



Facilitation of Strengthening the Food Security of Children with Special Needs (ABK) in Surabaya and its Surroundings during the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract. Becoming a parent of ABK certainly requires mental readiness, energy and also costs that are not small for the cost of caring for children. In the current pandemic situation, the economic burden on parents of children with special needs is increasing. Uncertain income and there are also layoffs. The Unesa Sociology Study tries to provide a solution for ABK parents to find new income in the midst of this uncertainty, namely through workshops on making homemade syrup and jam. The goals program are, first, to provide literacy on the manufacture of cheap and healthy food ingredients. Second, providing alternative entrepreneurial solutions in the form of making homemade syrups and jams worth selling. The method applied in this Community services activity is training. Due to the pandemic situation, the training was conducted via telegram. The reason for using Telegram is that it doesn't overload the user's cellular data. Telegram is also considered simpler than zoom or gmeet. The workshop is divided into several sessions. One session consists of several days. The first session is making syrup, the second session is making jam, the third session is practice and mentoring and the fourth session is competition. first: fostering an entrepreneurial spirit among ABK families which leads to an increase in the family economy. While the second goal is: increasing the food security of ABK families by utilizing existing materials in the surrounding environment. The first target requires further observation..While the second target can be met.

Keywords: Mentoring, Families of children with disabilities, Online Workshop, Pandemic

1 INTRODUCTION

In the last decade, people with disabilities have received significant attention from the government. One of these is the increase in the number of people with disabilities based on the Population Census. On the other hand, the government's attention is based on several things. First, just like other citizens, persons with disabilities are potential human resources for national development. Second, persons with disabilities are citizens who have the same rights and obligations. Third, the government must fulfill the citizenship rights of persons with disabilities. [1]

One aspect of disability that is on the rise is birth-related. The causes of disability are not physical, but cognitive, such as Down syndrome and autism. Both of these aspects are a consequence of the development of a cosmopolitan society. Down syndrome is caused by chromosomal (genetic) abnormalities. The risk of occurrence increases if the mother is pregnant above the age of 35 years. The second factor is health during pregnancy. Maternal illness during pregnancy can increase the risk of abnormalities in the baby being born. The result of Down syndrome is that in addition to its physical form, this person has impaired mental development, but can still socialize. [2], [3], [4].

A disability related to mental development is autism. Unlike Down syndrome, people with autism have difficulty socializing. He has impaired neurological development. Symptoms of autism can be recognized after birth. There are allegations that the cause is the same as Down Syndrome, such as the mother being over 35 years old. Others claim that environmental factors are to blame. A number of environmental factors are drugs and infections during pregnancy, birth problems, pollution and pesticides. Exposure to pesticides is thought to affect neurodevelopment while in the womb or afterward..[5], [6] Sementara itu, para ahli lain menyebutkan ada kombinasi antara faktor genetik dan faktor lingkungan. [7], [8]

These two disabilities have the consequence of increasing financing from the family level to the state. A number of studies on the burden on families with children with special needs, in this case Down syndrome and ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder) or abbreviated as autism show that the financing or precisely the investment in their care is double or triple. The financing is borne by the government, the community and the family. The government must provide additional costs for facilities and teaching staff in order to build inclusivity in educational institutions.[9], [10] . Meanwhile, families have to incur extra costs ranging from early detection checks during pregnancy, treatment during childbirth, to care and diet for children with special needs.[11], [12], [13] In their care, families must intervene or treat early to ensure their independence.[6], [14]

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the economic burden of families with children with special needs is much heavier than other families. Movement restrictions [15], [16]) The result is not only disrupting the economic structure of the families by losing jobs or decreasing income, but also limiting access to health and public services for their children. Movement restrictions are a government policy to minimise the spread of COVID-19 from 2020 to 2021. At a macro level, this policy has resulted in a decline in national economic growth to -2.97 (in 2020).[17], [18] At the East Java level, economic growth declined to -2.33. The biggest impact was experienced by cities based on industry and services, such as Surabaya (-4.85) and the largest Batu City (-6.46)..[19] These restrictions make it difficult for families to obtain medicines, therapies and purchase food supplements for their children,

all of which are important for children with special needs, especially Down syndrome and autism.

