

# Friendly Inclusive Environment Toward Learning in Inclusive Education

Mega Iswari<sup>1,\*</sup>, Marlina<sup>1</sup>, Nurhastuti<sup>1</sup>, Irda Murni<sup>1</sup>, Armaini<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Department of Special Education, Faculty of Education, Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang, Indonesia*

\* *Email: mega\_iswari@yahoo.com*

## ABSTRACT

This study revealed that friendly schools are able to develop the potential of students with special needs as optimally as possible from a variety of students' diversity. Therefore, "all children" of school age without exception should receive education services at the school that closed to their place of residence. This study used a descriptive study with a qualitative approach that was related to the objective conditions of the students with special needs in inclusive schools who attended Basic Education. Furthermore, this research was designed with developmental research because it began by describing the initial data from the observation in the field, analyzing the data based on the literature review, and formulating the friendly inclusive environment service model for the Basic Education level. The results stated that there were 5140 students with special needs in West Sumatra Education Office (the year 2016) with details: 4358 elementary, 578 secondary, 204 high schools/vocational high schools. Thus, 2570 special guidance teachers were needed to handle two children for each. A friendly inclusive learning environment was expected to develop the potential of the students with special needs according to their needs and abilities

**Keywords:** *friendly inclusive environment, basic education, students with special needs, inclusive education*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Schools that implement an inclusive education basically provide learning services tailored to the abilities of the students because the students with special needs have different characteristics for each individual [1]. Therefore, regular schools that organize inclusive education often experience obstacles in the learning process inside and outside the classroom. A friendly learning process in an inclusive environment must be facilitated for all students in which its activities use a flexible curriculum to the needs of all students with special needs who have diverse abilities [2].

Moreover, the teachers in regular schools in teaching the students with special needs are required to be creative and free in making modifications to the specific subject [3]. On the contrary, there are some teachers do not have a specific guidebook to provide friendly learning services in inclusive environment, even they have not received training to deal with the students with special needs in schools. There are also still many teachers do not understand the characteristics of the students with special needs. In order to create a friendly learning service in an inclusive environment, the school and all school residents have to accept the existence of the students with special needs. Thus, the learning process is able to adjust the curriculum to the needs of the students as well as the

learning strategy and assessment. In addition, the researchers feel that it is a must to create a friendly learning service model in an inclusive environment in which its learning process can be followed in the class by the students with special needs. They can also interact, socialize, communicate, and develop their potential along with other regular students.

The Special Education Department, Faculty of Education, Universitas Negeri Padang is the only tertiary institution in Sumatra that carries out the mandate to provide education for prospective special education teachers, both pre-service teachers and in-service teachers. It has the responsibility in helping the government to carry out coaching and assistance to schools that manage inclusive education. It is also pioneering inclusive education in the areas of West Sumatra. This subject supports the completion of the nine-year compulsory for basic education (Education for All) of the West Sumatra Provincial Regulation No.5 of 2001 and the West Sumatra Governor Regulation No.47 of 2001 that mention Special Education is a Technical Implementation Unit which is directly controlled under the supervision of the West Sumatra Province Education Office.

The fact that approximately 97% of school-age students who need special education services in Padang have not yet had the opportunity to obtain the education. If this matter does not get attention, education for all will not be achieved. In other words, the completion program of the nine-year compulsory for basic education in Padang does not completely achieve the expected goals. With the declaration agreeing to carry out education for all, namely

creating education with a friendly learning process in the inclusive environment it is hoped that "all children" of school age receive education services at the school closest to their place of residence.

In order to create a friendly learning service in the inclusive environment in Padang, the integration and collaboration between related institutions like Universitas Negeri Padang, the West Sumatra Provincial Education Office, Padang City Education Office, Padang Religion Department are necessary. Thus, it is also necessary to carry out an integrated and sustainable partnership cooperation. In the end, it is hoped that the education program for all can be planned, implemented, and monitored cooperatively by the institutions.

The inclusive education in Indonesia was just tested in 2003. Thus, the principal teachers have not yet had the competence to create a friendly learning service model. The students who are accepted in certain schools (elementary, high school / vocational high school) with special needs education services are assisted by special tutors. The tutors are assigned by the education office in collaboration with the local government. In this case, the institution like Universitas Negeri Padang prepares professional staffs in special education.

