

**Empowering Deaf Youth Through Vocational Training:
Case Study of Participants *Balai Rehabilitasi Sosial Penyandang
Disabilitas Sensorik Rungu Wicara Melati* Social Ministry of The Republic
Indonesia**

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Abstract:

Marginalized people are typically at risk of undesirable outcomes and experiences. Youth, especially those who are deaf, face significant challenges in making the transition from school to career life. Vocational Training is organized by the Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia to equip deaf youth with skills that suit their interests and talents. Empowerment can be understood as acknowledging or empowering oneself, gaining or regaining the power, energy, and imagination to structure one's situation. This research uses a qualitative research approach with a case study with as many as four deaf people as informants who have carried out a vocational training program located at Balai Melati. Methods of data collection in studies using depth interviews. Data validity was tested using source triangulation and member-checking methods. Furthermore, the data analysis techniques were interactive models consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion. The results of this study show that vocational training can be a means of empowerment for deaf individuals. There are barriers to female informants. Without proper support, deaf women cannot contribute effectively to their communities' societies and economies. Within the deaf community, parental hearing status plays an important role. Due to the negative stigma attached to deaf individuals, it is recommended that guidance and counseling services be provided in vocational training programs

Keywords: empowering, deaf, vocational training

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INTRODUCTION

One of the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture policies is to revitalize vocational education by improving the quality of educational programs in vocational education units and special education units (Effendy, 2016). The essence of vocational education and training is to educate individuals to be useful for life, competent, and able to develop skills through various exercises, repetition, habituation, and the development of good habits (Sudira, 2012).

Vocational training for deaf youth aims to enable them to live independently and play social roles successfully when they join the community. Social Rehabilitation Center for People with Deaf Sensory Disabilities Melati (*Balai Rehabilitasi Sosial Penyandang Disabilitas Sensorik Rungu Wicara Melati* which in this article is called Balai Melati) is an agency under the Ministry of Social Affairs which has the duties and functions of organizing vocational training for socially deaf people (melati.kemsos.go.id, 2021)

This center was established in 1988 with the main task of providing services, including social services and rehabilitation, in a curative, rehabilitative, and promotive manner through services in the form of physical, mental, and social guidance, skills training, as well as further guidance and resocialization. The ultimate goal of implementing this vocational training is for people with deaf disabilities to be able to be independent and play an active role in society. This center's main tasks and services are described in the Regulation of the Minister of Social Affairs Number 18 of 2018 concerning the Organization and Work Procedure of the UPT Social Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities within the Directorate General of Social Rehabilitation. Balai Melati in 2018, still uses the term UPT (Unit Pelayanan Teknis) for Social Institutions.

Widodo (2012) stated that social institutions are complementary services to the main social services, namely family and community-based, and private social services, so there are choices of services according to their conditions. These conditions include persons with disabilities who need social services. As for persons with disabilities, according to Law (UU) Number 8 of 2016, they are categorized into five types, namely: 1) physical, 2) intellectual,

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3) mental, 4) sensory, and 4) multiple/multiple. Based on data from the Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS), in 2020, the number of persons with disabilities in Indonesia will reach 22.5 million or 5% of the Indonesian population (Kemosos.go.id., 2020). Meanwhile, of this number, only 0.18% or 40.5 thousand people work with disabilities aged 15 years and over. This number decreased compared to the amount in 2019 of 0.19% (Katadata, 2021). This shows that around 22.45 million persons with disabilities do not have access to work.

According to the "Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability" (United Nations, 2006) organized by the United Nations, all countries recognize the rights and freedoms of persons with disabilities. Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 8 of 2016 concerning persons with disabilities, the seventh part of *pasal* 11 discusses the right to employment, entrepreneurship, and cooperatives for persons with disabilities, including the right to a) Obtain a job organized by the government, local government or the private sector without discrimination; b) Obtain the same wages as workers who are not with disabilities in the same type of work and responsibilities; c) Obtain reasonable accommodation in employment; d) not dismissed for reasons of disability; e) Obtain a return to work program; f) Fair, proportional and dignified work placements; g) Obtaining the opportunity to develop a career path and all the normative rights attached to it; h) promote business, have their job, be self-employed, develop cooperatives, and start their own business.

Deaf youth, as part of Indonesian society, have the right to obtain basic services in the field of social welfare. Through social programs or services, it is hoped that deaf disabilities can still reach the development process (Pudjianto & Syawie, 2015a). As previously discussed, at Balai Melati, the aim is for people with deaf disabilities to be independent and play a role in society. To be independent, one of the main things that must be considered is access to jobs for participants.

