Integrating Disability into Community Life: Promoting Social Inclusion through Local Initiatives

Sesya Dias Mumpuni[1]*, Laelia Nurpratiwiningsih[2], Ike Desi Florina[3], Sri Adi Nurhayati[4], Hijrah Eko Putro[5]

[1]Univeritas Negeri Yogyakarta, Indonesia
[2]Univesitas Muhadi Setiabudi, Indonesia
[3-4]Universitas Pancasakti Tegal, Indonesia
[5]Universitas Muhammadiyah Magelang, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: dias.mumpuni@live.com

Abstract. The great influence of community-based strategies in promoting social inclusion and raising the welfare of people with disabilities is investigated in this paper. Policies and laws meant to protect the rights of people with disabilities have evolved even if many still face significant challenges prohibiting them from totally participating in society. This paper systematically reviews the current research and case studies to identify community-based strategies that successfully support social inclusion and well-being. The results emphasise the need of thorough treatments covering the social, psychological, and physical elements of well-being. Important plans call for building public areas open to everyone, including leisure events adapted to individual requirements, and providing conveniently available mental health treatments. The study also looks at how social networks and peer support could help to lower the usually encountered social isolation among persons with disabilities. It emphasises how joint efforts help to create inclusive and inspiring communities. This paper argues that it is possible to significantly raise the welfare and social inclusion of people with disabilities by means of community-based programs, therefore promoting more fair and strong society.

Key words: [emporwerment, mental health, social networks, counseling community, volunteering services]

INTRODUCTION

Many times, people with impairments experience considerable difficulties completely interacting with their surroundings. Though many people still struggle to be fully integrated members of their hometowns, laws like the Americans with Disabilities Act (Muster, 2023) strive to increase access. According to social inclusion mostly determines the health, well-being, and quality of life of persons with disabilities (Blanck, 2022). Real community inclusion depends on the possibility to actively participate, a feeling of belonging, and the capacity to create meaningful relationships (Mumpuni et al., 2024)—rather than merely physical access. Projects allowing persons with disabilities to take part in significant events within their own local communities will support a more robust sense of social inclusion (Nurpratiwiningsih et al., 2018). People with disabilities have been more integrated because to community-based projects offering support services, social contact opportunities, and skill development (Hijrah Eko Putro, 2016). Studies reveal that persons with disabilities who are enabled to use resources and take part in community events can grow to have a more strong feeling of autonomy and belonging. Including persons with disabilities in the design and execution of these projects is absolutely essential to guarantee that the programs are catered to their individual needs and preferences (Permadi et al., 2023). Local programs utilising a community-driven model that gives the opinions and experiences of persons with disabilities top priority assist to remove obstacles to actual social inclusion and create more fair, inviting communities for all.

Community based approach that is the path of community development could be employed as a model or strategy to empower person with disability by ensuring equal opportunities for them to participate in development (Corrigan & Oppenheim, 2023). Furthermore, it is needed for them to carry out advocacy efforts through some approaches to reduce the limitation due to the local social policy. The participation of persons with disabilities and their associations support are at the core of disability inclusion in community development (Ferdiana et al., 2018), so that they are able to become the real subject of development, not only objects that do not have the power to innovate according to their capabilities. Being embedded within local communities, local governments are well placed to lead the

wider community towards social inclusion. Mostly, social inclusion of people with disabilities determines the improvement of quality of living and health. Still, individuals with disabilities find great challenges fully engaging in their communities—restricted access to school, job, healthcare, and other basic services (Tigere & Moyo, 2022). Realising disability inclusion calls for a concerted effort to solve these inequalities and guarantee that every person, regardless of capacity, feels like they belong and are regarded as equal and significant members of society, teaching those with disabilities their rights and providing support. Our support of rights for persons with disabilities as well as knowledge of them will help us to create an inclusive society. Crucially important awareness campaigns help one to eradicate prejudices, educate the public about the challenges faced by people with disabilities, and stress their achievements and capacity. Depending on how one sees changing attitudes and fosters empathy, these events could show themselves as seminars, media campaigns, or community meetings. Still, advocacy mostly addresses ensuring fair access to resources and chances for persons with disabilities. Laws like the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (Reese et al., 2024) guarantees their execution and defence of rights. Often working in alliances with governments, businesses, and the community, activists aggressively address issues including access, job bias, and healthcare disparities. Moreover, honouring the rights of people with disabilities encourages them to offer their own thoughts and participate fully in procedures of decision-making (Wilson et al., 2016). Apart from the welfare of people with disabilities, this comprehensive approach promotes justice and diversity, therefore improving society as a whole.

