Disability Empowerment In Islamic Community Training And Education Language For Visually Impaired Individuals

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Abstract

This research aims to reveal and analyze the empowerment implemented by Rumah Sahabat Foundation for the visually impaired individuals as an effort to improve the quality of human resources. The visually impaired individuals are part of a society who has the same rights, obligations, and roles in all aspects of life. In order to fulfill their social needs and to train them live independently, the empowerment efforts must be performed. Rumah Sahabat serves as empowerment facilitator. The role of social workers in this field is expected to help the empowerment process. In carrying out its duties and functions, the foundation has programs both educational and training in empowering the visually impaired individuals. The method used in this research is a qualitative method with a descriptive approach that focuses on (1) empowerment for the visually impaired individuals to improve the quality of human resources which includes: a) objectives and targets of the empowerment; b) the empowerment process; c) Result of the empowerment, and (2) supporting factors and obstacles of the empowerment. The results showed that the empowerment carried out by the foundation is well-established to train and form independent visually impaired individuals.

Keywords: Empowerment, Visually, Impaired, and Individuals

Introduction

Until recently, the government has been continuously paying considerable attention and action as an effort to empower people with disabilities and to train them to live independently. These efforts include the releasing of government's policy through various laws and regulations on social welfare. For example, the law No. 4 of 1997 on the disability people Article 6 that states: "Every person with disabilities has the right to obtain: decent work and livelihood in accordance with the type and degree of disability, education and ability", and the government regulation No. 43 Year 1998 on efforts to improve the social welfare of people with disabilities.

But in fact, the empowerment of disabled people is still limited to the policy's level. A fundamental problem with disabilities is the lack of understanding of the public and related government apparatus about the existence of people with disabilities. The society regards disability as a disgrace, a curse, an embarrassment, considered as mentally ill and helpless so that there is no need to send the people with disabilities to school and educate them. The society also assumes that they only need to be pitied and fed for their life continuance. They stay at home, trapped in it, and not being a burden for others so that parents or other family

members can easily supervise them. Some of them even chose or is forced to live as beggars. Such circumstances have been firmly rooted in the community, making it very difficult to give equal rights and opportunities to the disabled. Besides, the facilities such as physical and non-physical accesses for them are relatively limited, and it also factors that hinder their mobilities. A report proves this fact by stating that 59.8% of disabled people cannot pursue or complete their study and the remaining 40.2% get an education with a varied level of education (Marjuki, 2010). Other survey conducted by ICF reports that 74.4% of them is jobless while the remaining 25.6% work in various fields (Marjuki, 2010).

Furthermore, based on data from Statistics Indonesia (BPS) year 2012, the number of people with visual impairment is 1.780.20, hearing impairment is 472,855; speech impairment is 164,686; cognitive disability is 402,817; physical disability 616,387; and double or multiple disabilities is 2,401,592. And the people with those impairments who are difficult to manage themselves from the light difficulty to the serious one consist of 6,008,661 people.

Scientifically, the visual impairment can be caused by two factors, and they are internal factors and external factors. Things that include internal factors are factors that are closely connected with the condition of the baby while he or she was in the womb. It is probably due to gene, maternal psychic condition, malnutrition, drug poisoning, and many others. Meanwhile, the external factors are caused by some cases that occur after the baby is born. The common causes that lead to vision loss are accidents. The influence of medical aids during childbirth also can lead to the damage of eyes nervous system. The other causes are malnourished, vitamin deficiency, exposed to toxins, infected by trachoma virus, high-temperature body, as well as inflammation of the eyes due to diseases, bacterias or viruses (Somantri, 2007).

A person who began to experience visual impairment after she or he was birth or suffer the blind caused by external factors take time to have adaptation and accept his or her condition than those who experienced disability since the birth (Rofi'ah & Muhlisun, 2010). The social conditions of the visually impaired people have been assessed in vulnerable states, from their economic, educational, skill and society states. These conditions cause them not to be proactive in utilizing the existing social institutions as a necessity. The population of people with visual impairments is growing, and services to address their educational and rehabilitation requirements are needed (Corn & Erin, 2010).

