

Developing Rural Community Empowerment Model to Increase Educational Needs Fulfillment for Children with Disabilities

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Abstract: The objective of the study is to find an applicable society empowerment model in increasing society consent to fulfill disability children education. The method in this study was mix method carried out in three phases, covering: 1) preliminary study phase; 2) model development phase; and 3) implementation phase. After the implementation of the model, there are some changes in the rural community. In Mekarlaksana where the research was conducted, the changes that occurred are: society understanding on the types of disabilities and children with disabilities needs were increasing, the society raise more awareness that children with disabilities need special treatment, the people are aware to move and make a planning to support the education fulfillment for children with disabilities. The established empowerment model has created positive impact on the rural community and the education fulfillment for children with disabilities. The empowerment model can be implemented in increasing society empowerment that will lead to the education fulfillment for children with disabilities.

1 INTRODUCTION

Most children with disabilities in rural areas have not received a decent education and they receive a strong negative stigma from the society as disability children. (Lauver, 2010; Ahmad, 2013; Balcazar, Kuchak, Dimpfl, Saripepella, and Alvarado, 2014). It is due to the fact that most families with disability children are from low economic conditions (Susuman, Blignaut, and Lougue, 2013). Remote access to school, inadequate educational facilities, coupled with the limited knowledge, understanding and information has have caused problems for the family in handling its disability children (Eigenbrood, 2005; Black, Mcconkey, Roberts, and Ferguson, 2010). The family does not afford to make efforts in meeting the needs of sustainable and good education and training and tends to take care the children at home.

Society, including surroundings neighborhood, school and the social and religious organizations in the village fails to perform their functions, especially in providing support and social participation. The village, district and regent authority also did not contribute proactively in addressing the fulfillment of

the educational needs of children with disabilities in the village. Society does not have power in meeting the educational needs of children with disabilities. There are still many disability children who are marginalized and alienated from social interaction and services. (Foley, Roche, and Tucker, 2001).

Ecological perspective believes that the family, the school, the village authority, local communities and society in the broad sense are elements that influence the children development. (Farber and Maharaj, 2005; Huraerah 2008; Wakimizu, Yamaguchi, and Fujioka, 2016). Communities should have a power (Van Haren and Fiedler, 2008; Akey, Marquis, and Ross, 2000), particularly in meeting the educational needs for children with disabilities in the village. To this end, empowerment needs to be done, because the empowerment is essentially intended to develop the potential within oneself so as to spur social change. (Mclaughlin, Brown, and Young, 2004; Wilson, Abram, and Anderson, 2010).

Weak community empowerment in educational needs fulfillment for children with disabilities is the major concern of this study. To overcome these problems, applicative model of community empowerment to increase community empowerment

need to be developed. Based on the results of previous research studies, the research (Ljunggren, Huang, Wang, and Johansson, 2010; Mauro, Biggeri, and Grilli, 2015) has been widely examines how communities are empowered, but so far no studies that focus specifically on empowering the community to meet the educational needs of children disabilities.

Therefore, this study aimed to find an applicative model of community empowerment in improving community empowerment so that the educational needs of children with disabilities in Mekarlaksana in particular can be met. Empowerment was conducted on the social system that is micro system, meso system, eco systems and macro system. Micro system includes immediate child environment, the family, friends and school environment. Meso system includes the relationships between micro systems, eco systems including policy makers, while macro system includes broader community in respect to values and culture. (Farber and Maharaj, 2005; Algood, Hong, Gourdine, and Williams, 2011).

2 METHOD

The method of the study was mixed method and it was done through three research phases; 1) preliminary study phase, in this phase the researchers collect the initial information on the objective condition on the site (empirically) and compare the obtained data with existing literature (theoretically), this was done to formulate the intended model, the method used in this phase was qualitative and quantitative methods; 2) model development phase, in this phase focus group discussion (FGD) and model validation were carried out through both content and empirical validity so as to polish the model, the method used in this phase was evaluative method; 3) implementation try out phase, the designated and validated model was then implemented to see its practicality. Thus in this phase qualitative method was deemed appropriate to use.

The subject of the research was divided into primary and secondary informants. Selection of informants was conducted by purposive sampling. The primary informants consist of the Mekarlaksana

headman, Society based Rehabilitation cadres comprising such community elements as Family with Disability children Association, Community Social Workers, PKK cadres, RT and RW headman, BPD members and School teachers. The secondary informants are all the villagers of Mekarlaksana. Each is one person of each element and all the data obtained has been through the approval and also protected confidential.

This research subject becomes an important element in the process of empowerment because it is an element of the social system that provision of education services for children with disabilities can be met and improved. Ecological theory states that the environment strongly influenced developments. Bronfenbrenner ecological theory focuses on "human development is influenced by five environmental systems, namely micro system, meso system, eco systems, macro system and kroon system." (Santrock, 2009). The research lasted for one year starting from July 2013 to June 2014.