Projects targeted at communities have shown considerable capacity to encourage social inclusion among persons with disabilities. By means of integration of local stakeholders—including persons with disabilities and their families—these programs can change treatments to match the particular needs and aspirations of the community (Lorenzo et al., 2015). This can suggest better local resource availability, tailored assistance programs, and consequently possibilities for social contact and mutual understanding. Projects created for local communities have evolved into a valuable tool for promoting social inclusion among individuals with disabilities (Minotti et al., 2021). One can achieve this great relevance in their surrounds by means of local resources, encouraging collaboration, and including persons with disabilities actively in their surroundings. These strategies create inclusive environments where coworkers with impairments could be actively attending social, commercial, and cultural events alongside those with main emphasis. Usually, this approach consists in creating comprehensive programs and services especially meant with the active participation of persons with disabilities, thereby ensuring that the basis of the planning and execution processes is their requirements and point of view. Community-based projects help to remove the obstacles once marginalising people with disabilities by means of accessibility in public areas, transportation, education, and job priority attention. These strategies also foster community consciousness and empathy by means of education and support, therefore enabling a change in society attitudes and hence a reduction of social criticism. Encouragement of these projects mostly rests on local organizations—including disability advocacy groups—who directly relate to the particular needs and capacities of their local communities. Community-based programs not only improve the quality of life of persons with disabilities but also increase the social cohesion of the entire society by means of the creation of a feeling of empowerment and belonging, therefore promoting a more inclusive and fair society for all.

More importantly, actual inclusion encompasses a feeling of belonging, respect, and the ability to greatly participate in all sectors of communal life in addition to basic physical access. Adopting a more all-encompassing definition of inclusion, community-based projects can be highly essential in empowering persons with disabilities and overcoming the social and attitudinal challenges that have traditionally hindered their full involvement. True inclusion goes beyond just basic physical access to encompass respect, a feeling of belonging, and the ability to actively participate in all sectors of communal life. Though essential, physical accessibility—that which includes ramps, accessible bathrooms, sign language interpreters—is merely the beginning. Real inclusion is the situation whereby persons with disabilities actively engage as valued members of their communities instead of merely existing. This means arranging circumstances where their opinions are heard, their contributions recognised, and they have equal opportunities to participate in business, educational, and social events. It demands a shift in society's view of persons with disabilities as equal partners who can and should make major contributions instead of being recipients of charity. From inclusive policies and practices to daily interactions, respect of their dignity and rights has to be anchored in all aspects of communal life.

Encouragement of a feeling of belonging also helps to build networks of support and alliances appreciating diversity. This all-encompassing approach to inclusion guarantees that people with disabilities may follow their objectives, participate in decision-making, and lead joyful life free from discrimination or exclusion. Real inclusion enhances the overall society since it promotes diversity, empathy, and social cohesiveness, so benefiting everyone by creating a more fair and equal society.

METHODS

Applied in a qualitative research project aiming on exploring personal experiences and opinions, this method of investigation With an eye towards comprehending respondents' perspectives, attitudes, and experiences on the research issue, the study employs in-depth interviews to provide complete insights from each one. The choice of the qualitative research design helps to allow a comprehensive examination of the respondent experiences. Studies aiming at understanding complex events from the perspective of people directly involved will find this approach rather suitable. Purposive sampling allows respondents most likely to provide rich, relevant, and diverse data to be selected. Selected participants guarantee a range of opinions since their basis is certain criteria related to the research topic. By providing consistency across the interviews and freedom to probe newly developing topics, semi-structured interviews help to obtain data. The interview guide contains many open-ended questions designed to generate comprehensive responses, therefore inspiring participants to share their views and experiences using their own language.

