

# APPLICATION OF ANDRAGOGY IN COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT TO FULFILL THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES THROUGH A FIELD SCHOOL APPROACH

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## ABSTRACT

The use of field schools is considered the best approach to accelerate the empowerment stages as well as the process of understanding knowledge and acquiring skills through joint activities in the community directly. This research aims to obtain information about the principles of andragogy in empowering the community to meet the educational needs of Children with Special Needs through the Field School Approach. This research is descriptive research with a qualitative approach. Data collection in this research was carried out through observation, interviews and documentation techniques. Data analysis techniques in this research include data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusions. Triangulation is used to explain the validity of data by using source triangulation and technical triangulation. The results of this research obtained data that the principles of andragogy applied to Field School activities can create community empowerment.

**Keywords:** andragogy, community empowerment, ABK education, field schools

## INTRODUCTION

There are a significant number of people with disabilities in Indonesia ( Nail, 2023). In general, people with disabilities are often negatively stigmatized by society. (Nurjanah, Serikandi, & Handayani, 2022). According to the United Nations (UN), 80% of people with disabilities live in below the poverty line. Most of them live in rural areas where access to services is very limited ( Utami, 2019)

There are approximately 60 people with various types of disabilities in Mekarlaksana Village, Ciparay District, Bandung Regency , West Java Province . Almost the majority of people with disabilities are children with various types of disabilities. The condition of children with disabilities in this village is that they do not receive a proper education. This is because in general the families of children with disabilities are in limited economic conditions, access to school is quite far, coupled with limited knowledge, understanding and lack of information, causing problems for families in dealing with children with disabilities. The family only cares for the child as best they can at home. The

lack of information and knowledge means that families do not have the ability to make efforts to fulfill educational needs and skills training in a good and sustainable manner.

As Indonesian citizens, people with disabilities also have the same rights, obligations and participation as other Indonesian citizens. (Affandi, 2022; Itasari, 2020; Lestari & Sumarto, 2021; Pramashela & Rachim, 2021; Susiana & Wardah, 2019). The state has an obligation to guarantee, protect and provide basic social services for all its citizens, including people with disabilities. (Allo, 2022; Ndaumanu, 2020; Sagama & Ahyar, 2020). These basic services include services for educational needs ( Inkiriwang, 2020). At the same time, family and society also have relatively similar responsibilities. ( Hidayah, 2021). The ecological perspective believes that the family, school, village government, surrounding community and society in a broader sense are elements that have a big influence on children. (Murdiyanto, 2020).

Based on the implementation of community empowerment carried out in Mekarlaksana Village, it has proven successful in dealing with problems in terms of meeting the educational needs of children with disabilities, namely empowering families, schools, village community institutions, village government officials and the village community at large as well as government officials in a general sense. The driving agents of this community empowerment process are RBM administrators because they are potential human resources that can be utilized properly. ( Novianti, et al. 2018).

Fulfilling education is a complex challenge that requires active community involvement as a solution (Ervannudin & Widodo, 2016; Riyanto & Kovalenko, 2023), especially education for children with disabilities. Community empowerment is a crucial approach in overcoming this problem. (Alfiana, et al. 2023). Within this framework, the principles of Andragogy, as formulated by Knowles, become a critical foundation for achieving effective and sustainable learning (Egi, 2023; Meliana, 2020; Suwandi, 2019).

Adult learning / andragogy is an effort aimed at self-development carried out by individuals without coercion (Anwika, Ayub & Jas 2021) . The following are the six assumptions of Andragogy theory according to Knowles that are used, namely Self-concept, Experience, Readiness to Learn, Orientation to Task, Internal Motivation and Need to Know (Interest in Knowing). (Knowles, 1980; Sudirman, 2019). The six assumptions of Andragogy theory provide a detailed and relevant framework for community empowerment, especially through a field school approach that involves participants from parents of children with special needs and various elements of society.

