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## Strategies for Managing Facilities and Infrastructure in Inclusive Schools

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## Abstract

Inclusive education aims to provide access to quality education for all children, including children with special needs. Implementation in Indonesia still faces various challenges, especially in the management of disability friendly facilities and infrastructure. This study aims to explore the management of inclusive education facilities and infrastructure. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation for five months (August–December 2024). School has provided inclusive education facilities, such as accessible classrooms, disability-friendly toilets, ramps, and Disability Service Units. However, there are still limitations in special learning aids. Management of facilities and infrastructure is carried out through annual planning, routine monitoring, and periodic evaluation, not yet supported by special experts in inclusive services. The main challenges faced are budget constraints and lack of professional human resources. This study emphasizes the importance of adaptive and planned management of facilities and infrastructure in creating an inclusive learning environment. School has implemented strategies by applying for assistance to the Education Office, collaborating with community organizations, and holding inclusive education training for teachers. These findings can be a reference for schools in improving the effectiveness of inclusive education facility management.

## Keywords

Educational Facilities, Inclusive Education, Infrastructure Management, School Accessibility.

## 1. Introduction

Inclusive education has become one of the strategic issues in the development of modern education systems across various countries. The concept aims to ensure that all children, without exception, have equal opportunities to access quality and appropriate education in a non-discriminatory environment (Ainscow, 2020). Awareness of the importance of inclusive education has grown in line with the recognition of the right to education as a fundamental right for every child, including those with special needs, whether physical, intellectual, or emotional disabilities (Fitriah, 2021). Developed countries such as Finland, Sweden, Canada, Australia, and Japan have demonstrated strong commitment to inclusive education through adaptive educational policies, provision of disability-friendly infrastructure, intensive teacher training, and adequate resource support (Wulff, 2020; Nilholm, 2021).

Inclusive education regulations in Indonesia have been stipulated through the Regulation of the Minister of National Education No. 70 of 2009 concerning Inclusive Education for Students with Disabilities and/or Special Intelligence and Talents. This policy serves as a basic guideline for the organization of inclusive education in regular schools, which aims to enable children with special needs to learn together with their peers in a general education environment (Rahbini, 2012). However, the implementation of inclusive education in Indonesia continues to face various challenges, especially regarding the limitations in providing disability-friendly facilities such as limited accessible classrooms, disability-friendly toilets, learning aids, and competent administrative staff in inclusive services and suboptimal infrastructure management are still major obstacles in inclusive schools (Musi & Winata, 2017; Sukomardojo, 2023; Patty, 2023).

Several studies have shown that the lack of adaptive facilities has a significant impact on the effectiveness of inclusive education. Mirrota (2024) found that the limitations of assistive devices such as Braille books and hearing aids hinder the learning process of students with hearing impairments.

Additionally, research by Hasanah et al. (2023) identified that the lack of budget and administrative staff experienced in inclusive education facility management are the main challenges. Similar findings were reported by Ummah et al. (2023), found that many regular schools face difficulties in providing adequate assistive technology such as hearing aids, braille books, and other supporting facilities which will have a negative impact on the accessibility of education for children with special needs.

An ideal inclusive educational facility should not only provide comfortable classrooms but also additional supportive facilities such as accessible toilets, ramps, lifts, hearing aids, and teaching materials that are accessible to all students without discrimination (Jebril & Chen, 2021; Rafi' Athallah & Subroto, 2021). When such facilities are unavailable, students with special needs are at risk of experiencing decreased motivation to learn or even psychological disturbances due to limited access to education (Nida, 2018; Harris et al., 2023; Kedaton, 2024). Therefore, effective management of facilities is crucial in creating an inclusive learning environment (Jamaluddin, 2021; Nikita et al., 2023).

Starting from this context, this study aims to analyze the management strategy of inclusive education facilities at public senior high school of 7 Berau, which has been designated as a model school. This study explores the infrastructure management strategy, main challenges, and solutions implemented by the school to improve accessibility for students with special needs. In addition to contributing to the literature on inclusive education, the findings of this study are expected to provide practical recommendations for other schools in developing a more adaptive and sustainable facility management system.