An interview guide—containing a set of open-ended questions consistent with the study goals—is created. The guide lets the interviewer investigate further depending on responses, therefore ensuring that important subjects are addressed. Method of Interviews Interviews performed in a quiet, private environment help to guarantee respondent comfort and secrecy by means of which Depending on the complexity of answers, each interview runs between sixty to ninety minutes. With participants' permission, interviews are audio recorded and then exactly transcribed verbatim to guarantee accuracy in recording the respondents' words.

Data analysis uses a thematic approach—that is, it looks for, examines, and reports trends (themes) within the data. The procedure consists in various stages. Transcripts are read several times to get rather familiar with the material. First codes are assigned to data segments relevant to the research questions; coding using important phrases and sentences is emphasised. Reviewed and categorised into more general themes that reflect notable data trends, theme development utilising codes is Reviewing themes utilising themes helps to ensure they fairly depict the facts by means of improvement. This entails looking for coherence inside themes and uniqueness between them. Clearly defined and named, defining and naming themes using each other offers a succinct synopsis of their essence. The last stage is draughting a thorough report with the themes backed by exact quotes from the respondents to highlight important issues.

Conducting qualitative research involving human subjects calls for first priority ethical considerations. The rights and welfare of the respondents are safeguarded via the following actions. Using informed consent, we provide articipants comprehensive information on the study including its goals, techniques, and rights. Before the interviews start is informed consent requested. Respondents maintain their identities under confidentiality; the transcripts and reports utilise pseudonyms. Only the research team may access securely kept data. Responders are free to stop at any moment without facing any negative repercussions; voluntary participation in the study is just that—that which one does fully freely.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

During the research, in-depth interview rules must be followed absolutely. It serves as a road map to help the responders find their issues. Conducted under a house visit, the in-depth interview session ran 60 to 90 minutes. The researcher rode a motorbike twenty to thirty minutes to go to the respondent's house. The address of the respondent was discovered by use of address data gathered by Difabel Slawi Mandiri's partners. It is challenging for respondents to grasp the wording of the question in doing this in-depth interview. Finding information from respondents is much facilitated by using local language. The issues the respondents faced during the in-depth interviews define the outcomes of them.

The subjects of this research concentrated on Bogares Kidul village in Pangkah District, Tegal Regency, Central Java Province. The choice of respondents is deliberate to get thorough qualitative data. Out of the twenty respondents drawn from in-depth interview material, we gathered data from four of them.

Education Awareness for Communities

The sister of the interviewee helped as the interviewee IST (female/41 years old) is incapacitated. IST first experienced extreme temperatures in childhood, hence she has this handicap not since birth. He received late treatment since he was not treated properly when a child. You can still chat to him in daily life; but, his response reflects what he has observed and what comes to mind. He did, however, have a benefit—observance of worship and a really decent character. But the surroundings, particularly from little children who tease or make fun of IST, are a "crazy person" since his behaviour or attitude still resembles those of a child. In terms of daily activities, though, IST merely goes by the usual and cannot work. Still, IST has only attended one year of classes and two years of pesantren with her sister. One could argue that those with special needs are physically invisible to IST. But it was only observed from his behaviours and conversations that he was a disabled person.

Excess: if he has particular needs, IST is not reluctant to interact with me even if it is our first meeting. Though occasionally what he was saying or communicating was not obvious for me to react to, he also wanted to share stories with us.

For researchers, the most challenge in this interview is their thorough communication. Since IST's response to my query was not clear-cut. Luckily, her sister accompanied IST as her guardian for this interview.

Empower Families and Individuals with Disabilities

Among the members of the Inclusion Forum of Bogares Kidul village, DAR (male/47 years old) is a disabled citizen who also happens to be the spouse of a disabled couple that also take part in this forum. From boyhood, DAR has been disabled in his legs. He is ashamed to leave the house since his family still regard DAR as one of their eyes and he does not have any specific medical history. DAR works as a motorbike salesman, thus he is less active in the forum since he spends his days travelling between Tegal and Bogares Kidul. DAR has simply expressed his needs; he has never received any support and has not wanted to offer any recommendations to the forum or the village council as he did not offer a firm response to the issue during the interview. Although the money from the motorbike is still in gross income, his demands are also somewhat inadequate since he is quite diligent and always works; he does not spend time on his activities in the inclusion forum of Bogares Kidul village.