The site of the research was Mekarlaksana Village, Ciparay District, Bandung Regency, West Java Indonesia. This place was chosen because Bandung Regency have more disables and they are not handled properly yet either by the state or private parties. Integrated Data recapitulation for Social Protection Program in 2012 Bandung Regency Bandung Regency has stated that as many as 8,300 people with disabilities. (Indriani, 2012). Ciparay district is one of the four districts in Bandung Regency with the most disable people. The insufficient data and limited information has caused limited access for the villagers in acquiring information from the government in relation to the programs in handling children with disabilities.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data analysis on the preliminary research, the society empowerment model was designed as an effort to increasing education fulfillment for children with disabilities. Figure 1 Validated hypothetical model.

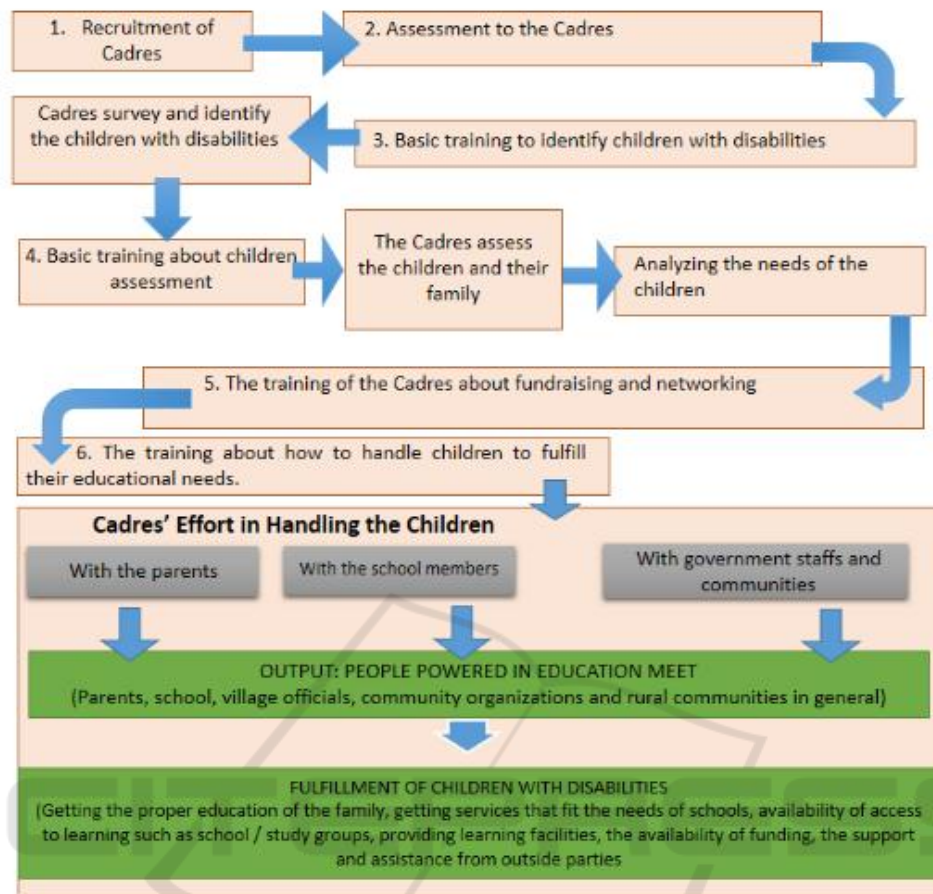


Figure 1. Society empowerment chart.

Figure 1 describes the structures/ contents and the flowchart of empowering process. The process is explained as follows:

1. TKM Recruitment
TKM (Society's team work) is projected to run the flow of the society's empowerment processes and hold some events that empower people to fulfill education need for the disability children in the village. TKM should represent every society's elements, it was done to ensure the empowering process is done through the whole level of society's.
2. Cadre Assessment
Assessment was done to measure the TKM motivation, commitment and understanding on the children with disabilities and how to deal with them. It was done to reinforce the organization and to build the awareness on the importance of education for children with disabilities which belongs to every elements of

- the society to fulfill the education for the children with special needs.
3. Cadre basic training in Identifying the children
In this phase, the TKM was introduced to who are the disability children, what are their characteristics. It was done to do early identification on the children suspected to suffer disability to provide immediate services.
4. Cadre Basic Training in Assessing Children
In this stage, the TKM members are introduced to assessment: what is a good instrument for assessment and how to do assessment.
5. Cadre Basic Training in finding and building network
In this stage, the cadres are exposed to the organizational reinforcement, fund raising and networking, advocating to sustain the upcoming activities.