This study introduces a unique perspective by examining the transformation of inclusive education infrastructure management in a real-world setting, particularly in a model school in East Kalimantan, Indonesia. While much of the existing research focuses on the theoretical frameworks and challenges of inclusive education globally, this research provides an in-depth, localized analysis of the management practices and the practical challenges faced by a school that has been designated as a pioneer in inclusive education. This research fills a gap in the literature by offering concrete recommendations for schools in similar contexts aiming to improve accessibility and inclusiveness.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Management and Organizational Challenges**

Weak school management is a major obstacle to the implementation of inclusive education, resulting in suboptimal resource allocation, inappropriate teaching methods, and difficulties in meeting the needs of students with special needs (Komarudin & Kaeni, 2023). Lack of training for school leaders results in inconsistent implementation of inclusive policies, while the absence of special staff results in teachers and students receiving less support (Rahbini, 2012; Sukomardojo, 2023). Inclusive education requires adaptive facilities and competent educators, but budget constraints limit the procurement of assistive devices such as Braille books and hearing aids and cause an imbalance between physical facilities and students' learning needs (Musi & Winata, 2017; Wulff, 2020; Nilholm, 2021).

In addition, fund management is often poorly supervised, so schools continue to lack essential facilities even though they have accessible classrooms (Hasanah et al., 2023). Ineffective organizational structures can hinder coordination between teachers, administrators, and parents and cause inclusive curriculum to be implemented inconsistently (Jamaluddin, 2021; Rafi'Athallah & Subroto, 2021). Lack of support for teachers leads to burnout and unpreparedness to face the challenges of inclusive education, while students with special needs can experience decreased motivation and social exclusion (Nida, 2018; Kedaton, 2024). To address these challenges, schools need to improve leadership training, form inclusive education teams, strengthen communication between stakeholders, and advocate for increased funding to provide more adaptive facilities (Jebril & Chen, 2021).

### **2.2 Teacher Competence**

Low teacher competency in inclusive education is a major obstacle in meeting the needs of students with special needs. Lack of training and limited professional development leave teachers feeling unprepared to face the challenges of inclusive classrooms (Ramadhan et al., 2024). Inclusive education requires skills in differentiated learning, behavior management, and the use of assistive technology, yet many teachers do not have sufficient training to implement them effectively (Guskey, 2021; Smith & Deshler, 2022). Research shows that teachers often struggle to adapt teaching methods and use assistive technology to support students with disabilities (Munk et al., 2023). The training provided is often general, insufficient to address the specific needs of inclusive education (Wilson et al., 2022).

In addition, teachers' lack of confidence in managing the behavior of students with special needs impacts learning effectiveness, while traditional discipline strategies exacerbate the challenges of inclusive classrooms (Haider & Amini, 2021; Farah et al., 2023). Recommended solutions include continuing professional development, peer mentoring, and integration of inclusive education into teacher preparation programs (World Bank, 2020; Smith et al., 2021; Lai & Merton, 2022). Organizations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) emphasize the need for inclusive teacher

education and attitudinal change to support successful implementation of inclusion (Tshiana et al., 2023).

### **2.3 Inadequate Curriculum Adaptation**

Lack of curriculum adaptation is a major barrier to inclusive education, causing students with disabilities to struggle to meet academic standards that are not tailored to their needs (Jauhari & Fajri, 2024). Uniform learning approaches often hinder accessibility, while curriculum adaptations involving instructional differentiation, Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), and assistive technology can increase student participation (Kowalski et al., 2023). However, many schools fail to implement these adaptations due to a lack of teacher training and resources (Williams & Holmes, 2022). Without professional development focused on inclusive education, teachers struggle to integrate individualized learning into the classroom (Smith et al., 2021). Furthermore, many education systems still lack a policy framework that supports curriculum adaptation, leading to inconsistent implementation (Bartolo et al., 2021). Standardized testing also worsens the situation, as traditional assessment methods do not consider the needs of students with disabilities (Tran & Nguyen, 2022).

The importance of individual learning plans (ILPs) is key to ensuring students receive appropriate support, but infrastructure limitations often hinder effective implementation (Pratama & Suryani, 2024). Meanwhile, assistive technology such as screen readers and communication devices can improve accessibility (Brown et al., 2023). Differentiated learning adapts teaching methods to students' needs, using visual aids, hands-on activities, and collaborative learning. However, lack of training has resulted in its implementation being less than optimal (Husnah & Adam, 2022; Thomas & Wright, 2022). The inclusive education model in Finland shows that curriculum flexibility and individual learning pathways contribute to better educational outcomes (Heikkinen & Sandström, 2021). In addition, collaboration with parents plays an important role in supporting the implementation of ILPs and ensuring effective inclusive education (Halim et al., 2023).

