple symptoms. Many children with special needs do not have access to education. The number of children with moderate or severe disabilities around the world is approximated to reach 93 million and a large number of children do not have access to quality education (Bose & Heymann, 2020).

The numbers include the special needs children in Indonesia. Educational access for children with special needs has actually received attention from the government and several inclusive schools and special schools in several regions in Indonesia have been established. This can be seen from the data from the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2008 that 925 schools were providing inclusive education in Indonesia. The data for 2017 shows that there are 32,000 inclusive schools in various regions in Indonesia. Meanwhile, in 2016 the organizers of special needs schools had reached 1,962 schools, and in the year 2016/2017 there are 2.070 schools the percentage increase by 5.5%.

However, the number of inclusive schools and special schools is still inadequate when compared to the number of children with special needs which reaches around 1.6 million children. Thus, It is not an exaggeration if, in the attachment to the Regulation of the Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Number 4 of 2017 concerning Special Protection for Children with Disabilities, it is explained that there are still many children with disabilities who have not received education services, especially children with special needs in rural areas. There are a few factors that cause difficulty in accessing education for children with special needs in rural areas, namely the cost of education is not cheap and access to locations far from special schools and inclusive schools.

This is what the Social Inclusive Education Project (SIEP) community stands for. SIEP is a community service in the educational field that focuses on special needs children in rural areas. The STEP program's tagline is *Equitable Educational Opportunities for Everyone* and this has become a reference for the implementation of the SIEP program. The purpose of the SIEP program is to facilitate the needs of children with special needs in rural areas, especially the special needs children who are not in school, to increase the knowledge and independence skills of children with special needs in rural areas, to expand educational opportunities for all, and to improve the quality of education in Indonesia.

Based on this, the author wants to know the handling carried out by the SIEP community for children with special needs in rural areas. This can be a reference for other regions and countries as a form in handling and providing access to education for special needs children.

## 2. METHODS

The method section describes the research methods used including research design, research subjects, and research procedures.

### 2.1 Research Design

The methodology in this study is qualitative descriptive. The goal of descriptive research is to describe a phenomenon and its characteristics (Nassaji, 2015). This study aims to describe the handling of the Social Inclusive Education Project (SIEP) community for children with special needs in rural areas. These methods of handling can be used as a reference for volunteering activities for children with special needs in Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Thailand, and other countries in the world.

### 2.2 Research Subjects

This research was conducted on 7 children with special needs in the SIEP community in both Purwakarta and Subang districts. The 7 children have different disabilities ranging from down syndrome, speech delay, motoric, specific learning difficulties, and visual impairments.

### 2.3 Research Procedures

This research is more concerned with what rather than how or why something has happened. Therefore, observation and interview tools are often used to gather data. Data can be collected using different methods such as through observation and interview. In this study, the author uses interactive techniques that include observation and interviews. Observations were made to describe the ways of handling by the Social Inclusive Education Project (SIEP) community for children with special needs in rural areas. The ideas and ways of handling can be used as a reference for volunteering activities for children with special needs in Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Thailand, and other countries, globally. Interviews were conducted with SIEP founders and SIEP volunteers to obtain data on the implementation of SIEP #1 and SIEP #2 as well as the handling of each child with special needs in rural areas.

This analysis technique has 3 stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and concluding/verification.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The SIEP community provides care for children with special needs in rural areas through various programs such as independence development programs, knowledge development programs, and skills development programs. The following are the explanation of each program namely the Activity for Daily Living Skills is an independent development program. The purpose of this program is to ensure the children understand the steps and importance of taking care of themselves in terms of cleanliness, safety, health and can interact and adapt with the community. The knowledge development program aims to provide academic activities such as writing, reading, and counting to stimulate the children's sense and knowledge in that field. The skills development program is a program that helps to stimulate children's self-interest and developing skills in various fields such as speaking, music, art, and others.

SIEP implements the ideas and activities with 7 special needs children from Puwakarta and Subang that have been involved in SIEP#1. In detail, the author describes the 7 children with special needs.

### 3.1 SR

SR is 10 years old and currently in class 1 at special school. SR has an issue with her motor skill. Despite having obstacles, SR is a cheerful child and SR's passion for learning never fades. SR loves art activities such as drawing, coloring, and painting. Apart from art activities, SR enjoys academic activities that involved recognizing letters and numbers. Based on this assessment, SR is placed for a knowledge and skills development program. **Table 1** is the description of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) for SR.

The IEP is used by volunteers as a reference in the implementation of the SIEP program for 4 meetings. Volunteers provide activities in each meeting for SR to stimulate SR's cognitive and motor development. The activities provided by volunteers were by using various mediums to introduce numbers and letters to SR such as sand media, mini boards and markers, number and letter puzzles, flashcards, and other mediums of learning. **Figure 1** is the documentation of when SR learned to write numbers and letters using a mini-board and markers.

