

Kerinci District Government's Efforts to Develop Inclusive Education in Remote Areas: Challenges and Strategies

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Abstract

Inclusive education ensures that all children, including children with special needs, have access to quality education. Although national policies support inclusive education, many challenges still hinder its implementation in remote areas. This article discusses local government efforts to improve inclusive education in remote areas, problems encountered and solutions. Data were collected by conducting literature research and policy analysis. Results show that local governments have done a lot to improve infrastructure, improve teacher training, provide a special budget and disseminate information to the community. Challenges such as infrastructure shortages, teacher shortages, and lack of public awareness still need to be addressed. The article concludes that the main strategies for improving inclusive education in remote areas are inter-sectoral cooperation, strengthening the role of communities and developing sustainable models.

Keywords: Inclusive education, Remote Areas, Local Government, Education Policy, Children With Special Needs.

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education ensures that all students, including those with disabilities or special needs, have access to high-quality education without discrimination (UNESCO, 2009). The concept is based on the idea that every child deserves the same right to learn and develop in an environment that allows them to do so. Law No 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, as well as Minister of National Education Regulation No 70 of 2009, regulate inclusive education in Indonesia. These policies emphasize how important it is for all children, including children living in remote areas, to have equal opportunities for quality education.

However, there are still many challenges to achieving inclusive education in remote areas. According to data collected in 2022 by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (MoECristek), only about 30% of schools in remote areas have accessible facilities for children with disabilities. In addition, a UNICEF (2021) report states that the two main factors hindering the achievement of this goal are teacher shortages and public awareness of the importance of inclusive education.

Remote areas often suffer from infrastructure limitations such as hard-to-reach roads, unstable electricity and a lack of educational facilities. The budget not allocated to inclusive education exacerbates these conditions. For example, research conducted by Sunanto et al. (2018) found that the budget allocated for inclusive

education was only 5% of the total local education budget in remote areas. This has an impact on the low quality of education services provided to children with special needs. Local governments have done much to improve inclusive education despite the problems. The purpose of this article is to examine the Kerinci district government's efforts to improve inclusive education in remote areas, the problems faced and the solutions to these problems. This article is expected to provide useful policy advice to improve the quality of inclusive education in remote areas by looking at concrete cases and referring to previous research.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a descriptive method used to describe or describe the phenomena that occur, in this case the Kerinci District Government's efforts in developing inclusive education in remote areas. this research explains: The actual condition of inclusive education in remote areas, including the challenges faced as well as the concrete efforts that have been made by local governments to describe the results that have been achieved from these efforts.

The data sources used are Kerinci government reports, literature studies and publications from various international organizations as well as concrete solutions carried out by the Kerinci government.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Challenges of Inclusive Education in Remote Areas

Inclusive education in remote areas faces major challenges due to lack of infrastructure, such as inaccessible classrooms and lack of supporting facilities (Hehir et al., 2016). According to research conducted by Sunanto et al. (2018), 70% of schools in remote areas do not have sufficient facilities for children with disabilities.

In addition, the lack of teachers trained in inclusive education is a significant challenge. According to research by Florian (2014), teachers in remote areas often lack the skills to handle children with special needs, which impacts on the quality of learning. So efforts to optimize this is an obstacle that must also receive special attention from the Kerinci district government.

Even the limited budget in Kerinci district is a barrier to inclusive education. A study by the World Bank (2017) shows that remote areas often allocate lower education funding than urban areas. Therefore, optimizing the achievement of the Kerinci district government's goals depends on the budget provided.

Furthermore, public awareness of the importance of inclusive education is still low, especially in remote areas. According to research by Miles et al. (2014), a lack of understanding about inclusive education can reduce support for children with special needs. In fact, it is often found that community indifference to the special needs of these children has become commonplace.

2. Local Government Efforts

Local governments have built accessible classrooms and provided specialized learning equipment. Although the indicators are not yet perfect. A study by UNESCO (2015) shows that improved infrastructure can increase the participation of children with disabilities in education. However, the Kerinci district government's efforts are slowly being felt.

In addition to construction, teacher training programs have also been implemented to improve skills in inclusive education. According to research by Forlin et al. (2015), effective teacher training can improve the quality of learning for children with special needs.

Special budget allocations Local governments allocate special funds for inclusive education, including the BOS Inclusive fund. A study by the World Bank (2017) shows that appropriate budget allocations can support the development of inclusive education.

Campaigns and counseling have been conducted to increase public awareness. According to research by Miles et al. (2014), effective socialization can increase community support for inclusive education.

To solve the problem of inclusive education in remote areas, the Kerinci district government has taken a number of actions. In some remote sub-districts, such as Gunung Raya and Air Hangat, the construction of inclusive schools is an important step. To support the learning of children with disabilities, these schools have ramps, special toilets and simple therapy rooms.

Despite these efforts, the Kerinci district government still faces a number of problems. Firstly, limited infrastructure in remote areas makes it difficult to distribute education facilities and equipment. Secondly, the community is less aware of the importance of inclusive education, especially in remote villages. Many parents do not understand the right of their children with disabilities to receive proper education.

3. Steps Taken

Construction of inclusive schools with accessible facilities. Teacher training in collaboration with local universities. Scholarship programs for children with special

needs. Providing specialized equipment such as braille books, hearing aids, wheelchairs and learning support technology devices.

In addition, the Kerinci district government could also organize intensive training for teachers in remote areas on teaching techniques for children with disabilities, inclusive classroom management and the use of learning aids. As well as providing direct mentoring to teachers in remote schools, accompanied by a team of experienced teachers or inclusive education experts.

The number of children with special needs enrolled in inclusive schools is increasing significantly. The study by Sunanto et al. (2018) shows that similar efforts in other regions have also yielded positive results.

4. Strategies to Overcome Challenges

Cooperation with educational institutions, non-governmental organizations and the private sector can overcome budget and resource constraints (Hehir et al., 2016). In addition, raising public awareness through socialization and outreach can support inclusive education (Miles et al., 2014) and developing sustainable inclusive education models can ensure effective implementation in remote areas (Forlin et al., 2015).

CONCLUSION

Local governments' efforts to develop inclusive education in remote areas have yielded positive results although challenges remain. Inter-sectoral cooperation, strengthening the role of communities and developing sustainable models are key strategies to improve inclusive education.

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