### **2.4 Insufficient Resources and Infrastructure**

Lack of resources and infrastructure are major barriers to inclusive education, especially in low-income areas. The success of inclusive education relies heavily on specialized learning materials, assistive technology, and physical facilities that support students with disabilities, yet many schools lack these essential elements (Komarudin & Kaeni, 2023). This lack of technology significantly hinders students' ability to learn effectively (Davis et al., 2022). Assistive technologies such as screen readers, communication devices, and text-based software play a critical role in increasing participation for students with disabilities, but lack of access leads to high dropout rates (Thompson & Shaw, 2021). In addition, lack of teacher training hinders the use of available technology (Johnson & Ponder, 2023).

Physical infrastructure is also a barrier, with many schools lacking basic accessibility such as ramps, lifts, and sensory rooms for students with disabilities (Hill & Parker, 2023; Murphy & Arnold, 2022). The main factors contributing to resource constraints are budget constraints and lack of policy support (Bishop & Kelly, 2021). Many governments fail to provide adequate funding and accessibility standards, resulting in uneven implementation of inclusive education (Alvarado & Ortiz, 2023). Additionally, teachers often do not receive adequate training in resource management and assistive technology, exacerbating disparities in learning outcomes for students with disabilities (Hughes & Peterson, 2021). Systematic approaches, such as redesigning teacher training programs and collaborating with NGOs for technology provision and training, are needed to ensure that inclusive education is optimal and sustainable (Miller & Thompson, 2023; Williams et al., 2024).

### **2.5 Lack of Collaboration Between Stakeholders**

Effective inclusive education relies on collaboration between teachers, administrators, parents, and external support services, but poor communication often hinders its success (Ramadhan et al., 2024). Parents play a vital role in the education of children with special needs, but they are often excluded from the decision-making process due to a lack of structured communication channels (Lund, 2023). As a result, the development of individualized education plans (IEPs) is suboptimal, leaving students' specific needs unmet (Jha & Kamat, 2022; Zulfikar et al., 2024). Teachers and school administrators are often poorly trained in engaging parents and external organizations, further exacerbating the fragmentation of inclusive education services (Komarudin & Kaeni, 2023).

In addition, the use of expert personnel and assistive technology is often overlooked due to a lack of resource integration (Musi & Winata, 2017). The roles of external stakeholders, including government agencies and NGOs, are also often unclear, leading to missed opportunities for funding and professional development (Nilholm, 2021; Fitriah, 2021). This lack of collaboration creates an uneven mix of inclusive education policies and practices, with some schools having strong networks while others remain isolated (Rahbini, 2012). Proposed solutions include regular stakeholder meetings, strengthening inclusive policies, and collaborating with health services and assistive technology to ensure greater access for students with special needs (Hasanah et al., 2023; Nikita et al., 2023).

### **3. Methods**

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to explore in depth the management of facilities and infrastructure in inclusive education at public senior high school of 7 Berau, East Kalimantan. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore phenomena naturally, without laboratory intervention, so that the research results reflect the reality that occurs in the field (Sugiyono, 2022). The case study method is used to gain a comprehensive understanding of how schools manage facilities to support inclusive education. Case studies provide in-depth insights by collecting data from various sources, allowing for a more contextual analysis (Yin, 2018).

In this study, this method was applied to identify facility management strategies, key challenges, and solutions implemented by public senior high school of 7 Berau in supporting students with special needs. The researcher acted as the main instrument in data collection, using direct observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation analysis as the main techniques. Interviews were conducted with the principal, teachers, education staff, and students with special needs to obtain diverse and in-depth perspectives. Documentation such as facility lists, infrastructure photos, and school policies were analyzed to strengthen the data obtained from interviews and observations. The presence of researchers at the research location is an important factor to ensure the validity of the data and build good relationships with informants.

This research is conducted at public senior high school of 7 Berau in East Kalimantan. The school was selected because it is the first inclusive school in Berau Regency, designated by the East Kalimantan Provincial Education Office, and has demonstrated a strong commitment to providing inclusive education for children with special needs. This location serves as a relevant representation for understanding the practices of managing inclusive education facilities and infrastructure at the senior high school level in the region.

