INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN MOTION:
Policy, Practice, and Progress in Indonesia

TRIYANTO

Professor of Civic Education

Universitas Sebelas Maret, Indonesia

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Diversity of Indonesia

🌍 **Geography**: Over 17,000 islands, 38 provinces

👥 **Population**: ±280 million people (2025)

🧑‍🤝‍🧑 **Ethnic Groups**: ±1,300 ethnicities (e.g., Javanese, Sundanese, Batak, Dayak, Bugis, Papuan)

🗣 **Languages**: 700+ local languages; national language: **Bahasa Indonesia**

🕌 **Religions**: Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and indigenous beliefs

🎭 **Culture**: Rich traditions in art, dance, music, clothing, and local customs

ID **Motto**: *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika – Unity in Diversity*

📌 **Meaning:** Diversity is Indonesia's greatest wealth and the foundation of national unity.

ACEH JATENG BALI JATIM KALIMANTAN PAPUA

SUMBAR JATENG BALI PAPUA joglo gapura candi bentar Visit site

Why Diversity Must Be Preserved

- **Cultural Enrichment** – Diversity sustains cultural heritage, languages, and traditions that enrich human civilization.

- **Social Cohesion** – Respecting differences fosters tolerance, inclusion, and peaceful coexistence.

- **Innovation & Knowledge** – Diverse perspectives stimulate creativity, problem-solving, and scientific advancement.

- **Equity & Human Rights** – Protecting diversity ensures equal recognition of identities and prevents marginalization.

- **Global Sustainability** – Cultural and ecological diversity contribute to sustainable development and resilience.

- 📌 *Safeguarding diversity is not only a moral imperative but also a foundation for a more just and innovative society.*

Challenges and Risks of Diversity

- **Cultural Misunderstanding** – Differences may cause miscommunication, stereotypes, and prejudice.

- **Social Fragmentation** – Without inclusion, diversity can lead to segregation and social conflict.

- **Discrimination and Inequality** – Minority or marginalized groups may face systemic barriers and exclusion.

- **Political and Religious Tensions** – Diversity unmanaged can fuel polarization and extremism.

- **Integration Challenges** – Balancing unity and respect for differences requires continuous effort and resources.

- 📌 *Effective management of diversity demands inclusive policies, ==education==, and sustained intercultural dialogue.*

Inclusive Vision Example

https://www.qantas.com/au/en/qantas-group/sustainability/reconciliation-at-qantas.html

Reconciliation at Qantas

Qantas would like to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the local lands and waterways on which we live, work and fly. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

Our vision for reconciliation   First Nations Strategy and Reconciliation Action Plan   Our history   Contacts

Our vision for reconciliation

At Qantas, we strive to reflect the Spirit of Australia.

A spirit that's over 60,000 years old and celebrates the knowledge and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Our vision for reconciliation is a shared national identity that will be achieved through the social, economic and cultural inclusion of all First Nations Peoples.

What is Inclusive Education?

- An approach that ensures equal access to education for all learners.

- Goes beyond disability to include differences in physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, gender, religion, cultural, and economic backgrounds.

- Promotes learning together in regular classrooms with appropriate support.

Siswa SMK Bakti Karya Parigi, Pangandaran, Jawa Barat, berasal dari berbagai suku di Indonesia. Selama tiga tahun, mereka hidup dalam keberagaman.(KOMPAS.com/RENI SUSANTI)

Siswa SMK Bakti Karya. (Foto: Dok SMK Bakti Karya)

Hide Ads

Pemerintah Provinsi Jawa Tengah

Why Inclusive Education is Important?

👥 **Equal Rights**: Every child deserves access to quality education.

🌍 **Diversity & Respect**: Fosters understanding, empathy, and tolerance.

📚 **Improved Learning**: Inclusive classrooms benefit all students, not only those with special needs.

🤝 **Social Integration**: Helps children with and without disabilities grow and succeed together.

🚀 **Future Readiness**: Prepares students for a diverse and inclusive society.

📌 **Key Point:** Inclusive education is not just about access, but about creating equitable opportunities for every learner.

Current Research in Inclusive Education

- In Australia, informing teachers about what inclusive education is may only have limited impact on teachers' actual inclusive education practices. More support in how teachers can apply the concept of inclusive education to practice may be needed so that their beliefs in their capabilities to teach inclusively are fostered and bolstered (Woodcock, et.at, *Teaching and Teacher Education,* 2022).