When it comes to dietary supplements, nutrition experts say that some foods can affect the health of children with Down syndrome and autism. Children with Down syndrome, for example, should avoid fast food because it leads to obesity. In addition to fast food, they should avoid acid-forming foods (chocolate, fatty foods and alcohol), gluten, processed foods, artificial sweeteners, and allergenic foods (wheat and soya). Meanwhile, people with autism should avoid foods with flour and dairy content, syrupy medications, foods with high phenol content (oranges, tomatoes, grapes and cherries), and finally table salt. This should be taken seriously by the family as it could aggravate the condition or cause other illnesses..[20], [21] This is especially difficult to fulfil during a pandemic with reduced income due to layoffs or job losses. On the other hand, families can utilise this as an opportunity to build a home industry for specialised food for people with special needs.

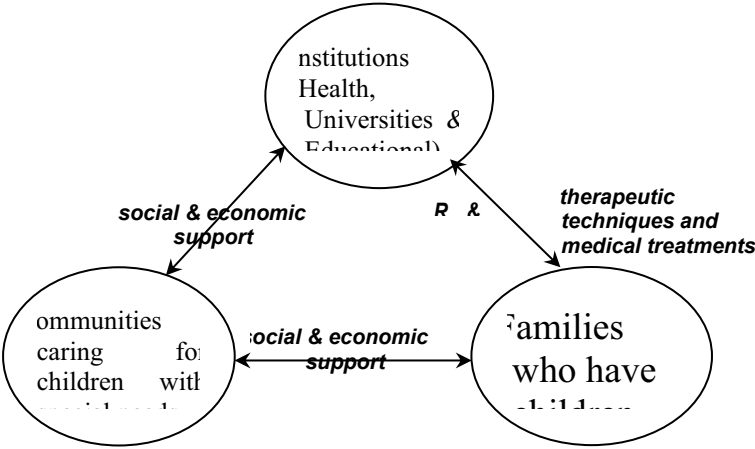


Fig 1. Social Networks of Special Need Children

With "extra" needs, families with children with special needs require social and economic support from their family and neighbourhood, including social institutions. In the sociology of disability, social networks are key to problem solving. In relation to Down syndrome and autism, it is not uncommon for families to take the initiative to build a community that shares with each other. This community also builds networks with the government and other institutions, such as: universities, hospitals, and educational institutions. In the function of solving problems on the one hand, and strengthening science on the other, universities take on the role of conducting research and development. The development includes medicines, nutrition, early detection techniques (during pregnancy) and

therapies that can minimise the impact and develop the independence of children with special needs. These therapies are carried out by families and professionals. However, family remains the key word in strengthening the independence of children with special needs who in turn can live independently.[5], [6], [22]

A number of action researches, known in Indonesian higher education *associal services*, have been conducted to strengthen families with children with special needs. The themes of social action research in the form of training are mostly about understanding the causes of disability in families and how to treat children. What therapies can be used by families are taught in community service. All of this is done in normal situations without movement restrictions such as during the COVID-19 Pandemic [23], [24], [25]

2 RESEARCH METHOD

The type of research conducted at this time was action research. This action research was conducted by first assessing the needs of the community. The community in question is Happy CP Family. Initial research was conducted in 2020 related to the entrepreneurial development of families with children with special needs. From this research, these families developed MSMEs to increase income. Because they have to give full attention to children with special needs, some mothers leave work or choose to work at home. The same thing is done by mothers in the United States.[26], [27]. From the initial research, the research team, hereinafter referred to as the Unesa Team (UT), conducted a needs analysis, one of which was to develop natural and healthy food products for their children. In the flow of action research according to McIntyre as the questioning stage and then followed by reflecting.