Universitas Negeri Padang as one of the only tertiary institutions in the Sumatra region that has an opportunity to implement partnership activities and achieve partnership objectives will always improve the quality and quantity of graduates to meet the needs of special supervisor teachers. The West Sumatra education office in collaboration with the West Sumatra Provincial Government can plan policies in the effort to complete the nine-year compulsory education in West Sumatra. The Padang City Education Office in the development and management of the Basic Education level can improve the nine-year compulsory for basic education effort for all, including the students with special needs.

In order to foster a friendly learning service, special attention is needed from relevant parties to meet the needs of the students with special needs. So that, they are able to open themselves and feel free and comfortable in learning and expressing their thoughts and feelings in accordance with their abilities. For this reason, many teaching and learning models are useful for the students with special needs in a friendly class to create creativity, train the students to be able to work together, and socialize in various ways while in school. The educational services will be in accordance with the characteristics of children and conditions of childhood disorders in making learning to work well if the teacher can choose the right service model for a friendly learning in the inclusive environment. The friendly learning in the inclusive environment is a learning environment which activities are to educate the students with special needs to attend education in regular schools [4]. It can be meant as student-centered learning and students' activity. The students with special need feel safe and comfortable in regular schools to attend lessons with other normal students. In sum up, they can live independently in the future.

The UNESCO report in 2003, when Inclusive Education was implemented, showed an increase in students' achievement and progress. In many regions of the world, it is reported that personal, social, and economic benefits are obtained by educating elementary school-age children who have special needs in public schools. Most of the students with special needs are managed to be accommodated more pleasantly through a friendly and respectful manner.

The inclusive education or integrated education can be interpreted as a model of education implementation in which both the students who are disabled and normal can learn together in public schools. For those who have difficulties in their disability, special assistance is provided. This education system uses the terminology of students with special needs or abbreviated "Students with Special Education Need (Students with SEN)" as a substitute for the term disabled or special need students. This implies that every child has special needs, whether permanent or not. These special needs can be divided into three: (1) individual needs; (2) special needs that are exceptions and (3) general special needs.

Therefore, education for all is the school community in which the teachers and students are working together to minimize the obstacles they found in learning and promoting the participation of all students in school. This is one of the characteristics of a friendly school (Welcoming School). This Welcoming School was strengthened in the Salamanca Statement[5] which was established the World Conference on Special Needs Education. It acknowledged "Education for All" as an institution. It can be interpreted that every student can learn, they are different, and the difference is their strength. Thus, the quality of the learning process needs to be improved through collaboration with the students, teachers, parents, and society to make the students get the education and can learn together with other normal students in order to be self-sufficient and develop children's potential.

The inclusive education is an education system in which all students with special needs are accepted at regular schools that located in their area and receive various support and education services based on their needs [6]. While, a friendly inclusive learning environment is defined by involving the students with disabilities in regular classes with other students, such as the students who have difficulty in seeing or hearing, cannot walk, slower in learning, and children with autism. However, this model involved all students without exception. Inclusive means that it is responsible for seeking assistance in capturing and providing education services to all students in school authorities, communities, families, educational institutions, health services, community leaders and others [7].

## **2. RESEARCH METHOD**

This research used a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. It was carried out by focusing on the effort to describe and analyze the following aspects; (1) problems faced by the students with special needs who attend

education in elementary schools and junior high schools; (2) the principles of implementing a friendly learning environment for the students in basic education today; (3) the mechanism of cooperation for Special Guidance Teachers and the needs of Special Guidance Teachers for each school in Padang, special mentoring teachers and other school personnel in developing a friendly inclusive environment in learning for the students with special needs in basic education. A qualitative approach was chosen to examine the problem of this research. This study described the circumstances and symptoms that appeared. It is then analyzed. According to Mc Millan & Schumacher[8], the main principle of qualitative research is to understand social phenomena seen from the perspective of participants.

### 3. DISCUSSION

There were 26 elementary schools and 7 state junior high schools that had conducted an inclusive education in Padang. Each school had students with special needs. The materials given to the students were based on the curriculum. The curriculum used by each school was K13 with a modified learning design model. Similarly, the material was taken from various textbooks. The material was the same and some were different depending on their own abilities. While the subject and classroom teachers modified the curriculum to simplify material for children with special needs.

In the use of media, the class or subject teachers in the field of study used the media in delivering material that is tailored to the students' ability. This matter was in accordance with one of the learning principles such as the demonstration principle. This principle was given with the consideration that teaching would be more interesting such as it was accompanied by examples and pictures to make them understand. Thereby, it helps to clarify the material for the students with special needs [9].