**Table 1.** Individualized Education Program (IEP) SR.

No	Aspect	Strength	Weakness	Requirement	IEP
1.	Cognitive and Motor	Able to recognize numbers and letters	Have not been able to hold a pencil	Requires a stimulus for fine motor skills to be able to write numbers and letters	Write numbers and letters using a blackboard and marker



**Figure 1.** SR is writing numbers and letters using a set of mini boards and markers.

### 3.2 JR

JR is 7 years old and did not receive any formal education. JR has a motor skill issue. Despite having obstacles, JR is a cheerful child. JR is very happy when someone comes to his house. Besides that, JR also enjoys watching *Upin and Ipin* movies and listening to *dangdut* songs. JR is very happy and enjoys outdoor activities such as riding public transports, eating ice cream, and swimming. Based on that assessment, JR gets a skills development program. **Table 2** is the description of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) for JR.

The IEP is used by volunteers as a reference in the implementation of the SIEP program for 4 meetings. Volunteers will provide support to JR to stimulate JR's motor development throughout the program. The volunteers conducted the activities by using a block puzzle medium and swimming in one of the swimming pools in Purwakarta.

In addition, SIEP volunteers usually provide 5 pictures that can help JR in expressing what he wants by picturing and imagining. The pictures start from pictures of television, toilets, food, drinks, and mattresses. From the picture, JR can indicate what activities he will do. By doing so, JR's parents and volunteers can know JR's needs.

**Table 2.** Individualized Education Program (IEP) JR.

No	Aspect	Strength	Weakness	Requirement	IEP
1.	Motor	Move very nimbly	Unable to walk	Requires stimulus to move in the water	Train JR to swim so that the muscles can move and stimulate properly

### 3.3 FI

FI is 11 years old and currently in class 5 in primary school. FI has specific learning difficulties. FI often lags behind other children in his class, specifically in learning to count, write, and read. FI is a shy child who doesn't talk much but is happy when someone else comes to his house. Based on this assessment, FI gets a knowledge development program. **Table 3** is the description of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) for FI.

The IEP is used by volunteers as a reference in the implementation of the SIEP program for 4 meetings. For each meeting, volunteers will do activities that can help in developing FI's cognitive skills. The activity done by volunteers was using a storybook as an educational medium.

**Table 3.** Individualized Education Program (IEP) FI.

No	Aspect	Strength	Weakness	Requirement	IEP
1.	Cognitive	Can recognize letters A-Z and be able to compose words	Unable to read paragraphs	Need help to read a paragraph	Give storybooks to FI and train him to read a paragraph



### 3.4 AA

AA is 10 years old and currently studying in class 1 at a special school. AA is a down syndrome child. However, AA is a cheerful kid and like to read Islamic book. AA has a high learning spirit and is happy to learn. Based on this assessment, AA received a knowledge development program. **Table 4** is the description of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) for AA.

The IEP is used by volunteers as a reference in the implementation of the SIEP program for 4 meetings. For each meeting, volunteers will provide activities that can stimulate AA skills in academics. The activity was given by volunteers using the sand-based medium. AA is given sand and a few prints that represent letters and numbers. AA puts the sand into the prints of numbers and letters and then says what numbers or letters he has printed.

**Table 4.** Individualized Education Program (IEP) AA.

No	Aspect	Strength	Weakness	Requirement	IEP
1.	Academic	Has a high spirit in learning	Unable to recognize numbers and letters	Requires learning that can introduce numbers and letters	Introduce numbers 1-10 and vowels (A, I, U, E, O) using sand as a medium

### 3.5 NL

NL is 12 years old and currently studying in class 3 at a special school. NL has a language issue, specifically speech delay. Despite that, NL has high self-confidence. NL has a high learning spirit and is very happy when interacting with her friends at home. Even though the way she speaks is not very clear, she always is a leader in her group. Based on the assessment, NL gets a skills development program in the language. **Table 5** is the description of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) for NL.

The IEP is used by volunteers as a reference in the implementation of the SIEP program for 4 meetings. The volunteers will give activities that help NL in developing her language skills. The activity was given by volunteers using flashcards as a medium. NL is given a flashcard of vowel letters such as A, I, U, E, and O. The letters are lined up and NL is directed to jump from one letter to another letter. However, in the second stage, NL not only jumps but NL is also directed to pronounce the letter clearly. **Figure 2** is NL playing with the volunteers and her friend at home

**Table 5.** Individualized Education Program (IEP) NL.

No	Aspect	Strength	Weakness	Requirement	IEP
1.	Language	Has a good self-confidence	Unable to pronounce clearly when talking	Requires proper pronunciation training in speaking, especially vowels	Train NL to pronounce vowels correctly (A, I, U, E, and O) using flashcards



**Figure 2.** NL playing with the volunteers and her friend at home.

### 3.6 SI

SI is 9 years old and does not attend school formally. SI has down syndrome and also difficulty in the language (speech delay). SI is shy and rarely interacts with her friends. SI has not been able to carry out daily activities independently such as bathing, wearing clothes, and praying. Based on the assessment, SI gets the independence development program. **Table 6** are the description of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) for SI.