- In Indonesia, many obstacles remain in the way of implementing inclusive schools, including a shortage of human resources, limited facilities, and public acceptance of children with disabilities. Teachers in inclusive schools should be trained since the system requires more teachers who can teach children with disabilities. The government should provide sufficient and qualified training. This study is expected to be a source and example in strategic decision-making for policymakers regarding inclusive schools, (Triyanto et. al, *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 2023)

- In China, school inclusive education climate plays a direct and indirect role in promoting teachers' inclusive education competency (Xue, Chai, Yao and Fu, *Front. Psychol,* 2023).

- In Myanmar, the special schools had met the students needs with life-skills courses, supplementary study time, and a safe environment. However, there were some challenges, including a lack of communication between the special and regular schools and inadequate bonding between students with and without visual impairment. However, it also suggests the importance of addressing the wider range of needs of students with disabilities for inclusive education (Tonegawa, *International Journal of Instruction, 2022).*

- The Finnish teachers were more worried about teachers' efficacy when implementing inclusion, particularly when teaching students with intellectual disabilities or emotional and behavioural problems. The Japanese teachers had a more positive view on the benefits of inclusion for disabled or non-disabled students. Because Finnish schools emphasise the effectiveness of special education, the Finnish teachers in this study were more critical than the Japanese teachers of the idea that the efficacy discourse justifies the need for inclusive education (Moberg et al, *European Journal of Special Needs Education, 2020*)

My latest publication (2023)

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Teachers' perspectives concerning students with disabilities in Indonesian inclusive schools

Published: 08 February 2022

Volume 24, pages 291–301, (2023)   Cite this article

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Triyanto ✉, Dewi Gunawati, Itok Dwi Kurniawan, Rima Vien Permata Hartanto, Triana Rejekiningsih, Hassan Suryono & Yudi Ariana

Inclusive Education Issues
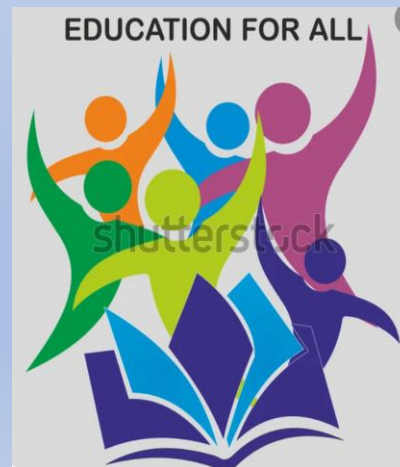## (*Global Perspective*)

ISSUE	MAIN CHALLENGES
Disability / Special Needs	==Accessibility==, curriculum modification, lack of assistive tech & ==teachers==
Multicultural Diversity	Discrimination, cultural bias, language barriers
Socio-economic Differences	Poverty, dropout risk, digital divide
Gender Inequality	Unequal participation, gender bias
Language Barriers	Different mother tongue, literacy challenges
Migrant & Refugee Students	Trauma, documentation, adaptation
Marginalized Groups	Street children, conflict zones, undocumented
Gifted & Talented Students	Lack of enrichment, unchallenging curriculum

Policy Landscape in Indonesia

- Constitution and National Education Law guarantees the right to education for all.

- Inclusive education is recognized as part of human rights.

- Policies emphasize equality, but implementation faces challenges.

- Free education and government-funded 'Sekolah Rakyat' are emerging issues

POLICIES UPDATE

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EDUCATION FOR ALL

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SEKOLAH RAKYAT

Sekolah Rakyat yang berlokasi di Kota Bekasi. (Pojoksatu.id)

Types of Education in Indonesia

CLASSIFICATION	TYPES	EXAMPLES
Ownership	▪ Public schools	▪ Ministry of Education schools (SD, SMP, SMA, SMK)
		▪ Ministry of Religious Affairs (MI, MTs, MA)
		▪ Ministry of Social Affairs (*Sekolah Rakyat*)
		▪ Government Service Schools (*Sekolah Dinas*)
	▪ Private schools	▪ Private foundations, religious schools
Level	▪ Early childhood	▪ TK
	▪ Basic education	▪ SD / MI
	▪ Secondary education	▪ SMP / MTs / SMA / MA / SMK
	▪ Higher education	▪ Universities, Polytechnics
	▪ Special forms	▪ State-funded boarding schools
Characteristic	▪ General schools	▪ Public/private general schools
	▪ Religion-based schools	▪ Madrasah, Pesantren, Christian/ Catholic schools
	▪ Vocational schools	▪ SMK, vocational institutions
	▪ Special schools	▪ SLB (for students with disabilities)