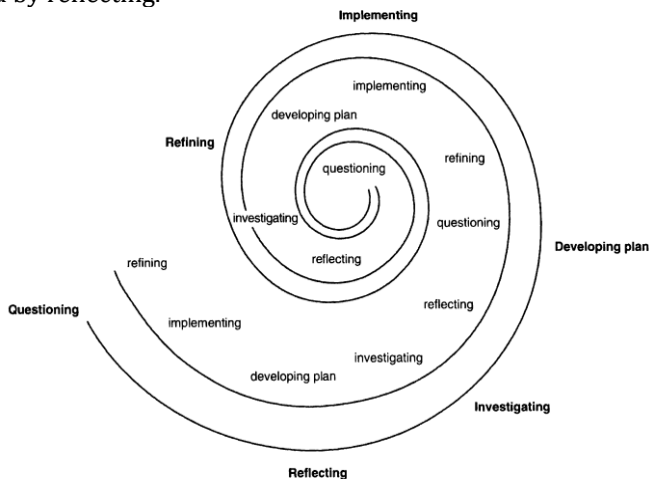


Fig. 2 McIntyre's Cycle Flow [28]

The needs analysis process was conducted through focused discussions, as is the flow of action research..[29], [30] The focused discussion resulted in the families' reflections on the meaning of children with special needs and how to

prepare their children for independence. In this reflection, families were invited to explore the assets that families have to continuously care for their children. What was obtained was that none of the families saw children with special needs as a burden, but a blessing. With a complicated process, they introspected on this reality from the time of diagnosis, to avoidance and finally accepting it as a blessing..[31], [32], [33], [34], [35]

In the next stage, together with the research team, through FGDs that year, the community identified other needs, in addition to the development of their MSMEs. From this list of needs, they determined a priority scale. One of the priorities was specialised food processing for children with disabilities. Meanwhile, the research team developed a network with a person who cares about MSMEs, SHINE, a non-profit organisation working in the field of entrepreneurship. Activities were carried out from April to October 2021 with preparatory stages, including registration of participants between April and June 2021 while waiting for the dynamics of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The training and monitoring were finally conducted from September to October 2021.

3 FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

3.1 Objective Conditions of Families with Children with Disabilities during the COVID-19 Pandemic

The families in question are members of the Happy CP Family Community. The word "CP" stands for cerebral palsy. CP can result from a variety of causes, ranging from viral infections during pregnancy (toxoplasma, herpes, zika, etc.), genetic mutations, childbirth disorders, infant meningitis, to falls during infancy and brain haemorrhage. In its development, the community accepted members from families with autism and Down syndrome. It is recognised that these two disorders also impair independence in adulthood. The commonality of anxiety about the child's future is a uniting factor. According to their Facebook page, there are 168 members. They gather regularly at the home of the founder, Anjarsari, also known as Mother Zakilala. Zakilala stands for her two children's first names. One of her children has special needs. Out of love and concern for the child, she established a parenting home as well as an early childhood centre. [23] (see figure 1).

Table 1. Family Economic Condition

Condition	Before	After
Increase	12	4
	7,14%	2,38%
Flat	80	57
	47,62%	33,93%
Slight decrease	53	62
	31,55%	36,90%

Decrease	23	45
	13,69%	26,79%

When they become members of the community, they receive various activities on child care, and more than that, they are invited to develop MSMEs in their homes. This means that while caring for their children, they can increase their income with various businesses. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, their businesses were starting to improve, but that changed during the pandemic. In addition to several heads of families being laid off, some were even laid off, they have to face competition with other families who have participated in developing MSMEs as a coping strategy to overcome the economic crisis.[36] On the other hand, the number of buyers has decreased due to movement restrictions (PSBB), except using digital marketing and sales.[37], [38] On the other hand, the number of buyers has decreased due to movement restrictions (PSBB), except using digital marketing and sales.

MSMEs are a coping strategy to overcome problems arising from the COVID-19 pandemic as shown in table 1. Four families are still improving economically, as are these 57 families (33.93%) who are more supported by this business. By having children with special needs, they are actually trained to be sensitive and respond to changes in any conditions. This sensitivity and response is the family's coping strategy. Therefore, they quickly learned to produce and sell digitally. They studied and practiced all digital marketplace applications, such as: Gojek (Gofood and Gosend), Grab (Grabfood) and Shopee.

3.2 E-Workshops as a Strategy to Overcome Movement Restrictions

Selection of Social Media Platform. When told that the research team would continue to realise one of the programmes prioritised in the previous year, the community leader welcomed the plan. The issue is whether it should be IMPLEMENTED in an offline form. Both the research team and the community leader made an agreement to look at the direction of change in the COVID-19 Pandemic. Meanwhile, through the community leader, the team opened registration for training participants. The offer was conveyed through the Happy CP Family whatsapp group (WAG).