## **4. Results**

### **4.1 Condition of Facilities and Infrastructure in a Public Senior High School**

Observations and documentation show that the school has provided various supporting facilities for inclusive education. Some of the available facilities include accessible classrooms for wheelchair users, special toilets for people with disabilities, ramps, and visual learning media and sound systems in several classes. In addition, the school has formed a disability service unit which functions as a consultation and support center for students with special needs. However, this study also found limitations in existing facilities. Facilities such as hearing aids for students with hearing impairments, Braille books for blind students, and assistive technology such as audio-based computers or screen readers are not yet available (Hasanah et al., 2023; Nikita et al., 2023).

In addition, mobility support facilities such as handrails along the school corridors are not yet fully available in all areas of the school. These conditions are important issues in efforts to create an optimal inclusive learning environment. The findings of this study indicate that the school has made efforts to provide various inclusive education facilities (Yin, 2018). However, this study also identified several shortcomings in facilities, such as the lack of hearing aids, Braille books, handrails, and assistive technology. The imbalance in available facilities has the potential to hinder the participation and development of students with special needs.

### **4.2 Management of Inclusive Education Facilities and Infrastructure**

Based on in-depth interviews with the principal and education staff, the management of facilities and infrastructure at the school is carried out through an annual planning mechanism that is prepared collaboratively in meetings with teachers and the school committee. This process considers the condition of existing facilities, the needs of students with special needs, and the priority of procurement of facilities and infrastructure based on the school budget. The implementation of facility management is carried out by a special team appointed by the school, with coordination under the Vice Principal for Facilities and Infrastructure (Nikita et al., 2023).

In addition, the school carries out regular inspections and maintenance of facilities every semester, as well as monitoring and evaluating facilities that are directly related to services for students with special needs. Although this management system has been implemented, the management of inclusive education facilities is still carried out by a general team, without any administrative staff who specifically have competence in inclusive education services (Komarudin & Kaeni, 2023). Therefore, the sustainability of inclusive education depends not only on physical facilities, but also on management competence and administrative support that ensure that resources are utilized effectively. A strategy is needed to increase the capacity of education staff and to introduce special policies that support a more adaptive facility management system aligned with the needs of students with special needs.

### **4.3 Barriers in the Management of Facilities and Infrastructure**

The results of the study revealed several major challenges in managing inclusive education facilities and infrastructure. One of the most prominent obstacles is the limited budget available to schools. The allocation of funds from Regular School Operational Assistance (BOS) and Affirmative BOS, which should be the backbone of school operational financing, has not been able to meet real needs in the field. These funds are still far from adequate to meet the needs of special learning aids, which are essential for students with special needs. This condition forces schools to create a strict priority scale in the use of the budget. The need for facilities that are considered the most urgent, such as repairing damaged infrastructure or procuring

basic facilities and infrastructure, are forced to be prioritized. As a result, the procurement of special learning aids, which is very important for the success of inclusive student learning, is often neglected or postponed (Jauhari & Fajri, 2024). In fact, special learning aids such as hearing aids, visual aids, wheelchairs, or adapted learning materials are very much needed to ensure that students with special needs can learn effectively and equally with other students.

In addition to budget constraints, this study also highlights the lack of Human Resources (HR) who have specific competencies in managing inclusive education facilities. Ideally, managing inclusive facilities requires administrative staff who have specific knowledge and skills related to the needs of students with special needs. However, the facts on the ground show that the management of facilities for students with disabilities is currently still handled by a general team that does not have a background in special education or adequate inclusive training. According to the results of interviews with the school, the general team tasked with managing school facilities is responsible for all aspects of management, including facilities for inclusive students. However, due to limited knowledge and specific skills, this team often has difficulty understanding and meeting the unique needs of students with special needs. As a result, the facilities available may not be fully appropriate or adequate to support the learning and development of inclusive students (Komarudin & Kaeni, 2023). This shows a gap between real needs in the field and the capabilities of existing HR, which can ultimately hinder the implementation of quality inclusive education.

#### **4.4 Solution Strategies Implemented by the School**

To address these challenges, the school has implemented several strategies, including submitting a proposal for special facility assistance to the Provincial Education Office and establishing partnerships with related institutions and community organizations that focus on disabilities. The school has also made efforts to maximize existing facilities by adjusting classrooms, modifying visual aids, and providing special support services for students with special needs during the learning process (Ummah et al., 2023). In addition, the school has begun implementing a resource room system, which is a special room where students with special needs can receive additional learning support based on their needs outside of regular class hours. The principal has also taken the initiative to involve several teachers in inclusive education training to improve their understanding and skills in supporting students with special needs.