"Rumah Sahabat" Foundation is one of the humanitarian and social organizations that focuses on the field of empowerment for people with disabilities, especially the visually impairment. Rumah Sahabat Foundation is one of the organizations that also fight for the sake visually impaired individuals and their needs through the various activities that held by the foundation so that they can continue their lives without regret with limitations.

The foundation that views Islamic normative and values as its active principles is an independent private foundation. As a social foundation focuses on developing the potential of the visually impaired individuals, Rumah Sahabat Foundation not only touches the social life aspect, such as trying to seek information access for them but also assisting them to study the Islamic sciences and teachings.

"Rumah Sahabat" Foundation is located in Jatisari residential block D6 Number 36 sub-district of Mijen Semarang. This foundation also helps visually impaired individuals to

memorize Qur'an in the *tahfidz* training centre for special needs. The number of visually impaired individuals who are in Rumah Sahabat is 29 people, and they are also members of the Sahabat Mata Community.

Despite experiencing various difficulties in the implementation and limitation of the funds, Rumah Sahabat Foundation still commits to its consistency to help the visually impaired individuals to develop their potentials.This research aims to find out and analyze the empowerment carried out by the Rumah Sahabat Foundation Semarang for visually impaired individuals to improve their skills so that they can get a better life. This research also aims to dig up the supporting factors and obstacles faced by the foundation in order to execute the empowerment efforts.

Literature Review

1. Management to Empower

Effective low vision services involve the utilization of a collaborative team approach (Corn & Erin, 2010). Thus, a systematic management is an important part of any activities involving many individuals with the same goals, in this case, related to disability empowerment. Management is required for all types of organized activities in all types of organizations. In practice, management is needed wherever people work together; whether it is in the organization or other type of working together. Moreover, management is a tool to achieve organizational goals. The management functions are universal. This trait is a result of the fact that management functions are the same everywhere, in the whole organization and at any time (Handoko, 2003).

In reality, no management definition has been universally accepted. Marry Parker Follet (Handoko, 2003) defines management as the art of completing work through other people. This definition implies that managers achieve organizational goals through their commands to other people to carry out various tasks; management also means that the managers are not doing the tasks themselves. Unlike Stoner (Handoko, 2003) discusses the definition in more complex way and includes important aspects of management. He said management is:

Management is the process of planning, organizing, directing and supervising the efforts of the organization members and the use of other organizational resources to achieve the stated organizational objectives.

From the definition above, it appears that Stoner has used the word process, not art in describing management. Interpreting management as art means personal abilities or skills, while interpreting management as a process means a systematic way to do work. Management is defined as a process because all leaders, regardless of their skills or competencies, must carry out specific and interrelated activities to achieve the desired goals.

We believe that people with disabilities are an underutilized human resource, and that utilizing their abilities should be a key component of an inclusive talent management approach. According to the research, talent management can differentiate between taking an exclusive (differential) approach and an inclusive (egalitarian) approach to talent management. There are four distinct pre-employment talent management activities: (a) identifying talent, (b) ensuring a match between potential vocations and the candidate, (c) crafting employment-specific activities, and (d) providing informal support (Kulkarni &

Scullion, 2015).

Pre-employment talent management activities included seeking talent in non-traditional as well as traditional locations, involving relevant stakeholders to holistically understand talent needs, and matching the primary talent with potential jobs or vocations. This phase also included talent development activities such as tailored and generic training, as well as general information dissemination. The findings indicated the importance of involving multiple stakeholders when understanding the focal talent's existing skills, needs, and choices (Kulkarni & Scullion, 2015).

2. Community Empowerment

Community can be viewed as a vital intermediate level of society, bridging the gap between the micro-level relationships of family and main groups and the larger macro-societal economy, politics, and culture (Scotch, Carey, Barnartt, & Altman, 2011). People with disabilities may benefit the most from their relationships within communities and may experience deprivation in the absence of them. The interdependence of social ties is a vital support for growingly isolated nuclear families and individuals with impairments, whose functioning is less likely to be effectively backed by strangers' kindness and generosity or distant governmental regulatory bodies than by community members with whom they exchange social ties and a common identity (Scotch et al., 2011).