6. Child treatment

The next step of the research is the most important stage. It deals with how to handle disability children along with their family, teachers, community and government authority.

a. Children handling along with the family

The child handling along with their parents were done through the following procedures: 1) Parents with disability children empowerment on the importance of the education for the children were done to build parents awareness in paying more attentions on their children needs and educational fulfillment for their children; 2) Providing training on how to handle disability children at home and how to run the designated program based on the prior assessment done by TKM; 3) Paying home visit and doing treatment to the children at home and teaching their parents how to handle their children; 4) Doing weekly monitoring.

b. Children handling with the school authorities

The child handling along with the school authorities was also committed through some stages: 1) Holding a training at school dealing with basic concepts of inclusive school and how to identify and assess disability children with permanent impairments; 2) Doing simulations in carrying out identifications and assessments and practicing the identification and assessment in the real life context; 3) Providing training for analyzing the assessment result and planning individual instructions and providing special learning control to the teachers; 4) Holding a monitoring with the teachers to see the children progress.

c. Children Handling along with the authorities and society organization

In this stage, the following procedures were also carried out: 1) Holding meetings with the village authorities, the headman in particular, discussing the headman contribution in education fulfillment for disability children; 2) Discussing the conditions and the social efforts with society organizations and formal education institutions in Mekarlaksana Village to fulfill the education need for disability children; 3) Meeting the head of Ciparay

district, Bandung regency and West Java Province ministry of education.

Based on the model of empowerment, it can be seen that the flowchart of empowering process has guided the vulnerable and weak community to have ability and skills (Yoo et al., 2004; Suharto, 2005). Based on the interview and observation to the RBM cadres, it was found out that after the implementation of the model, The cadres has gained more knowledge and skills in identifying the disability characteristics, as the result, RBM cadres were able to record and identify every children with disabilities in their village. In addition, the RBM cadres were able to do assessment on the disability children and their family.

The aforementioned condition was confirmed through the cadre skills in identifying the disability children needs and performing better child treatment. They were also confident in having face to face meeting with the children and their family. The cadres have also given some advices to the parents to handle their disable children at home. Moreover, the cadres responsibly recorded the children progress by regularly paying home visit.

In fund raising, networking and advocating skills, the cadres have successfully built the network in SD and SMP in Mekarlaksana, consequently, they can exchange the information with the teachers in relation to the training and gaining access to the library accessible to the disability children. Furthermore, the schools welcome the disability children to be accepted.

From the interview, the researchers revealed that parents with disability children change their way of thinking on the importance of the education for their disability children and they gain more knowledge on how to educate and handle their disability children at home. They are not ashamed of their disability children and they are willing to put their children at school in the current academic year.

Based on the interview and observation to the teachers in Mekarlaksana Village, it was revealed that the teachers are able to do identification, assessment and treatment to disability children at school. However, the teachers need to improve their knowledge. The school authorities also welcome the children with disabilities to enroll at the schools.

Based on the interview and the observation, there have been some changes in Mekarlaksana community after the implementation of the model, they are: the increase of society understanding on the types of disabilities and the special needs for children with disabilities, the increase of social awareness in fulfilling education needs for children with disabilities, the increase of social awareness in

moving and planning the education fulfillment for children with special needs in Mekarlaksana village, the society provides school access and home visit as the realization of the education fulfillment for the disability children, the society can intervene in providing education fulfillment for disability children, the authority are made aware of the disability rights in accessing education and support the implementation and the development of the upcoming events

Based on the interview to the parents and RBM cadres, it was revealed that children with disabilities have full access to proper education they deserve. The disability children in Mekarlaksana are facilitated to get formal, informal and non-formal education, among others: the children with disabilities acquire proper education from their family. It was confirmed from the condition that the increase of the family awareness to take their children to school. In addition parents are gaining more knowledge and understanding in handling their children.

Based on the results of the assessment of children with disabilities were analyzed quantitatively child looks enhanced ability. Children with disabilities have a wide open opportunities to every accessible school nearby their surroundings and they also deserve educational services in line with their special needs from the school they go to. The availability of learning access in society that pay home visit. The availability of better learning facilities at school and the available support from the other parties.

4 CONCLUSION

The Society empowering model that is being developed can be implemented in empowering the society so that the education fulfillment for the disability children are realized in Mekarlaksana village, Bandung. The reliability of the model has been proven through the field test. The empowerment model has contributed positive effects to Mekarlaksana Village society had toward the fulfillment of education needs for children with disabilities. As described in the discussion of research results. In brief, the model is deemed applicable. The empowerment model has given significant and sustainable change in fulfilling education needs for disability children. This model is believed applicable in other regions with similar characteristics. It is in line with the philosophy of empowerment that society is not only the object but it also plays as an agent of changes by applying this society empowerment model's.

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