Advantues: Given his handicap in his legs, DAR is quite fluent in communication, so he finds it simple to present his information.

Difficulties and barriers: DAR was shy, thus his response was somewhat naive and supported by his wife a little ignorant attitude. Sometimes DAR answers differently than expected, hence it is important to repeat and reinforce queries when DAR has such trouble. Regarding his aspirations, DAR is more concerned with living his life than with realising the tough village governance. The community's ambition is disjointed.

Support from Institution

KUS (man/ 48 years old) is usually called in his neighbourhood. He walks with some difficulty every day and cannot go far, cannot walk fast and requires the use of assistive devices. KUS is busy to meet his daily needs as a coffee shop trader which is usually an additional job or work once every 8 months in Jakarta when 8 months later KUS will return to his village during the trading holiday which is replaced so for a side job of trading toys at the school in the area where KUS lives to cover the unemployed job for the next 8 months. With the help of the village government, KUS once received facilities to support his situation, such as the sticks he received in the past. KUS himself as a member of the inclusion forum of Bogares Kidul village where he rarely participates in the activities of the forum but when he is free at home he will follow it because there is a permanent job every 8 months so to be

active in the forum is rare, but for services KUS often conveys to the chairman to propose to the village government to realize a program of accessibility for road support in the alleys because as KUS have to walk far when the access is lacking in facilities around the road considering that KUS is difficult to walk far because there must be an assistive device so that the road that is made smooth for the disabled both in the prayer room and also training more towards the development of the times doesn't make a product that is difficult to do or carried out by people with disabilities.

Excess: KUS because of his disability in the legs, so to communicate smoothly, although the situation at the time of the interview was 7 days after his son died, but KUS still had the right answers to the questions and also with a good mood as well.

Obstacles: When KUS was interviewed, his sentence was not long, the question had to be dug out, when KUS answered briefly, he had to be asked again because there might still be a lack of confidence to talk to KUS.

Creating Safe Spaces for Disability
        RIZ (male/ 26 years old) is a member of the village inclusion forum and also the disabled community after having an accident in elementary school where he now has a crooked right hand and leg even though he used to be treated but for the shape of the two is still the same until now, but for the activities that have been carried out properly except still with heavy ones or for running, RIZ is not balanced and difficulties when faced with such conditions. RIZ lives with his parents, he teaches at islamic elemntary school in Bogares Kidul school every day as an honorary teacher and has a daily life such as serving printing for photocopying and also printouts for school children in the area where RIZ lives. RIZ still often feels pain in the hands, especially in the joints, leg joints, knee joints and elbows often experience pinched joints. For the village government program, RIZ knows some of the proposed accesses for disabilities and from my observation, RIZ has tried to communicate it, but the village government still sorts out certain people, such as there is a hidden sense from RIZ regarding the proposal for disability access so that the village government looks at it and also the village government's lack of participation in the delivery of the forum.

Excess: The advantage of the interview with RIZ is that the clarity of the answers given has been included in the core of the question, then there are no obstacles at all and the delivery is also clear. Because of the disability suffered by RIZ, the interview was still running smoothly considering that RIZ is also a teacher so it is easy to understand.

Obstacles: There are no obstacles / shortcomings in answering RIZ, it's just that his voice is a bit quiet. All answers have been covered by what RIZ answered.

Social Inclusion in Village
        MUS (male/ 50 years old) is a disabled resident of Bogares Kidul village where he is also the chairman of the board of the inclusion forum of Bogares Kidul village. He is one of the disabled residents who is a disabled person, namely his legs have shrunk since he was a child, he lives with his wife and 2 children. In his daily life he works as a private teacher and he also understands religious knowledge which is then sometimes used for circumcision walimahan events, lairan as a ritual event in the community to become an expert who understands religion around MUS's environment. He has a relatively sufficient life to meet the needs of his family. In the interview session, I can also observe that MUS often emphasizes that for difficulties he does not experience any obstacles at all, except for long distances that require MUS to use a private vehicle. He is one of the people who is quite active in the forum so that in the village government programs in helping people with disabilities, MUS knows it very well because his answer is very detailed regarding the question, MUS has the convenience of talking with the village head of Bogares Kidul and the chairman of the BPD because he is the chairman of the forum, so the access to communication with the village government is very smooth. He also pointed out that as the chairman of the forum, he emphasized people with disabilities not to expect help from the village government.

