



## Asking commitments for local government to implement inclusive schools: its policy and practice

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### Abstract

This article aims to find out some commitments performed by the local government in implementing its policy and its practice. This is a qualitative method using designs semi-structured interview questions which included in-depth interviews, direct observations and some recordings. The results of the study refer to the five categories of pertaining commitments that should be done from the local government, they are; to strengthen in education administration practices, to use appropriate models of teaching and learning, to support in some training for un-skill special teachers, to give supporting financial for inclusive school and to establish many inclusive school.

**Keywords:** inclusive education, policy, practice

### 1. Introduction

Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world (Mandela, 2014) [14]. Likewise, children with special needs must go to formal school if they want to change the world. Inclusive education policies have been held and carried out in educational institutions in local government. The enormous attention in this inclusion sector has made it as a pioneer in inclusive education in East Java, Surabaya. The Education Policy of Republic of Indonesia in 2010 proposes that one of the objectives of teacher training programs is to ensure the equal access of children to education regardless of social class, gender, religion, and ethnicity. It also called to develop strategies for meeting in the same class with the learning needs of all children with their diverse backgrounds and circumstances (MOE, 2010) [16]. Similar to this initiative in Bangladesh, and developing countries such as India (Alur, 2019; Sharma & Deppeler, 2005; Singal, 2005) [13, 23], Brazil (Santos & Silva, 2009), Tanzania (Gronlund, *et al.*, 2010), South Africa (Daniels, 2010) [7], and Indonesia (Sulistiyadi, 2014) [25] has also taken policy initiatives that support inclusive education. It is clear that developing countries adopt policies to support inclusive education, but they face challenges in the effective implementation of these policies. One important area that deserves attention in this regard is how educational institutions in local government that offers pre-service programs prepare teachers, resources room for inclusive education and financial support.

The success of education for all is the quality of teachers itself. The result of the study provides evidence that teacher quality is the most critical variable to influence student's achievement (Gustafsson, 2003; OECD, 2004) [10, 18]. Pre-service teacher education builds for future teachers through basic knowledge and skills and prepares them to face challenges related to their profession (Wike, 2004). Research also shows that pre-service teacher education is the best time to develop positive sentiments and minimize concerns about inclusive education among pre-service teachers (Loreman, *et al.*, 2005; Sharma *et al.*, 2006) [13, 21]. Schools should be able to accommodate the diversity of students in the classroom, and the term reaches unreachable

meaning that they can reach out from those that cannot be reached by reading, writing, and arithmetic. Through some desirable lessons, the teacher could apply for children with special needs in everyday life in the classroom (Mudjito, 2012) [17]. But in facts, there are many children with special needs who have not received education as equal as other normal children.

The number of children with special needs students admitted to regular schools is far less than the total number available. In East Java Province, the latest Social Service data in 2017 shows that the number of children with special needs in East Java is 47,286 children spread in 38 regencies and cities or around 49% of the total disabled people in East Java in the same year of 95,560. Based on the data recapitulation of the East Java Government, the number of inclusive schools in East Java until December 2017 was 478 institutions spread in 25 regencies/cities. Access to services for inclusive students is also not fully carried out by state / private inclusion schools. In practice children with special needs obtained formal education through special schools, there were also those who had to go to special schools by staying in a dormitory house so that they were far from their families and separated from normal children.

The issuance of Sidoarjo Regent Regulation number 6 of 2011 concerning special education and special services suggests that all schools in all levels are obliged to organize inclusive education and receive students with special needs in the class. The Sidoarjo regency through its office of education and culture institution must provide special inclusive teacher, fulfill some school infrastructure and educational supports since the regulation is has begun. Stakeholder's support and school citizens are highly more expected and motivated to execute the program. Unfortunately, seven years since the program started, there were still evident in the uneven quantity and quality of the number of special teachers owned by inclusion school. When we compare to education standards was promised by the local government there were many lacks (Sulistiyadi, 2014) [25]. Some inclusive schools still do not have a learning resource place. The flexibility of curriculum modification as well as the learning process in the classroom

is still unsatisfactory. That indicates many obstacles in its implementation of the inclusion program in the field.