Community is one of the most important aspects in supporting people with disability. Community relationships provide opportunities for friendship and knowledge sharing. A research shows that youngsters appreciated their connections, whether official (planned and developed by adults) or casual, such just hanging out with other friends (Leiter, 2011).

Having the sense of community is important for the disabled, even as small as a family. While there are many barriers to social participation, for example, families can successfully use a variety of strategies to create a sense of community for themselves and their children. For instance, they can participate in family support, form enclaves of wiser individuals, and engage in active social networking. Children with impairments can present surprising chances for family community involvement (Green et al., 2011).

A community can also act as a means of sharing the necessary information for individual with impairment. For example, individuals who use prosthesis connect with peers through trading technical information and insights into use of it. Thus, the notion of community can be understood in terms of interaction with shared objects and environments, other than shared identity (Schairer, 2011).

Relationships among disabled youths may result in bonding social capital and friendships, but there are fewer opportunities for bridging social capital and making connections with typically developing youth (Leiter, 2011).Empowerment has been used for over a century, first in relation to women's rights, then to civil rights, and finally worldwide when advocating for and ensuring the emancipation and self-determination of any disenfranchised group or individual. Empowerment has meant a lot to disabled people by allowing them to take more control of their lives, informing policies and service provision, and assisting them in acknowledging what should be obvious, that people should be valued for who they are, not 'despite' an impairment (Dan, 2020).

Empowerment implies choice and control; it implies that someone has the ability to

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make choices and decision and thus enhance control in their lives, recognizing that there are limits to how much control any of them have over what happens in their lives (Morris, 1997). According to KBBI published by Depdiknas, empowerment is defined as a process, method, deed to make a decision. Additionally, it is described as the ability to do something, to act, to reason, or to make an effort (Depdiknas, 2003). While Bookman and Morgen (Bookman & Morgen, 1988) argues that empowerment as a concept which refers to fostering efforts of one's desire to actualize himself or herself, undertake upward mobility and provide emotional states that make the person feel empowered.

Ife (Ife, 1995) explains that "empowerment means providing people with the resources, opportunities, knowledge and skill to increase their capacity to determine their future and to participate in and affect the life of their community." Empowerment is a medium providing people with resources, opportunities, knowledge and skills to increase their capacity so they can determine their future and participate in their community life. Sumodiningrat added (Sumodidingrat, 1999) that community empowerment is an effort to make people independent through the realization of their potential abilities. As for community empowerment, it always involves two interrelated groups, and they are the community that needs to get empowerment works and the party that provides empowerment activities.

Community empowerment is giving power to those who are lacking or powerless in order to have the strength to implement their self-actualization. Empowerment is concerning how individuals, groups, or communities try to control their lives and try to shape the future in order to pursue their dreams and wishes. From the several definitions of empowerment above, it can be concluded that empowerment is a process to provide the provisions of the empowered one (power) of chances, opportunities, knowledge, expertise, and material, so the provisions can make the powerless to have power. The empowerment of visually impaired individuals is also expected to be able to increase the ability, capacity, and self-confidence of people with visual impairment. So with these bits of help, they have the power and strength to overcome the problems they face in order to achieve a better life and can determine the future according to their wishes.

A disabled person may join four types of communities: geographical, disability-based, religious, and online. For youth with disabilities, disability-based settings offered a significant portion of the foundation for friendship (Leiter, 2011). The location of the disabled individuals' residences defined their membership in geographic communities. Living in a specific community provided possibilities to connect with individuals who shared the same neighborhood or at the very least the same town. Furthermore, the individuals may become members of religious communities, while people membership in disability-based communities was based on their experiences of living with other disabilities. These communities might be disability-specific or cross-disability, and they could fulfill the social desires or developmental requirements of disabled indiividuals. People who participated in disability-based groups found acceptance, resources, and relationships. Disability-based communities, like geographically based communities, can be formal or casual (Leiter, 2011).