## **METHOD**

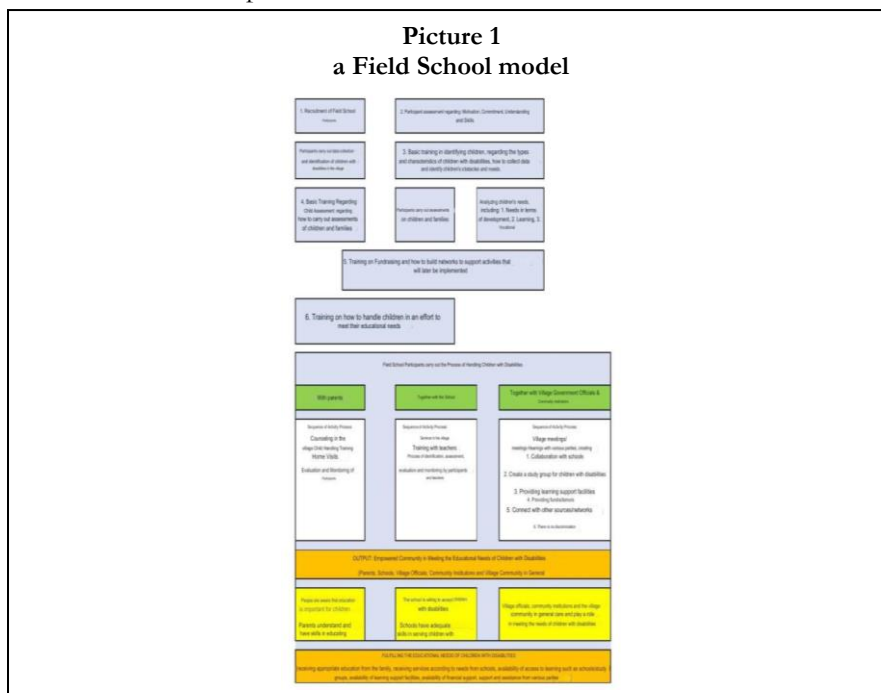
The research approach used in this research is a qualitative approach with descriptive research methods. The subjects in this research were facilitators who implemented field schools. Subject determination was carried out using a purposive sampling technique and adjusted to the information needs related to the research with certain considerations. The research was carried out in September-November 2023 in the Bandung Regency area, West Java Province. The selection of research locations was based on the consideration that Mekarlaksana Village, Ciparay District, Bandung Regency is an area that implements field schools. Data collection techniques through interviews, observation and documentation. The data source used is primary data obtained through interviews and

observation. Meanwhile, secondary data sources were obtained through books, the internet and documentation. The main instrument in the research is the researcher, while other instruments are interview guides and observation sheets. To check the validity of the data, researchers used source and technique triangulation checking techniques. Data triangulation is carried out by comparing research data and checking information on data obtained from interviews with observation results, and vice versa, comparing what was conveyed by each research subject, and comparing the results of interviews, observations and documentation obtained during research. The data analysis technique used in this research uses data analysis techniques including data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusions. (Aryani & Setiana, 2023).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of the Field School provides empowerment to the community so that it can meet the educational needs of children with disabilities in Mekarlaksana Village. The contents of the model consist of: rationale, objectives, empowerment components, empowerment steps, empowerment structure and content, empowerment program, evaluation and success indicators.

This field school model begins with participants agreeing on what needs to be known and improved as a form of meeting their needs related to the education of children with special needs. Among them are the importance of community empowerment in Mekarlaksana Village, the need to change and strengthen the understanding of the community in Mekarlaksana Village regarding the importance of education for children with disabilities, raising an awareness and caring attitude towards meeting the educational needs of children with disabilities, implementing relevant capacity building and generating actions. actions from the community related to efforts to fulfill the educational needs of children with disabilities in their villages, such as support and networking. The following is a Field School model that has been implemented:



The image above depicts the Field School Model Process Based on the results of interviews and observations, after implementing the model, it is known that there are several changes that have occurred in the community of Mekarlaksana Village, including: increasing community understanding regarding types of disabilities and the needs of children with disabilities, the community is aware of the need for special treatment in meeting needs. education of children with disabilities, the emergence of community awareness to move and make a plan in an effort to fulfill the educational needs of children with disabilities in Mekarlaksana Village, the community creates/provides school access and study visits to children's homes as an effort to fulfill the educational needs of children with disabilities in the Village Mekarlaksana, the community, especially field school participants, can carry out their own interventions related to meeting the educational needs of children with disabilities in Mekarlaksana Village, the government is starting to become aware of the rights of children with disabilities in accessing education and is also supporting it in the implementation and development of subsequent activities.

Based on the results of interviews with field school participants, it is known that currently children with disabilities in Mekarlaksana Village can access more appropriate education. Disabled children in Mekarlaksana Village can be accommodated in formal, informal and non-formal educational services, including: disabled children receive proper education from their families. This is evidenced by families increasingly realizing that education is important for children and parents starting to have the desire to send their children to school. Apart from that, parents are starting to know, understand and have good skills in educating their children.

Field school participants are now able to undertake community-based learning activities. Children with disabilities have open opportunities to access learning activities in the community. Field school participants make weekly visits to children's homes. There is starting to be information from external governments regarding the availability of financial support and other assistance from external parties. The social advocacy carried out in Mekarlaksana Village has also succeeded in ensuring that annual field school activities receive budgeting from village funds.