The positive impact of planned pre-service teacher education programs designed for class diversity is reported by several studies conducted in Australia (Carrington *et al.*, 2010) <sup>[3]</sup> and the United States (Gettinger *et al.*, 2008) <sup>[9]</sup>. Several studies also identified various pre-service teacher concerns in dealing with class diversity. For example, inadequate resource support during a pre-service teacher education program was identified as a barrier to teacher preparation in studies conducted in India (Sharma, Moore, & Sonawane, 2009) <sup>[22]</sup> and Hong Kong (Chong, Forlin & Lan, 2007) <sup>[5]</sup>. Other studies (Chai, Teo, & Lee, 2009) <sup>[4]</sup> report short course duration as a challenge to prepare pre-service teachers correctly. In other Indian studies (Alur, 2001) <sup>[1]</sup> lack of resources; Negative beliefs and attitudes towards the concept of inclusive education and inadequate teacher training were identified as significant barriers to the implementation of inclusive education.

## 2. Research methodology

The main objective of this research is to asking commitments of the local government in accordance with the Sidoarjo Rules Number 6 of 2011 to provide in accessibility all students with special needs were enrolled in junior high school, to apply some education trainings for special inclusive teachers, to fulfill in infrastructure or facilities include; books, media, educational tools, a learning resources, and support to some funds (financial) for inclusive schools.

This type of research is a qualitative research. Data collection techniques are used for participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation recordings. Data analysis technique used in this research is case study. It uses two sites of junior high schools (namely SMPN 4 Sidoarjo and SMPN 4 Waru) and 2 officers who come from education institution named the Sidoarjo Education and Culture Institution. The participants of some inclusion schools are namely 2 principals and 2 special inclusive teachers from both of schools. The participants are asked to answer 10 questions in a five semi-structured questions and a five- open questions concerning its policy and practice.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### Commitments

There are three kinds of commitment; affective, continuance, and normative (Meyer & Ellen, 1991) <sup>[15]</sup>, different to Cooper *et al.* (1997) <sup>[6]</sup> emphasizes that there are four types that influence commitment namely; emotional literary, emotional fitness, emotional depth, and emotional alchemy. Likewise, a policy or regulation from the local government that has been approved should be implemented perfectly concretely in the community because winning commitment is a mirror of effective leadership (Harry, 2004) <sup>[12]</sup>.

In 2000, The World Education Forum, Dakar Framework for Action we could conclude that the concept of inclusive education is based on the fundamental right of all learners to a quality and equitable education that meets their basic learning needs and considers the diversity of backgrounds and abilities a learning opportunity. Inclusive education is intertwined with the international vision and efforts towards achieving Education for All.

The commitment of the central government to hold

inclusive schools is stated in the ministry of education Number 70 of 2009 concerning the opportunities for students with special needs to obtain an education in regular schools at elementary, junior high, and high school or vocational level. The government should guarantee and to protect students with special needs and students with intelligence potential and special talents. This rule is a reference for all inclusion schools to implement education in every province and regent all over Indonesia legally.

But based on implementation theory George C. Edward III (Edwards, 1990) <sup>[8]</sup> states that the implementation of policies is considered important and success if it meets four standard components, namely; (1) communication component, (2) resource component, (3) disposition component and (4) bureaucratic structure component. With an in-depth study of these components, the policy of inclusion education in Sidoarjo Regency will be known how effective and efficient it is in the field.

The communication component must be done so that the vision, mission, and objectives of inclusive education policies can be achieved. Communication carried out by policymakers (local government) to target groups (inclusion schools) must be built intensely, consistently and clearly to be understood by the target group. The policy giver must be intense, consistent and clear in conducting monitoring and evaluation with the target group. This communication must be done intensely from the start of the policy to the principal, all existing school residents including special teacher, education staff and guardians of students with steady. Consistency in communicating from the Local Government to the inclusive school needs to be agreed upon and built continuously so that the goal of implementing inclusive education can be achieved quickly. Mutual communication is considered necessary to be done by both parties consistently because different sources of information will give birth to different interpretations.

