8ᵗʰ ASEF Regional Conference on Higher Education (ARC8)

Outlook 2030: Inclusive and Diverse Higher Education in Asia and Europe

ARC8 Expert Group on Equitable Access and Success in Higher Education
Session 3 | Tuesday, 23 February 2021

Presentation of Dr Dina AFRIANTY, Founder, Australia-Indonesia Disability Research and Advocacy Network (AIDRAN); Research fellow, La Trobe Law School, Australia

Dina was asked to make a 10-minute presentation on the following questions, to serve as an input to the expert group discussion:

1. What is your take, how inclusive are the national, institutional policies and **practices currently**? Do you have any numbers to show or any story to tell?
2. What **potential risks** do you foresee in the coming years that could jeopardize greater inclusion, access and success efforts?
3. What **leverage points** do you see to promote inclusion?

Prevalence of Disability in Indonesia

Age groups	People with disabilities	
	National Survey Bureau 2018	Ministry of Health 2018
5-17 years old	0,98%	3,3%
18-59 years old	1,75%	22%
> 60 years old	15,85%	22%

Dina went straight to the point, stating that people with disabilities in Indonesia are faced by a myriad of challenges. One major challenge was the fact that persons with disabilities could not rely on the government. Data on number of people with disabilities in Indonesia vary depending on the different ministries. According to some ministries, the number sits between 15% to 20% of Indonesian population, which means it would be about 27 million to 35 million people with different types of disabilities, out of the total of 260 million population of the country. Based on the 2019 report of the SMRU Research Institute, the data on the prevalence of disability in Indonesia stands between 17-45%.

Despite varying statistics from different ministries of the government, according to Dina, **in terms of policies, the Indonesian government had made significant progress** by adopting international principles of disabilities and by **ratifying the 2011 Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**. Additionally, the Indonesian government introduced the **national disability law in 2016.**

Inclusive policies

Regulatory policy	Total
National Law	2
Government Regulation	7
Ministerial Regulations	4
Governor Decrees	1

A national legislative framework has been established for people with disabilities in Indonesia. Based on these, human rights advocates and researchers on disability rights could ensure that the government respect and fulfill the rights of people with disabilities with regard to education, health, and employment etc.

In Indonesia, the right to education is a basic right guaranteed in the Indonesian constitution. However, in practice and implementation, upholding the rights of persons with disabilities have been very poor. Nonetheless, in consideration of the adoption of the CRPD in addition to the introduction of national

disability law, ministerial decrees, local government decrees, and institutional guidelines for government offices, universities and schools, progress was made to ensure accessibility to people with disabilities.

According to Dina, despite all of these policies introduced by the government, educational attainment for people with disabilities continued to stagnate.
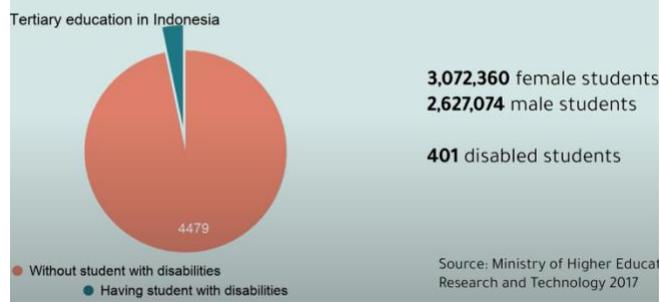
Level of education of people with disabilities

		Non-disability	People with disability
People with disabilities >/= 15 years old	No education	26,73	53,78
	Primary education	25,68	24,31
	Year 7-9	21,67	9,13
	Year 10-12	26,95	9,98
	Higher education	8,97	2,90

As presented in these tables, the rate of educational attainment for people with disabilities continued to reduce on the higher levels of education. A caveat was presented by Dina, she reminded the expert group that data was difficult to verify and that there was the possibility of variance in rates.

Dina, using as reference the Ministry of Higher Education Research and Technology study of 2017, presented the data in which there were 5,699,434 students, and only 401 of which were persons with disabilities.

Students with disabilities in Indonesia's higher educati

Tertiary education in Indonesia

3,072,360 female students
2,627,074 male students

401 disabled students

4479

- Without student with disabilities
- Having student with disabilities

Source: Ministry of Higher Educat
Research and Technology 2017

Government regulation introduced in March 2020 required institutions to be equipped with infrastructure and assistive devices to guarantee different students could access education and find fulfillment. Additionally, more comprehensive and detailed regulations were introduced on how institutions should practice inclusive education. Despite progress, the regulatory framework and legislation in place, higher education institutions were still facing difficulties in fulfilling their obligations.

This photo picturing an everyday situation at a prestigious Indonesian university which claimed to be inclusive. This university has now around 110 students enrolled with different types of disabilities, and this is the biggest population of students with disabilities in Indonesia. Nonetheless, what the picture presented, according to Dina, was the inadequate infrastructure to make certain that persons with disability were included. The university has since introduced several policies to make sure that they could improve their services to students with disabilities including providing services and helping teachers and educators understand inclusive education.