The WAG is the communication instrument of the community. The use of whatsapp is much easier and more common than other social media.[39]. The community leader recognised that members were more skilled at using WA than other social media. TU created an e-pamphlet. The e-pamphlet contained a brief objective, how to register and the WAG address, as well as the WA number of the contact person. The community leader recognised that members were more skilled at using WA than other social media. TU created an e-pamphlet. The e-pamphlet contained a brief objective, how to register and the WAG address, as well as the WA number of the contact person.

After seeing the development of the COVID-19 Pandemic which has not improved, even in June-August 2021, the virus mutated into the delta type. This delta type of COVID-19 virus turned out to be much more deadly than the alpha

type. Hearing the information, anxiety was experienced not only by the TU, but also the members of Happy CP Family, out of 168, only about 30 registered. Therefore, there was a delay. Meanwhile, TU established a relationship with a community that cares about MSMEs, SHINE. The community appointed Fenny Kartika as the resource person.

In a three-way discussion between Unesa Team, Mrs Fenny Kartika (SHINE) and Mrs Anjar (Happy CP Family), there was one conclusion that the condition of the COVID-19 Pandemic does not allow offline training. Firstly, offline training poses a risk of spread. Second, with government regulations, Unesa team have difficulty finding venues. Third, there is no guarantee of compliance with health protocols. Fourth, the participants were more focused on assisting children at home. With these four reasons, the decision was made to conduct the training online.

The next issue was the choice of platform. Information from Ibu Anjar that the members are not yet fluent in using meeting platforms, such as: zoom and google meet, so the choice refers more to WA. However, there needs to be another platform that can be used to store and share videos and power point materials. WA does not have the ability to store and share videos above 16 MBytes (and has now increased to 64 Mbyte). Another drawback is that the saved and shared videos will reduce the memory capacity of mobile phones.

To overcome this obstacle, with the approval of Mrs Anjar and Mrs Fenny Kartika, the Unesa team made the decision to use telegram. Telegram is an application founded in 2013 by Nikolai and Parel Durov that has a number of advantages. First, telegram groups can accommodate more than 100 members. Second, to become a user, it is much easier than WA. Third, videos and images are stored in the cloud, so they don't put a strain on mobile phones. Therefore, the strategy is to send a telegram link invitation in the training WAG. All they had to do was click on the link and they were already part of the telegram group. Two telegram groups were created, viz: discussion group and material group.

Online Learning, Online QA and Practice on a Small Scale. The workshop was conducted on Saturday and Sunday (18-19 September 2021) at 19.00-21.00 WIB. There are several steps involved. The first step is to ensure that participants are registered as members in the telegram group, both discussion telegrams and materials. Second, TU announced the training plan. The time and day were discussed between the Unesa team, Fenny Kartika (SHINE) and Anjarsari (Happy CP Family). The time was chosen after the children were asleep or someone else accompanied them (husband or sibling). The last step is Mrs Anjarsari reminded again through WAG for participants to be able to join at that time.

On 18 September 2021, Ibu Diyah Utami from Unesa Team opened the conversation via telegram discussion about the activity and briefly introduced the profile of Ibu Fenny Kartika. The next discussion was filled by Ibu Zakilala to give a brief welcome to the activity. Then, Mrs Fenny Kartika delivered her material. The initial material was to motivate mothers to develop businesses at home (homemade products). Based on her experience, through a home-based business, she has earned an income that is not inferior to those who work in the office. She pointed out some of the advantages, one of which is to continue to accompany the

growth and development of children. "Educating children is left to the maid. Yes, it's our responsibility!" She also mentioned her marketing strategy. For her, since it is still early days, there is no need to obtain a licence. "However, we must ensure that the process is good, safe and "halal"." She then shared examples of home-based products that have been successfully marketed. She then offered that the participating mothers could make syrup home products because it is important not only for their children, but also marketable. In fact, it can happen if there is awareness from the learners. In this case, if we follow Alfred Schutz's thinking, one's objective condition can be a *motive because*. [40], [41], [42], [43]