Components of resources (resources) are also considered important, which include special companion teacher resources, educational personnel resources, financial resources (financial) or budget, and infrastructure resources for the success of the implementation of inclusion. Support for other supporting facilities is also needed such as books, learning media or source space. Inadequate human resources (amount and ability) in schools result in the inability to implement inclusive education perfectly because they cannot carry out supervision properly. If the number of special teachers is limited, what must be done is to increase the skills/abilities of other teachers of program implementers to undertake inclusive education. For this reason, the need for HR management is carried out in inclusive schools well so that it can improve the performance of inclusive education.

Factors that also often influence the effectiveness of policy implementation are the disposition and attitudes of inclusive schools. If they agree with the contents of this inclusive education policy, they will be happy to implement, but if their views differ from the local government, the implementation process will experience many obstacles. There are three forms of disposition or attitude/response of the target group to policy; awareness of program implementers, instructions/direction of the implementer to respond to the program towards acceptance or rejection, and the intensity of the response. Program implementers may understand the aims and objectives of inclusive education

programs, but often fail to implement the program appropriately because they reject the objectives that are in it so that they hide and avoid program implementation. Besides that, the support of implementing officials is very much needed in achieving the program objectives. In Sidoarjo, there are a regulation number 6 of 2011 states that every school must give service of inclusive education

and as a guideline for inclusive education school. The regulation carries out a form of giving equal rights to every citizen. This is a local government policy. Sidoarjo Regency has a total of 158 regular school consists of 80 elementary schools, 20 junior high schools, and 9 senior high schools and three vocational high schools, and it is the largest in East Java. It shows in table 1.

**Table 1;** Comparison of Total Inclusive School in Sidoarjo Regency

| Schools                | Total of Schools | Inclusive Schools | Percentage |
|------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Elementary School      | 552              | 80                | 44,16%     |
| Yunior High School     | 164              | 20                | 32,80%     |
| Senior high School     | 64               | 9                 | 5,76%      |
| Vocational High School | 84               | 5                 | 4,20%      |
| Total                  | 946              | 114               | 10,78%     |

*Source:* Sidoarjo Education and Culture Department in the year 2018

The table above shows that only at the Yunior High School level the percentage of 44, 16 % is greater than the other levels. Evidence that local government commitments in organizing inclusive education need to be revised. The number of inclusive schools is below 50 percent of the total number of schools available. Although the local government has been declared as pro-inclusive regency it is still cannot accommodate all students with special needs. It can be seen that when we compared to the total number of schools as many as 946 institutions, the number of inclusive is still not too many. The distribution of inclusive schools is also not optimal, where not all districts have inclusive schools with a certain level of education. The uneven distribution itself is caused by several things including; the number of children with special needs, unprepared schools and lacks inclusion teachers. Otherwise, the demands of school to increase its budget for inclusion and asking the commitment of local government to implement in practice wanted.

**Administration Practices**

The readiness of the school themselves also causes the uneven distribution of inclusive education services in each district for elementary, junior, senior school were not all areas have the willingness of school to carry out inclusive program.

Since 2014, Resource Center (RC) has also been projected in every district to have an early detection function, which is involved in the process of diagnosis and assessment of students with special needs. The establishing RC will also as a function as transitional education. Transitional education is education that must be undertaken by students before entering elementary school, which lasts for two semesters (1 year). The transitional education will also be related to the early detection function of the RC so that through both RCs can determine whether a child with special needs can continue to inclusive school or must continue at an extraordinary school. The local government is a regulator so it must carry out junior schools as a continuation study after administration practices. There are still many districts that do not have elementary schools accommodating students with special needs.

**Model of inclusive curriculum**

The inclusive education model uses a moderate, inclusive model, or commonly called the mainstreaming model. This model is required to study together with other students in regular classes. But on certain occasions where students

with special needs are separated for special treatment. In principle, students with special needs are given the same opportunity to get classroom learning together with students who are not classified into special needs children. The inclusive teacher modifies such as (a) in time allocation (b) modification of content/material. (c) Change of the teaching and learning process. The separation of students with special needs from regular classes is done only on certain occasions where the learning process cannot be equalized. This class model is called a pull-out class, where children with disabilities learn with other children (normal) in a regular class but at certain times are withdrawn from the regular class to the resource room to study with a special tutor. The Education Office itself does not provide strict rules on how the inclusive education model should be practiced in schools. The school is the one who knows the condition of the students the most, so the school themselves must identify the needs of students. It is very necessary so that the implementation of a policy can run properly and there is no misunderstanding regarding the policy.