Following the discussion on the Status Quo, Dina proceeded to present **challenges, that could jeopardize greater inclusion in higher education in the next decade:**
- The lack of political will and leadership;
- Bureaucratic incompetence;
- Administrative inefficiency between tiers of government;
- Lack of awareness about equal rights as rising as social and religious conservatism continues to stigmatize people with disabilities;
- The absence of commitment to effective law enforcement and policy implementation;

- The challenges presented by having different socio-economic contexts has a significant impact on how countries decide to implement and practice the principle of inclusive education;
- Certainly, budget and economic factors were included as a challenge;
- Lack of accessible infrastructure in public transportation;
- Lack of awareness about equal rights as well as rising social and religious conservatism that potentially continue to stigmatize people with disability, based on Dina's research.

Nonetheless, Dina clarified, the barriers to offering equitable access of higher education is an ongoing subject for research and analysis.

After the presentation of Dina, the expert group proceeded with a **discussion and an exchange of some questions and answers:**

WAN Chang Da
Chang Da first articulates the shared understanding of the context in Asia. Nonetheless, Chang Da expressed surprise about the dropout rate of students with disabilities. Bulk of the issue is really on how to ensure people with disabilities complete their education up to the secondary level, up to higher education. Chang Da did inquire more on the context of Indonesia, specifically with regard to other forms of post-secondary education and such.

Response from Dina, in summary:
Dina explained that, in Indonesia, there was special education system which segregated education for people with disabilities. This is one major reason why the number of people with disability going to primary and secondary school was quite high, especially in primary education, because the numbers of special education at this level are quite high.

Nishat RIAZ
Nishant began by expressing a shared understanding of the context and, at the same time, a call for collective action in light of shared problems and concerns. First, Nishant clarified that there are variations on definitions of disability. There are instances wherein parents don't agree with or believe in intellectual disabilities, physical disabilities, minor disabilities, learning disabilities and so on. Considering the similar landscapes in South Asia, Nishant was interested in learning more about how to raise awareness and understanding of disabilities.

Second, Nishant did add that the state may fail not only or necessarily because of lack of willingness, but this may be due to the lack of resources for the significant population in the respective countries.

Third, Nishant did raise the possibility of engaging with the third sector, NGOs, the private and corporate sector, and philanthropists to come support and partner to ensure inclusivity, establishing infrastructure and so on.

Lastly, Nishant shared that in Pakistan, a disability bill was issued to incentivize parents, guardians and carers to send their children to school. It was observed that there was an increase in participation in schools.

Response of Dina, in summary:
First, Dina agreed with the point of Nishant on how disability is defined differently and not always understood or accepted by some parents. To add, Dina shared a different perspective from different communities. For example, there are communities that think disability is a blessing and, on the other

hand, some think disability is a sin. These different perspectives should be taken into consideration and reflect in drafting policy and in policy implementation.

Dina added that there was advocacy training for young Indonesian disability advocates, and acknowledged that awareness raising is on ongoing initiative. There has also been engagement with the international community and how the rights language has been used by advocates in Indonesia. Also noting that, a rights-based approach for disability rights was not really that disputed, which is very interesting, compared to a rights-based approach on other issues.

Martin HAMMERBAUER
Asked a question with regard to willingness of the government to adopt policies and how is the enforcement of the measures done to help the students with disabilities? Is this a top-down approach or from roots-upward?

Response of Dina, in summary:
Dina explained that, higher education is regulated by the national government. As for primary and secondary education, it is decentralized and regulated by the local governments. This is the simplified answer. What must be taken note of is a unique consideration in Indonesia, Islamic Education. Thus, the Ministry of Religion also plays a significant role in policy setting.

Mary TUPAN-WENNO
Mary appreciated the emphasis Dina gave on important points such as understanding what it means to live with a disability and addressing stigma on disabilities. Mary believed that was easy to develop policy, to provide funding to institutions, to deal with all kinds of physical barriers.

Mary wanted to shift attention towards raising awareness among the faculty and teachers to really support, including emotional support, students and not seeing them as an outlier or somebody to feel pity for. To Mary, this was the biggest challenge.

Lastly, there was emphasis throughout the entire session and in the presentation of Dina on the sense of belonging and intersectionality, and layered diversity, a positive observation shared by Mary.

Response of Dina, in summary:
In Europe, physical barriers may not be that big of a challenge. While that remains to be the first barrier that must be overcome, in Indonesia, it is quite a big challenge due to reasons mentioned earlier: bureaucracy, leadership, and funding, and so on.

Graeme ATHERTON
Graeme's question was direct to the point, inquiring about the role of universities in addressing deeper rooted lack of awareness and prejudice about disabled people and disabilities in society.

Response of Dina, in summary:
According to Dina, awareness raising is needed, This was and will continue to be done through advocacy work, research, and influencing policy with research. This is not only for access and inclusion in higher education, but also in accessing all the other public services. Dina acknowledged that this was quite a recent development in Indonesian higher education sector.

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