As for virtual communities, disabled teenagers access to electronic communication tools affected their participation. These online contacts takes multiple forms, such as networking on Facebook, playing games online, e-mailing pals, or engaging in forums that included the ability to communicate with others. They may have links in multiple

communities, depending on several foundations (Leiter, 2011).The ultimate goal of community empowerment is to make the community independent, empowered, and build their ability to advance toward a better life in a sustainable manner (Kartasasmita, 1996). There are also aspirations from individuals with disabilities for the community. One of the main goals is creating an inclusive community, a community with a place for all (Martin, 2006).

An inclusive community that can support disabled individuals can be described as a community that does not attempt to modify them or make them similar to the others, that recognizes and values their abilities in the same way that it recognizes and values the abilities of the rest of the community. It also consults them when their needs are discussed, no longer makes choices on their behalf, and where the organizations that serve them ensure that they may fully participate in decisions affecting their welfare or the way services are delivered (Martin, 2006).An ideal community also opens its doors and accepts everyone as equals, where the disabled individuals learn to speak up, make their own decision, and learn about responsibilities. Where they feel at home and accepted in their neighborhood. In short, it is inclusion: the chance to become genuine people with real lives in real communities (Martin, 2006).

Community empowerment is important as when a person with low vision masters the art of self-advocacy, their freedom and self-determination are increased (Sticken & Kapperman, 2010). Collaboration with families and other professionals is essential for providing successful orientation and mobility teaching and evaluation for low vision teens and children. Traditional Orientation and Mobility instructional and evaluation methodologies for adults can be adapted for children and teens through the use of natural observation, games, demonstrations, role-playing, and other age-appropriate activities (Fazzi & Naimy, 2010).

The possibility of overcoming barriers to independence by stepping out of the comfort zone of dependency and taking on responsibilities, the disabled individuals may be empowered and learn to pursue greater independence, and encourage them to act autonomously (Damianidou, 2021). Furthermore, disability does not have to define a person, as many fear, but can be a source of empowerment (Kahana & Kahana, 2022).

3. **Empowerment Principles**

The politics and philosophy of the disability rights movement include the intertwined principles of empowerment and human rights, integration and independence, self-help and self-determination as well as the general philosophical principle that people with disabilities must have a voice and control over their lives (Charlton, 2000). Political empowerment actors include: activists with a political orientation who work with a disability-related organization or professionals in related fields such as social services, academia, or government who have disabilities or are parents of disabled children; parents of disabled children; activists who engage with the issues; politicians involved in academic/policy research, or independent living centers; and wealthy people (with disabilities) or people connected through philanthropy (Charlton, 2000).

The typology of disability rights organizations have implemented yields the following: (1) local self-help groups, (2) local advocacy and programming centers, (3) local single issue

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advocacy groups, (4) public policy groups, (5) single issue national advocacy groups, (6) national membership organizations, (7) national coalitions/federations of groups, (8) national single disability organizations, (9) regional organizations, and (10) international organizations. The most important of these are independent living centers. They are nonresidential, non-profit organizations that participate in advocacy, service, and public education (Charlton, 2000).

Individual empowerment and community empowerment are the two main approaches to empowerment. Individual empowerment is focused on improving an individual's ability to exert greater control, whereas community empowerment is concerned with collective action toward social change of oppressive structures and social inequalities (Andersen, 2022). For example, a program may aim to raise community awareness in order to support disability empowerment by providing the community with disability awareness training (Roth, Pure, Rabinowitz, & Kaufman-Scarborough, 2018).

4. **Empowerment for Individuals with Visual Impairment**

Individuals with limited vision who receive instruction in independent living skills can maintain or acquire confidence, allowing them to fully engage in their personal lives and participate in community activities. Individuals with low vision may also need to adapt to alternative approaches such as listening to books instead of reading them visually, or using specialized tools such as magnifiers and telescopes or assistive technology to help with reading, writing, and calculating in order to maintain their communication and literacy skills (Wolffe, 2010).