There were still many students with special needs who had not entered inclusive education at school. While the number of special mentoring teachers who assist the learning process in inclusive schools was only 19 people for primary and secondary schools. Meanwhile, dealing with children with special needs was severe. One teacher was needed for one student with special needs such as autism, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), hyperactivity. However, there were a number of schools in which the tutor was specially hired or paid by parents, yet this matter was also happening only for some people. Thus, it was estimated that the need for special guidance teachers was more than 2570 people. This estimation number was real if one teacher handles two students with special needs. On the other hand, students with autism who experience a rather severe disorder were better to be handled by one teacher for each student. In fact, there were still some schools that did not have guiding teachers with an extraordinary educational background in organizing the inclusive education.

To create a friendly learning in the inclusive environment, the students and teachers learned together as a learning community. The students were at the center of learning and actively encouraged to participate in learning. The learning process should also meet the needs and interests of the teachers to make them able to provide the best education for the students. To sum up, learning should be relevant to the students' daily lives in which the students hold responsibility for learning.

The schools that carry out education with inclusive settings for the students with special needs had developed in regular schools ranging from elementary school, junior high school, and even to high school/vocational high schools in Padang. Its innovation grew out of schools, the participation of the teachers was increasing, and it was also supported by the local government. Some elementary schools with inclusive settings had received attention from UNESCO too. Some regular schools with inclusion settings in the city of Padang had already had special tutors. Moreover, various training on inclusive education both for the bureaucracy, academics, and practitioners had been carried out and gradually improved by local and central governments. In simple terms, the inclusive education in Padang had been carried out in the right manner.

Further, clear guidelines and policies were needed from the central and regional governments. It can be in the form of discussions or work meetings on education for all inclusive institutions to build consensus with decision-making bureaucrats. The existing inclusion principles needed to be interpreted in the context of each region. Seeing the fact that inclusion was difficult to standardize, the implementation will differ from one region to another, even between one school and another school. It depends on the commitment built in each region or school.

On the other hand, involving all school residents' resources to work in a formulation of policies that had been formulated together was also needed. It can be meant in the form of involving all of the students to formulate policies, planning, and program development. This program was expected to involve various experts in a variety of disorders (orthopedagogues) in formulating flexible policies to ensure the fulfillment of the education needs of all students. Thus, conduct training for both pre-service and in-service teachers was also needed. The next was transferring the role of special tutor teacher to be a teacher of various knowledge sources or as a place of consultation for all students in school.

In conclusion, the parent organization needed to be formed with a structured relationship with professionals in order to motivate their participation in the learning process. They needed to be trained in the development and evaluation of programs for the students with special needs as early as possible to make them are able to provide services for their children at home. The parent needed to be encouraged to prepare and manage the use of teaching materials that were not costly and can be implemented at home.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the description and explanation regarding a friendly learning process in the inclusive environment in basic education above, it can be summarized as follows: 1) The schools are responsible for creating a friendly learning environment for inclusive students, in which the students can learn and feel involved in the learning community inside and outside the classroom. 2) The schools must establish relationships in the learning process of fellow teachers. 3) The teacher creates more creative learning to be easily understood by the students. 4) The curriculum used can be the same as other regular students and modified as attached. 5) The assessment can be done by written, oral, portfolio, regular evaluation systems, evaluation of modifications and individual evaluations. 6) The schools do not have to accept all students with special needs to be included in regular schools. They can be limited by certain characteristics in order to provide optimal services. 7) The implementation of a friendly inclusive learning model requires changes in the system of schooling and the commitment of various parties as well as the education community. 8) Every school that organizes inclusive education is not discriminatory against the conditions of differences that are borne by the students with special needs. 9) A friendly inclusive learning environment can also be done through individualized learning for the students with special needs that cannot be classified.

Based on the above conclusions, it can be given the following suggestions: 1) The class or subject teachers who teach the students with special needs must upgrade their skills in providing services to the students with special needs such as joining a training. 2) The teachers should understand the characteristics of the students to make it easier to provide the services needed in developing their potential. 4) The teachers should together with school citizens create a friendly inclusive environment towards learning. 5) The school is expected to be able to create a friendly inclusive environment in learning for the students with special needs and provide infrastructures needed by the students with special needs in participating in inclusive education. 6) The school principals, classroom teachers, subject teachers must be able to create more friendly and warm relationships for all students with special needs who attend inclusive education. 7) There should be a collaboration between class teachers, subject teachers, and special guide teachers in designing lesson plan and assessing each subject. 8) The teachers should create cooperative learning in the classroom and create peer tutoring learning in helping the students with special needs. 9) The teachers should show positive feelings for the students with special needs by giving sincere affection

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