**Giving of teacher training**

Sloman (2000) <sup>[24]</sup> said the teacher's HR learned and could develop through training, coaching and mentoring. Preparation and promotion through practices strategy is key to the success of implementation. Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) <sup>[26]</sup> also mentioned that the implementation of the policy needs the support of resources, both human resources and non-human resources. In implementing policy, the necessary resources cover several aspects, namely the human resources of teachers, employees, information resources for the availability of internet networks, the resources of the principal's authority, and the resources of school facilities.

In terms of quantity, human resources in the form of teaching staff or special assistant teachers owned by the Education Office can be said is not good. Even though Sidoarjo Regency has the highest number of teaching staffs for special teaching teachers in East Java. Until January 2014, it had 200 special teachers from the elementary level to the high school / vocational high school. But in terms of quality, the quality of teachers can be said to be not too maximal. It caused by the lacks of the inclusive teacher who graduates from university who have special education qualifications less. The majority of inclusive teachers in the Sidoarjo Regency are regular teachers who have got some training/ workshops; in other words they are not inclusive

teachers with inclusive educational backgrounds. It became difficulties in carrying out their duties and functions handling children with special needs in the class.

#### Financial supports

The 158 schools organize inclusive education services for 140 students with special needs from all levels of education in Sidoarjo Regency. The budget is allocated around 25% of the total education budget for the development of inclusive education for the provision of assistance for learning resource facilities, book books, and incentives for special mentoring teachers and supporting resources for other inclusive schools. The budget can be said to be very limited when compared to the number of students and also the number of administering schools. In practice, the local government still cannot provide funds assistance to all schools inclusive education programs equally. This certainly affects the implementation of inclusive education services. The local government has indeed assisted in the form of facilities and infrastructure as well as other learning support tools, and available funds are also very limited. The implementation of inclusive education services is still very dependent on internal funding sources owned by each school. This is certainly still a bit burdensome to the school because the budget owned by each school is certainly different from each other.

#### Other supports

A policy will succeed effectively and efficiently if the implementers not only know what they have to do and have the ability to implement the policy, but they also have the willingness to implement the policy. High commitment from policy implementers will make them always enthusiastic in carrying out their duties, authorities, functions, and responsibilities by the rules that have been set (Edwards, 1990)<sup>[8]</sup>. The success of policy implementation is not only determined by the extent to which policy actors know what to do and can do so, but it also discovers whether the policy actor has a strong disposition to the policy being implemented. The commitment of the local government also can be seen from their efforts to maximally utilize existing resources in the midst of all limitations, to be able to support the implementation of inclusive education as a whole. The absence of special incentives for regular teachers who concurrently serve as a special teacher does not significantly affect the amount of commitment. The commitment arises based on personal reasons, namely humanity and empathy for children with special needs, so they are willing to carry out the additional tasks voluntarily. In addition to the aspects of communication, resources, and disposition, aspects of the bureaucratic structure are also one of the important elements that determine the successful implementation of a policy.

#### Giving a license

The Education Office appoints the Primary and Secondary Education Sector as the coordinator of inclusive education. The duties are to assess and to give a license of a new inclusive school. This sector cooperates essential to developing and implementing an inclusive curriculum too. The implementation of inclusive education at the school level is making sure that all children can participate and learn – significantly pushes on inclusive teachers. Teachers need to be supported by the whole education system to own

and apply inclusive pedagogic strategies in their classrooms effectively. On the other hand, interaction, co-operation and interdisciplinary teamwork among practitioners have demonstrated the benefits of working with diversity.

#### 4. Conclusion

The commitment from the local government in the implementation of inclusive education has not been fully implemented as expected. The existence of regular schools should serve inclusive education in each district was not available. The effort has not to be seen from its support the inclusive education as a whole program. The commitment arises as a manifestation of the enthusiasm to realize education services without discrimination. The importance of inclusive education system can enrich children's learning processes, strengthen feelings of empathy and high social care, mutual respect, sharing of potential and inspiration. Even confidence will increase if the inclusive school is in all district.

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