Social situations that may present difficulties for people with limited vision can be handled by teaching adults alternate strategies or procedures for analyzing social interactions only through vision. Adults with low eyesight who are found eligible can engage with a team of rehabilitation specialist, vocational rehabilitation counselors, vision rehabilitation therapists or teachers, orientation and mobility specialists, low vision specialists, job coaches, and other professionals as needed may be part of the team (Wolffe, 2010).Individuals with impaired vision have a wide range of adaption preferences. A person with low vision may be able to improve visibility in a given situation by modifying the environment. People with visual impairments must choose whether to use optical or non-optical devices for a given task, based on professional training as well as personal preferences and lifestyle (Sticken & Kapperman, 2010).People with limited vision may find it more efficient to perform various tasks utilizing non-visual skills rather than vision (Sticken & Kapperman, 2010).

Visual efficiency, or the capacity to use vision effectively, can be improved by a mix of environmental adaptations, literacy-focused instructional practices, and the use of appropriate optical, electronic, and non-optical equipment. Instructional goals for the use of vision should be designed with the individual's preferences in consideration, as well as their functional needs, frequency of use of vision for various purposes, safety, and social relevance. Environmental adaptation decisions should be established on careful observation and assessment (Erin & Topor, 2010).

When examining working-age persons with impaired vision for employment-related needs, rehabilitation specialists must considered the tasks the individuals will be performing, the locations in which they will be working, as well as their specific needs and capabilities.

Adult learning methods are used to improve low vision instruction. Systematic low vision training, which includes the use of optical devices, enhances an adult's capacity to function at work. Adaptations and adjustments to the job environment, the use of universal design principles, and the use of assistive technologies all help people with low vision function in the workplace (Lee & Ponchillia, 2010).

Vocational rehabilitation services offer job counseling, training, and placement assistance to people with low vision. Individuals who have low vision may decide whether job retention or retraining is the best option for them. Work-site analysis should include an environmental or ecological approach, which includes a combination of clinical low vision evaluation, functional vision assessment, and an analysis of the work requirements and design. A number of national initiatives and resources are available to assist and equip people with impaired vision who want to enter or remain in the job sector (Moore, Wolffe, & McDonnall, 2010).

Before planning intervention strategies for orientation and mobility for a person with low vision, extensive clinical and functional assessments must be done. A systematic evaluation process is required to identify a person's functional acuity, visual field, and visual performance in various settings. A person's functional vision is influenced by both internal and external environmental factors. Instructional approaches for visual-motor skills, distance vision, and depth perception can be used to improve functional vision for independent travel (Smith & Geruschat, 2010).

5. Visually Impaired Individuals Characteristics

Low vision terminology has evolved over time and may not always have specific definitions (Corn & Erin, 2010). There are several types of visual impairment. First, individuals can be classified legally blind for one of two reasons: visual acuity limitations or visual field impairments. In this definition, visual acuity relates to an individual's ability to notice detail at specified distances (for example, distinguishing one letter from another by seeing separations between lines) (Corn & Erin, 2010).

Second, persons with Partial Sight have best-corrected visual acuity in the better eye ranging from 20/70 to 20/200. The third is functional blindness, which refers to a kid or adult whose use of for various functions, such as reading, is inefficient. Although they may use vision for some tasks, such as finding a cup on a tabletop, they are more efficient when using nonvisual approaches to literacy and other skills that need more detailed vision (Corn & Erin, 2010).Some diseases and conditions that cause visual impairment are present from birth or early childhood (congenital), while others are acquired (adventitious); some conditions are stable, while others cause progressive vision loss, and mostly all visual conditions are influenced by genetic inheritance (Schwartz, 2010).

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Visually impaired individuals are people who have the whole limited vision (blindness) or partially (low vision) which hinder in obtaining information visually and affect their learning process and achievement. People who have limited vision have some characteristics. These characteristics are the implications of visual loss of information. According to Sari Rudiyati (Rudiyanti, 2001) the characteristics of visually impaired individuals are: 1) suspicion of others; 2) irritability; 3) verbalism; 4) feelings of inferiority; 5) custom; 6) like to fantasize; 7) critical thinking, and 8) brave.

People with low vision have diverse psychosocial experiences depending on characteristics such as age of onset, family and public attitudes, severity and progression of visual impairment, and individual attributes and skills. The general public may misinterpret visual behaviours and requirements due to a lack of understanding of the functional characteristics of low vision. In most cases, openly conveying one's low vision needs to others will result in more successful social experiences and environmental access; nonetheless, a person with low vision should carefully evaluate when, when, and how to disclose this information (Sacks, 2010).