The study found that the school has a strong commitment to providing inclusive education. Although some facilities are available, there are still gaps in assistive technology and special learning aids. Facility management is carried out through collaborative planning; however, budget constraints and the lack of special management staff remain obstacles that need to be addressed. The school seeks to overcome these obstacles by optimizing available resources, building partnerships, and improving teacher competency.

### **5. Discussion**

The results of the study show that the school has made efforts to provide various supporting facilities for inclusive education, including accessible classrooms, disability-friendly toilets, ramps, and disability service unit. The existence of these facilities confirms the school's commitment to providing equal educational opportunities for students with special needs. Research by Rafi'Athallah and Subroto (2021) states that special facilities such as ramps, disability-friendly toilets, and visual learning media are important prerequisites for the successful implementation of inclusive education. However, this study also found gaps in facilities, such as the unavailability of hearing aids, Braille books, handrails, and assistive technology. This

finding is in line with research by Ummah et al. (2023), which highlights those disparities in inclusive education facilities in Indonesia are still a major obstacle, especially for schools in rural areas. This imbalance can limit the participation of students with special needs in academic activities, thus hindering their development in an inclusive school environment.

The school has a systematic facility planning and management mechanism, with a focus on monitoring, maintenance, and periodic evaluation. This approach is in line with the concept of educational facility management put forward by Jamaluddin (2021), which emphasizes that the management of educational facilities must include the stages of planning, implementation, and supervision to support the smooth running of the learning process. However, this study also revealed that the lack of special administrative staff handling inclusive education services is a major challenge. This is consistent with the findings of Hasanah et al. (2023), which stated that the absence of professional staff in the field of inclusion hinders the optimization of inclusive education facility management in public schools. Without special staff, facility planning is not always based on the real needs of students with special needs, thus reducing the effectiveness of inclusive education services.

In addition to structural challenges, this study also found that budget constraints are a major obstacle in the management of inclusive education facilities. The available funds, both from Regular BOS and Affirmative BOS, are still insufficient to meet the needs of special learning aids. Damayanti (2018) emphasized that limited funding is a key factor in the low quality of inclusive education services in Indonesia.

The lack of human resources with special skills in managing inclusive facilities is also a challenge. Jebril and Chen (2021) stated that the absence of facility management personnel who understand the needs of children with special needs can cause bias in planning, resulting in less-than-optimal facilities for inclusive students. To overcome this challenge, the school has implemented several strategies, including submitting a proposal for assistance to the Education Office, partnering with disability organizations, modifying existing facilities, and providing resource rooms and inclusive teacher training. This strategy is in line with the recommendations of Nilholm (2021), who emphasized that collaboration between parties and optimization of local resources are strategic steps in developing inclusive education. In addition, strengthening teacher capacity through inclusive education training is a key strategy to ensure that all school personnel have the same understanding in supporting students with special needs. Wulff (2020) emphasized that the success of inclusive education depends not only on physical facilities, but also on the readiness of human resources in serving a diverse student population.

## 6. Conclusion

Based on the research findings, the management of inclusive education facilities at the school reflects a relatively strong commitment to implementing inclusive education. The school has provided several supporting facilities for students with special needs, such as accessible classrooms, disability-friendly toilets, ramps, and a disability service unit. These efforts show a clear intention to create an equitable learning environment. However, the availability of essential tools like hearing aids, Braille books, handrails, and assistive technologies remains limited. This indicates that although the foundation has been laid, further enhancement is needed to ensure all students' needs are fully met.

Facility management is carried out through annual planning, regular maintenance, and monitoring, involving both teachers and the school committee. This participatory approach contributes to the structured management of inclusive facilities. Nevertheless, the absence of dedicated administrative staff for inclusive education poses a challenge to effective implementation. Additionally, limited budget

allocations and a shortage of personnel with expertise in inclusive education remain significant obstacles.

To address these issues, the school has taken several strategic steps, including submitting proposals for support to the Education Office, collaborating with community organizations, modifying existing facilities, and establishing a learning resource room. Teacher training programs on inclusive education have also been implemented to strengthen educators' competence in managing diverse learners. In conclusion, the school's efforts underscore the importance of structured and inclusive facility management to support inclusive education at the secondary level. These findings can serve as a reference for other schools aiming to develop inclusive education and for local governments in formulating supportive policies that advance inclusive practices in educational institutions.

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***Data Disclosure Statement***

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.



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