Advantages: In the interview session, MUS was very active in answering where he also answered with all categories of people with disabilities, both in difficulties and in his activities in the inclusion forum so that regarding questions he told them in detail and at length.

Obstacles: The disadvantage of MUS is that when he answers at length like that, he also focuses on other communities so that the essence for MUS must be clarified again with questions that are tied to MUS because here he answers it sometimes in terms of disabilities from various categories.

CONCLUSION

From the results of this study, we found that people with disabilities participate in building inclusive villages. An in-depth perspective can provide new findings of what is perceived and what has not yet been revealed in quantitative form.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

REFERENCES

Blanck, P. (2022). Disability-inclusive employment, cancer survivorship, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. *Journal of Cancer Survivorship*, *16*(1). https://doi.org/10.1007/s11764-021-01141-4

Corrigan, P. W., & Oppenheim, M. (2023). The Power of Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR). *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*. https://doi.org/10.1037/prj0000568

Ferdiana, A., Post, M. W. M., King, N., Bültmann, U., & van der Klink, J. J. L. (2018). Meaning and components of quality of life among individuals with spinal cord injury in Yogyakarta Province, Indonesia. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, *40*(10). https://doi.org/10.1080/09638288.2017.1294204

Hijrah Eko Putro, S. (2016). Model Konseling Kelompok Teknik Self Regulated Learning Untuk Mengurangi Prokrastinasi Akademik Siswa. *Jurnal Bimbingan Konseling*, *5*(1).

Lorenzo, T., Van Pletzen, E., & Booyens, M. (2015). Determining the competences of community based workers for disability-inclusive development in rural areas of South Africa, Botswana and Malawi. *Rural and Remote Health*, *15*(2). https://doi.org/10.22605/rrh2919

Minotti, B. J., Ingram, K. M., Forber-Pratt, A. J., & Espelage, D. L. (2021). Disability community and mental health among college students with physical disabilities. *Rehabilitation Psychology*, *66*(2). https://doi.org/10.1037/rep0000377

Mumpuni, S. D., Florina, I. D., Nurhayati, S. A., Nurpratiwiningsih, L., Putro, H. E., Susilowati, N., Mubarokah, N. A., Istiqomah, N., Septiana, W. C., Adinda, C., Lestari, F. I. Y., Chiisai, A. P., Putri, N. M., Rini, E. F. S., & Ambarwati, R. T. (2024). Konseling Sebaya: Kesehatan Mental Dan Well-Being Anggota Forum Desa Inklusi. *Jurnal Bimbingan Dan Konseling Pandohop*, *4*(1). https://doi.org/10.37304/pandohop.v4i1.12354

Muster, C. L. (2023). Disability Justice and the Americans with Disabilities Act: An Opportunity for Social Work. *Social Work (United States)*, *68*(4). https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/swad034

Nurpratiwiningsih, L., Didik, &, Setiyoko, T., Diponegoro, P., & 11, R. W. (2018). Development of Education Games Map Material as a Learning Media for Elementary School Students. *Journal of Primary Education*, *8*(3).

Permadi, D., Florina, I. D., Hartati, O., & Edy, S. (2023). Public Speaking Training at SMKN 1 Slawi. *ASEAN Journal of Empowering Community*, *2*(2). https://doi.org/10.24905/ajecom/vol2issue2.42

Reese, A. D., DiNardo, L. A., Siddiqui, A., Powers, K., Gupta, S., Clausen, S., & Carr, M. M. (2024). Americans with disabilities act cases initiated by individuals with cochlear implants in the United States. *American Journal of Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Medicine and Surgery*, *45*(1). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amjoto.2023.104079

Tigere, B., & Moyo, T. (2022). Disability-inclusive community development: A case of a community garden in Limpopo province in South Africa. *African Journal of Disability*, *11*. https://doi.org/10.4102/AJOD.V10I0.850

Wilson, N. J., Cordier, R., Parsons, R., Vaz, S., & Buchanan, A. (2016). Men with disabilities - A cross sectional survey of health promotion, social inclusion and participation at community Men's Sheds. *Disability and Health Journal*, *9*(1). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dhjo.2015.08.013