Family members and practitioners who understand the psychosocial requirements of people with low vision can help children and adults with low vision adjust. Family members and experts can promote and support children and adults with low vision's positive self-identity (Sacks, 2010).

Research Method

For A method is an essential part of the research and is a necessary element that facilitates the accomplishment of study results. Based on the discussed topic, the type of this research of descriptive research, which also uses qualitative the research approach (Skarbek, 2020). Through the qualitative approach, the descriptive data is produced. Bogdan and Taylor (Moleong, 2007) define the qualitative method as a procedure that produces qualitative data in written and oral word. This research always looks at various variables in unity, and the variables are inseparable from other conditions related to the context. Those variables cannot be understood separately from their position of relevance in an overall context. This research focuses on (1) Empowerment of people with visual impairment to improve the quality of human resources at the Rumah Sahabat Foundation, which includes: a) forms of empowerment activities, b) implementation of empowerment activities, c) facilities and infrastructure, d) results of the empowerment; (2) supporting factors and obstacles.

The Empowerment of Visually Impaired Individuals at Rumah Sahabat Foundation Semarang

"Rumah Sahabat" Foundation is one of the social and humanitarian organizations engaged in the field of empowerment for people with disabilities, especially for the visually impaired individuals. The foundation that views Islamic normative and values as its active principles is an independent private foundation. As a social institution that is engaged in developing the potential of people with visual impairment, the foundation provides physical, mental, and social guidance and skills training to develop the social capabilities of people with visual impairment to become capable and useful citizens.

1. **Social Guidance and Skill Training Stages**
a. Physical and Mental Training
The existence of physical and mental guidance is to build one's obedience and faith towards Allah the almighty. The guidance also means to actualize the will and ability of the visually impaired individuals in order to re-establish their self-esteem, confidence, and emotional stability to create a personal maturity.
1) Religious Guidance

This guidance aims to allow the blind to be human beings who fear and obey Allah SWT and have honourable morality as individual and community members.

2) Sports

This sport is aimed to provide visually impaired individuals with a healthy physical and to keep them away from various diseases. Sports activities include running fast or sprint, swimming, long jump, bullet, disc throwing, and javelin throwing.

3) Mobility Orientation

Mobility Orientation aims to allow visually impaired individuals to get a guideline to move from one place to another without the help of others. Every individual in this foundation get social rehabilitation, and each class will perform mobility orientation activities because this activity is a provision for the visually impaired individuals to help them in walking using the stick.

4) Activity Daily Living (ADL)

Activity Daily Living (ADL) is guidance given to the visually impaired individuals to have the ability to perform their daily activities without relying on others. Activities that they do are learning to organize and serve food at the dining table, ironing, arranging beds, and many others. These are everyday activities usually done by ordinary people.

b. Social Guidance

Social guidance is intended to form a social attitude based on solidarity and togetherness and social responsibility.

1) Reading and Writing Braille Letters

Introduction of Braille letters is intended to use the letters as a medium of communication for the people with visual impairment. Teachers from Rumah Sahabat Foundation teach the introduction of Braille letters.

2) Community Service

This activity is intended for the blind to practice the ability of social interaction with surrounding communities.

c. Enterpreneurship and Skills Training

that The training is proposed to provide some skill for visually impaired individuals so they can get work and have business plans. This training is aimed to ensure their future following their abilities and environmental conditions. This entrepreneurship and skills training activity include:

1) Handicraft Class

The skill provided for visually impaired individuals is making doormats and duster. At Rumah Sahabat Foundation Semarang, the individuals are taught to make doormats and duster. These two handicrafts are chosen because of its simpleness and easiness to be taught to people with visual impairments. This simple training is intended to provide them with the skills to get involved in the community. The activity of making doormats and dusters is still not the most crucial because massage gets more interest from visually impaired individuals.

2) Household Industry

This training is proposed to give the individuals skills as an effort to increase household income. The household industry skill that is taught to the individuals is making salted eggs. In the household industry, the activity of making salty eggs is considered easy to do by people with visual impairment. This activity is selected because not all household industry

activities can be carried out by them.