Fig.3. After Practice Making Homemade Syrup



Fig 4. Workshop material through telegram group

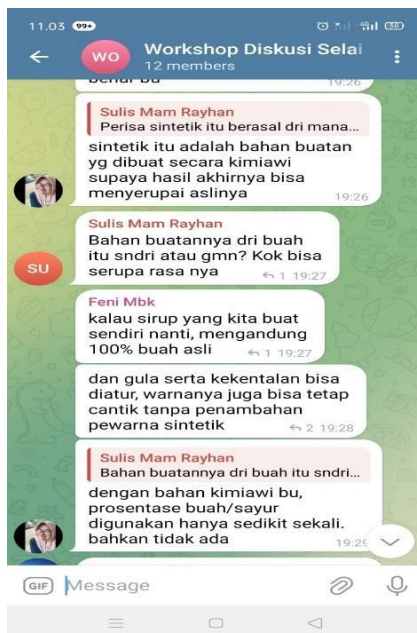


Fig 5. Discussion through telegram group

The next day (Sunday, 20 September 2021), she delivered a theoretical presentation on the content of fruit and spice syrup and how to make it. Then, participants were asked to open the material telegram. In the telegram, he had sent a video on how to produce syrup, starting from the equipment needed, the raw materials, to processing and packaging. She warned, "Don't use artificial sweeteners or preservatives. It's not good for the growth and development of the children." The statement is true because one of the food ingredients should not be consumed by children with special needs. At the end of the session, after questions from the participating mothers, Mrs Diyah Utami provided an opportunity to practice making syrup at home, either individually or in groups. The participants were asked to make a video clip from the beginning to the making process. Through the video clip, Unesa Team together with Mrs .Anjarsari gave judgement and prizes for the winners.

E-Workshops Need Motivation to Build Participant Awareness. E-Workshop is part of E-Learning Strategy. E-learning is distance learning that uses digital technology. The basic philosophy is that no one is left behind. [44], [45]. This philosophical foundation is the basis for development, especially education. Education, which is an instrument of vertical mobility or an instrument of poverty alleviation, must be experienced by all people throughout their lives (long life education). [46], [47]. In fact, it can happen if there is awareness from the learners. In this case, if we follow Alfred Schutz's thinking, one's objective condition cannot be a motive because [48] becoming participant workshop.

Objective conditions in the form of a sharp decline in income during the COVID-19 pandemic have not been enough to force people to increase their skills. E-workshops have actually ensured the safety of individuals from virus exposure on the one hand. On the other hand, this activity also transcends administrative boundaries and enters the subject's home. He does not need to pay for transport, just sit in any place in his house in the most comfortable position possible. The organising costs were low, the committee and resource persons only had to create a telegram group and create teaching materials, while the participants only used their regular data packages. Additional costs are only incurred when practising. To make video clips, participants only need to use standard applications on their mobile phones.

The barriers are communication and motivation. Communication between organisers, resource persons and the community is not as good as offline. Face-to-face communication during the pre-COVID-19 pandemic period does make it easier to provide understanding and understand the understanding of participants. Moreover, through face-to-face communication, motivation can be displayed in an expressive manner. This cannot be found in e-workshops. On the other hand, through offline workshops, the quality of acceptance and new skills can be measured. That would be difficult to obtain in an e-workshop. As they are not intended for the issuance of skills certification, these e-workshops have become an adequate instrument of knowledge and skills transformation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

4 CONCLUSION

There are several things that can be concluded in social action research. First, universities can take on the role of mediator or facilitator in coping strategies for marginalised communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Second, the community, in this case with disabilities, has been able to optimise the ability of its members to overcome or assist their children with special needs. They encourage each other that children with special needs are a blessing from God for which they should be grateful. All criticism and rejection gradually diminished and turned into motivation for the family. Third, with all its limitations, the e-workshop has effectively helped improve the skills of mothers with children with special needs. Fourth, the implications of this activity must be sustainable. This can happen if there is a strong motive not only in the target group leader, but also in its members.

5 Acknowledgements

This article is dedicated to Ibu Anjarsari, the founder of the Happy CP Family community who has passed away. Time is short, but she has produced extraordinary work. Her concern has strengthened her members in assisting children with special needs. Her house remains upright and does not stop. Her spirit remains and will never subside.

Moreover, the team would like to thank Universitas Negeri Surabaya for paying special attention to people with disabilities. Therefore, the team received funding for action research as part of Community Service.

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