Field school participants revealed that this community empowerment model could be implemented easily, effectively and efficiently. This community empowerment model is functional and very useful. The obstacles faced during the process of implementing this empowerment model were obstacles for the users/themselves because this was related to their sincerity in carrying it out, there were also obstacles for parents who refused to take part in the activities. Field schools will continue to be carried out forever because they cannot only be done once and for a short period of time but must continue and be sustainable. This model can be implemented in other places and will be delivered to other villages that have not yet touched on handling children with disabilities.

Fulfilling the education of children with special needs is a complex challenge that requires active community involvement as a solution. Community empowerment is a crucial approach in overcoming this problem. Within this framework, the principles of Andragogy, as formulated by Knowles, become a critical foundation for achieving effective and sustainable learning.

The following are six assumptions of Andragogy theory according to Knowles in his book "The Modern Practice of Adult Education: Andragogy versus Pedagogy": (1) Self-

concept: Adults have a self-concept of being responsible for their own lives, for their own decisions, and for their own actions; (2) Experience: Experience, including mistakes, provides the basis for learning activities; (3) Readiness to Learn (Readiness to Learn): Adults are ready to learn to the extent that they perceive that it will help them perform tasks or solve problems in their lives; (4) Orientation to Task: Adults are motivated to learn to the extent that they perceive that it will help them perform tasks or solve problems in their lives; (5) Internal Motivation (Internal Motivation): Adults have a deep psychological need to be self-directing; (6) Need to Know (Interest in Knowing): Adults have a need to know why they need to learn something before they are willing to invest in learning it (Source: Knowles, MS (1980). *The Modern Practice of Adult Education: From Pedagogy to Andragogy*. Cambridge: Cambridge Adult Education. )

The six assumptions of Andragogy theory presents a detailed and relevant framework for community empowerment, especially through a field school approach involving participants from parents of children with special needs and various elements of society who are interested in being involved, which can be described as follows:

### **Self-Concept and Community Empowerment in the Field School Context**

The first assumption, self-concept, is a key foundation for community empowerment through their participation in field schools. Participants, especially parents of children with special needs, can build their self-concept as agents of change through direct experience and shared responsibility in designing appropriate educational programs.

### **Experience as an Empowerment Resource in Field Schools**

The second principle, experience, opens up opportunities for community empowerment through field schools. The participants' life experiences, especially in the context of education for children with special needs, become the basis for designing more effective learning strategies. Through participatory methods such as interactive lectures and group discussions in field schools, community empowerment can be realized through the exchange of experiences.

### **Learning Readiness and Empowerment of Inclusive Education in Field Schools**

The third assumption, readiness to learn, guides the design of inclusive education empowerment programs in field schools. Responsiveness to individual and community learning readiness is key, and training according to the needs and readiness of field school participants can significantly improve understanding and implementation of the concept of inclusion.

### **Task Orientation and Empowerment through the Field School Approach**

The fourth principle, task orientation, highlights the need for a direct link between learning and the tasks faced by society. The field school approach emphasizes direct application of the concepts and skills learned, encouraging active participation and more visible contributions from society.

## **Internal Motivation and the Role of Field Schools in Stimulating Motivation**

The fifth assumption, internal motivation, creates a stronger foundation in the field school context. Involving people in practical activities will stimulate their intrinsic motivation to learn. Their participation in field schools has a positive impact that can increase their sense of personal responsibility and motivation to support the education of children with disabilities .

## **The Need to Know and Field Schools as a Source of Practical Knowledge**

The sixth assumption, the need to know, guides the selection of learning materials and methods in field schools. People will be more involved when they see the relevance of learning materials to their daily needs. Field schools, as a source of direct transfer from theory to practice, provide the in-depth and practical understanding that society desires.

## **CONCLUSION**

This research provides an overview of community empowerment through a field school approach by integrating the principles of Andragogy. A strong self-concept and life experience are the main drivers for participants, especially parents of children with special needs, to be actively involved in designing appropriate educational programs. Learning readiness and internal motivation play a key role in increasing people's participation in practical activities , increasing better understanding and making positive contributions.

Despite this success, this research highlights several challenges that need to be addressed. Internal factors, such as the level of participants' sincerity, and external factors, such as resistance from parents, show the complexity in implementing empowerment. Evaluation of long-term impacts and improvement of success indicators are needed in future research . The field school model can increase community empowerment in providing education to every child, especially in this case children with disabilities.

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