3) Massage Training

Massage by people with visual impairment has been well known to society. So this foundation also chooses massage as the offered skills for the individuals. The individuals are taught how to massage by one of the instructors at Rumah Sahabat Semarang. This training is expected to allow them to get income for their life.

4) Music and Karawitan Class

Karawitan is a Javanese traditional music art with the particular musical instrument equipment called Gamelan. People with visual impairments are taught Karawitan and musical arts adjusted to the musical talents they have and want to be pursued so that their talents are able to be adequately conveyed.

5) Art of Reciting Al-Quran/*Qiro'at* Class

For the Muslim blind people, they can learn the art of reciting Qur'an. This activity is held during religious guidance every Saturday.

Islamic Wilson (Porwoko & Totok, 2012) argues that empowerment activities for each organization are a cycle of events that consists of:

First, developing one's desire to change and improve, which is the starting point of the empowerment. Without the desire to change and improve, then all efforts to carry out the empowerment process and activity will not get the attention, sympathy, or even participation from the public. Rumah Sahabat Foundation undertook stages, where those stages were aimed to find out how much the desire of the visually impaired individuals to enter the Semarang Rumah Sahabat Foundation and to do social rehabilitation process. The growing motivation of people with visual impairment to change and improve can help to make the empowerment process easier for them.

Second, fostering the willingness and courage to break away from the feeling of pleasure, satisfaction, or even obstacles, and then taking a decision to join the empowerment in order to realize the expected changes and improvements. Growing the will and courage to be more developed is needed for their progress in developing what will they get at the Rumah Sahabat Foundation for social rehabilitation so that the changes and improvements needed for their lives in the community can be realized.

Third, developing a willingness to participate or take part in empowerment activities that provide benefits or improve conditions. Rumah Sahabat Foundation has compiled activities that are expected to empower visually impaired individuals. Empowerment activities carried out by Rumah Sahabat Foundation have purpose and objective in developing the abilities of people with visual impairments.

Fourth, increasing the role and participation in the empowerment process that has been conducted. The participation of teachers and parties who support the ongoing empowerment activities at Rumah Sahabat Foundation for social rehabilitation can make a difference for the visually impaired individuals. These individuals initially were only able to act to the extent of their limited ability, but with the role and participation of participated parties so they can further develop their abilities.

Fifth, enhancing the role and loyalty of volunteers and participants toward the empowerment activities. Loyalty is shown with the development of motivations to make changes. The participation of the teachers at Rumah Sahabat Foundation is providing regular motivations

and directed guidance for the visually impaired individuals. These activities mean to make it easier for individuals to follow the kind of events in the empowerment process.

Sixth, increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of empowerment activities. The types of empowerment activities carried out by the Rumah Sahabat Foundation are adjusted to the abilities of each person with visual impairment and are guided together through the stages of the existing program. The program is performed under the predetermined period.

Seventh, increasing competencies to make changes through new empowerment activities. The empowerment activities performed by Rumah Sahabat Foundation gradually aims to realize independent and capable visually impaired individual so they can work with the obtained guidance while they were in Rumah Sahabat Foundation. And they can develop the competencies they get from the foundation to achieve an independent life.

2. **Supporting Factors and Obstacles Faced by Rumah Sahabat Foundation in Empowering the Visually Impaired Individuals**

a. The Supporting Factors

1) Comfortable Environment in The Foundation

Convenience at Rumah Sahabat Foundation is essential for visually impaired individuals. The existence of a comfortable environment at the foundation will also have an impact on those who live there. If the environment provides comfort, it will ease the implementation of the empowerment process there.

2) Teachers and Trainers

The presence of friendly and patient instructors in dealing with the visually impaired individuals will ease the process of implementing empowerment activities at Rumah Sahabat Foundation. Furthermore, the existence of friendly teachers will make the individuals adapt more quickly to the learning process at the foundation.