Inclusive Issues in Indonesia

Category	Description in Indonesia	Status
Students with Disabilities (ABK)	Focus of inclusive education policy and implementation	**Dominant**
Socio-economic Differences	Poverty, regional disparities, digital divide, dropout rates	**Dominant**
Multicultural Diversity	Ethnic, linguistic, and religious pluralism; tolerance education	**Emerging**
Gender	Relatively balanced, but gaps remain in some regions (NTB, Papua)	Less dominant
Migrant / Refugee Students	Example: Rohingya refugee children in Aceh	Specific/limited
Marginalized Groups	Street children, children without birth certificates, conflict areas	Specific/limited
Gifted Students	Not yet a main focus in national inclusive policy	Less attention

Students with Disabilities

ISSUE	MAIN CHALLENGE	IMPACT
Access to education	Many students with disabilities cannot enroll, especially in rural areas	Exclusion from formal education
Special schools	Mostly located in urban areas	Rural students lack nearby options
Regular schools	Lack of facilities and trained teachers	Inclusive education not fully effective
Social stigma	Negative perceptions from peers, teachers, parents	Discrimination and low self-esteem
Policy implementation	Laws exist but poorly applied	Limited real change in schools
Family & economy	Financial and awareness constraints	Difficulty supporting children's learning

Socio-Economic Differences

ISSUE	MAIN CHALLENGE	IMPACT
Access to quality schools	Poor families cannot afford private or better schools	Unequal learning opportunities
Learning resources	Limited access to books, internet, or devices	Widening learning gap
Digital divide	Rural and low-income students lack stable internet & gadgets	Exclusion from online learning
Nutrition & health	Malnutrition and poor health among low-income children	Lower concentration and performance
Family support	Parents with low education or unstable jobs provide less support	Reduced academic motivation

Multicultural Diversity

ISSUE	MAIN CHALLENGE	IMPACT
Language differences	Students from minority groups struggle with Bahasa Indonesia as medium of instruction	Learning barriers and lower achievement
Curriculum relevance	National curriculum often ignores local cultures and indigenous knowledge	Loss of cultural identity and disengagement
Teacher competence	Many teachers lack intercultural teaching skills	Difficulty managing diverse classrooms
Social integration	Stereotypes and prejudice among students from different backgrounds (culture and religion)	Bullying, conflict, and social exclusion
Policy implementation	Limited support for multicultural approaches in schools	Inequality in representation and recognition

Current Practices of Inclusive Education

- Inclusive classrooms integrating students with diverse backgrounds.

- Teacher training on inclusive pedagogy.

- Collaboration with parents, NGOs, and community.

- Ongoing adjustments to curriculum and assessment methods.

Progress and Challenges

- **Progress:**
  - Increased awareness of inclusive education.
  - More schools adopting inclusive practices.

- **Challenges:**
  - Limited resources and facilities.
  - Hidden discrimination and social stigma.
  - Uneven implementation across regions.

Inclusion efforts at my Department

- Installing Braille signage and guiding blocks,
- Providing elevators for students with physical disabilities,
- 2025: Admitted a student with visual impairment for the first time in 50 years

University inclusion efforts (2)

- **Multifaith Prayer Room**

State-funded boarding schools (*Sekolah Rakyat*)

- **New model introduced by President Prabowo**
  - Aimed at providing free and quality education for underprivileged children
  - Noble purpose: expanding access to education
- **Criticism on implementation**
  - Why create a new school system instead of improving regular public schools?
  - Regular schools are already free, yet still face quality gaps
- **Funding allocation issue**
  - Both *Sekolah Rakyat* and regular schools use state budget
  - *Sekolah Rakyat* receive larger allocation → raises concerns of discrimination and inequality

The Way Forward

- Strengthening policies with clear implementation guidelines.
- Enhancing teacher capacity through continuous professional development.
- Expanding support systems for learners with diverse needs.
- Ensuring inclusive education addresses not only disability but all forms of diversity.
- Promoting equity through free education and public initiatives.

THANK YOU