The IEP is used by volunteers as a reference in the implementation of the SIEP program for 4 meetings. The volunteers will provide activities that will help SI's independence skills. SI is given training on how to perform prayer so that SI can pray independently or pray in a big group at the mosque. In **Figure 3**, volunteers teach the steps for ablution and its reading, the steps for praying and its readings, prayers, and *dzikir* after prayer.

**Table 6.** Individualized Education Program (IEP) SI.

No	Aspect	Strength	Weakness	Requirement	IEP
1.	ADL	Has a high spirit in learning	A shy person and rarely interact with friends	Requires independence training such as prayer procedures	Requires independence training such as prayer lesson



**Figure 3.** Training activities on how to pray to SI.

### 3.7 EG

EG is 18 years old and no longer attend any formal education institution. EG is a child with visual impairment. EG has great potential and has a good voice. EG can recite *sholawat* nicely with his good voice. However, EG still needs to be guided when reciting and memorizing the Koran. Based on that assessment, EG gets a Skills development program. **Table 7** is the description of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) for EG.

The IEP is used by volunteers as a reference in the implementation of the SIEP program for 4 meetings. For each meeting, volunteers will provide activities that help in developing skills in reading and memorizing the Koran. EG was given the training to memorize Al-Quran with a good and melodious voice. This training is conducted through the online platform such as Zoom. EG already has memorized short *surah* such as An-Naba, An-Nash, Al-Falaq, and Al-Ikhlās. The activity is continued with the memory of *surah* An-Naaziāt. Every meeting EG deposited his memorization and got 5 new verses. EG tried for Al-Quran memorization training using the 2T+1M method.

As described above, the SIEP community has 7 children with special needs in rural areas. Early assessment is important to provide specific interventions that are appropriate to the needs of children (McKenzie et al., 2012). SIEP volunteers conducted an assessment and made an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for each child with special needs. These children have various types of obstacles such as motor barriers, down syndrome, specific learning difficulties, visual impairments, and speech delays. Various treatments are carried out by the SIEP community through SIEP volunteers.

From the results of the assessment and IEP, several treatments were carried out for 2 children with down syndrome. Down Syndrome is a congenital physical defect or disability



accompanied by mental retardation, thick and cracked or split tongue, flat face, and slanted eyes, facial abnormalities, short body, small chin or mouth, short neck, legs and sometimes arms bent, and the eyelids have epicanthic folds (Marta, 2017). The process is done by providing training on how to pray and training to recognize numbers and letters through the sand medium. The activity is done so that children with down syndrome understand that learning that can be useful in everyday life. The aspect of providing understanding in learning for children with down syndrome is to explore the potential of each child, stimulate various activities to achieve developmental tasks, especially the basic independence in life to shape the child's personality (Kirana & Dewi, 2018).

Apart from children with Down syndrome, there are 2 children with motor impairments. Children with motor impairments are given treatment in the form of swimming and writing training using various learning mediums. Children with visual impairments are given treatment in the form of training to memorize verses in the Koran. Children with speech delay barriers are given treatment by pronouncing vocal letters as shown on the flashcard.

As for children with specific learning difficulties, they are given storybooks as training in reading. In general, there are four main characteristics possessed by the subject of children with specific learning disabilities, namely unable to achieve the learning objectives that have been set. Therefore, it can be said that the subject experienced a failure because he was unable to reach the minimum standard or was unable to master the learning material (less than 60%), the learning outcomes in one field or several fields are below the class average, the learning outcomes are low, even though the potential (intelligence, talent, and interest) is good, have an immature personality, for example, low motivation, low self-esteem, often neglecting tasks, often playing truancy, does not care about what happens around their environment, less responsible, hesitate to act, and emotionally unstable (Rudiyati et al., 2010).

**Table 7.** Individualized Education Program (IEP) EG.

No	Aspect	Strength	Weakness	Requirement	IEP
1.	Academic	Have a good voice both for <i>sholawat</i> and reciting	Have visual impairment	Requires 2T+1M method training to memorize the Quran	Memorizing short <i>surah</i> in the Koran ( <i>juz 30</i> )

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The SIEP community carries out various treatments for children with special needs that are adjusted to the results of the assessment that has been carried out before the volunteers come to the children's homes. The handling is carried out after making the Individualized Education Program (IEP) for each special needs child in rural areas. There are 7 children with special needs in rural areas ranging from children with down syndrome, motor impairments, specific learning difficulties, visual impairments, and speech delays. Children with special needs are given treatment according to children's needs such as training to memorize the Qur'an, training in prayer procedures, the introduction of numbers and letters, training in pronunciation of vowels, reading storybooks, writing training, and swimming training. The activities carried out by the SIEP community for children with special needs in rural areas are expected to be a reference for volunteering activities for special needs children in Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Thailand, and other countries in the world.

## 7. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. The authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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