3) The Visually Impaired Individuals

The people with visual impairment in Rumah Sahabat do not only come from the same city where the foundation is located. They come from various cities in Central Java Province. They need to adapt to fellow visually impaired. If they are able to adapt to fellow visuall impaired, then it will help them to learn from each other. Additionally, the strong motivation to learn and follow all programs is needed.

b. The Obstacles

1) Accessibility

Accessibility is very crucial for people with visual impairment in reaching the places around them. The distance from the rehabilitation site to the bus stop or station is far enough. The easy access is needed when individuals want to return to their origin. Sometimes they still have difficulty to reach the places.

2) Mood

People with visual impairments are more sensitive to their environment. Their mood is easy to change. Sometimes their moods make them disinclined to do activities and follow programs at Rumah Sahabat Foundation.

3) Adaption to the surrounding environment

Some visually impaired individuals are still unable to blend in and adapt to their fellows. Sometimes they prefer to be alone, the foundation or even the fellow visually

impaired must take useful approaches to reach them.
4) Acceptance at the Rumah Sahabat Foundation

The acceptance of new participants at Rumah Sahabat Foundation sometimes does not meet the expectations. When the foundation has several registrants quota for people with visual impairment to get empowerment program, but the individuals are unwilling to register. So the foundation has to wait for some registrants to begin their programs.

Conclusion

From a series of research and discussions conducted by the writer on how was the empowerment for the visually impaired individuals in Rumah Sahabat Foundation Semarang, the followings are the conclusions of the study results:

1. The process of empowering people with visual impairments at Rumah Sahabat Semarang includes:
a. Rumah Sahabat Foundation is one of the social and humanitarian organizations that focuses and advocates for the fulfillment of people with visual impairment needs through a series of empowerments. All efforts that have been made by Rumah Sahabat Foundation are the needs of the visually impaired in general, starting from the problems of social life, the spirit of life, and self-confidence. Moreover, the efforts include pieces of training and teachings in order to improve and develop the social abilities of individuals to become capable and useful citizens.
b. The targets of the empowerment in Rumah Sahabat Foundation are all people with visual impairments both the total blind and the low vision from all regions in Central Java. But, the number of participants is being adjusted to the dormitory capacity of Rumah Sahabat Semarang.
c. One of the empowerment programs implemented by Rumah Sahabat Semarang is the education and training for blind people.
d. The types of activities in the empowerment program for visually impaired individuals are:
1) Education and guidance: religion guidance, reading braille letters lesson, and social education
2) Skills training: computers, broadcasting, massages, and entrepreneurship.
3) Physical training: sports, mobility orientation, self-development, and daily activity skills
2. The supporting factors of empowerment at Rumah Sahabat Foundation can make the process easier and achieve the expected results at the maximum level. These factors can be obtained from the comfortable environment of the foundation, teacher, and fellow visually impaired individuals.
3. All activities carried out at the Rumah Sahabat Foundation do not run according to what is expected. Besides the supporting factors, some obstacles hinder the implementation of programs at the foundation. These factors come from the facilities, available infrastructure, the visually impaired individuals, and the acceptance of new participants.

Suggestion

Based on the result of the study, the writers put some suggestions to the following parties:

1. Foundations, organizations, and institutions, especially the Rumah Sahabat Foundation
a. "Rumah Sahabat" as an institution that handles problems regarding people with visual

impairments must be even more active in carrying out their duties and need to improve the human resources who work there. And the Islamic religious guidance for them should never be removed in order to improve the quality and the potential of the visually impaired individuals

b. "Rumah Sahabat" Semarang needs to establish cooperation with the government, especially the Semarang government, in order to facilitate the various activities.

2. The community in Semarang and around the foundation should respond positively to what has been done by Rumah Sahabat Foundation. Through various activities that have been carried out by the foundation, the community must also morally support the programs. Also, support in the form of promotion to the broader community will help the blind to get an environment that suits the needs of the visually impaired individuals. This action will significantly help the individuals to learn and live independently. This action also can facilitate the to discipline the to deepen their religious knowledge so that they can become the obedient Muslims to Allah SWT.

3. The involved government should understand the needs of visually impaired individuals so that the programs aimed to empower them to become very beneficial. The government also needs to keep providing the individuals helps to improve their quality of life.

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