Access to work can make troubled youth independent or empowered. Levinson & Palmer (2005) explain that work is a crucial part of an individual's life phase. Adolescents with deaf problems who are involved in social life get wider access (Hardman et al., 2016). Opening access to work for deaf participants at Balai Melati is carried out with a one-year vocational training program.

Implementing vocational training is one of the efforts to expand accessibility and prepare persons with hearing disabilities to achieve

independence and adapt to the workplace, family, and community where they live. Vocational training goals are the same for individuals with deaf and non-deaf disabilities (Munyua et al., 2014).

Vocational training is carried out to improve the skills of individuals with disabilities to master certain things that benefit their career development. Dasel & Marcus (2019) define vocational training for persons with disabilities as providing them with entrepreneurial skills, skills, and careers in certain fields that are tailored to their abilities.

One way to increase the independence of persons with disabilities, especially in economic activities, is through vocational training (Wiratman et al., 2018). Studies show that the vocational training provided can support youth with disabilities to get jobs (Breyer et al., 2020). Vocational training is learning based on the development of theory and practice intended to help individuals be ready to compete in the world of work according to their talents, interests, and potential (Afriliani, 2016). It is necessary to carry out vocational training for disabled adolescents to gain perceptual experience, appreciative experience, and creative experience (Jaya et al., 2018).

Work skills for people with disabilities are often discussed nationally and internationally. Adolescents with disabilities have a 40 percent higher risk of falling behind in employment, education, or training (Georgiadis et al., 2018)

The ICF (International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health) survey shows that 74.4% of persons with disabilities in Indonesia do not have a job (Marjuki, 2010). Meanwhile, (Punch et al., 2005) in their research involving deaf youth as a subject, reported that they had no knowledge of careers at school and did not know what type of work was suitable to do according to their interests and talents. This proves that there are potential barriers experienced by youth with deaf disabilities in terms of their career choices.

Furthermore, (Petner-Arrey et al., 2016) stated that persons with disabilities in an inclusive environment are hampered by their lack of opportunities to participate in the labor market, shown by a high response rate compared to those who do not experience impairments. Concerning the above, Ochs & Roessler (2004) explained that deaf youth with disabilities must be equipped with skills to develop self-confidence and positive views regarding careers.

Empowerment of youth with deafness can be done through community, work skills, and asset approaches (Ramadhon & Ardisal, 2021 ; Saptyawati,

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2019). Previous research has also been carried out at Balai Melati or similar social institutions. Several studies at Balai Melati focused on the biological, social, economic, psychological, and spiritual conditions of the deaf person (Nurjayanti, 2012; Pudjianto & Syawie, 2015). Meanwhile, this research is different from the others because it looks at the empowerment of deaf youth through the implementation of vocational training.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative research approach with case study research. Case study research focuses on whole entities that exist in real-life contexts (Hanurawan, 2012). The subjects were four deaf people whose ages are adolescents. Regarding the identification of informants in this study, they had completed professional training at Balai Melati and were willing to be research subjects. The environment for this study was conducted in East Jakarta city. Methods of data collection in studies using depth interviews. Data validity was tested using source triangulation and member-checking methods. Furthermore, the data analysis techniques were interactive models consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

According to the Minister of Social Affairs No. 18 of 2018 the main tasks of Balai Melati services include providing social services and rehabilitation in a curative, rehabilitative, promotive manner through services in the form of physical, mental, social guidance, skills training as well as further guidance and resocialization. The ultimate goal of implementing this vocational training is for people with deaf disabilities to be able to be independent and play an active role in society.

The general description of the condition of Balai Melati is as follows. There are 68 human resources consisting of 38 civil servant, 23 Non civil servants, and 7 Contract Employees. Five dormitories can accommodate around 20 participants and there are foster guardians in each dormitory. There are 80 participants in rehabilitation activities per batch and each year they graduate. Balai Melati has service coverage from the Prov./District/City areas in Sumatra, Java and Kalimantan (melati.kemsos.go.id, 2021). The eastern region of Bali, Makassar Papua, and so on. served by another agency. To become a participant in rehabilitation activities, several conditions are required, namely:

1. Age 18 to 35 years old

2. Deaf person (non-multiple disabilities)
3. Minimum education SMPLB and passing the registration selection
4. Able to communicate in sign language (SIBI/BISINDO) and verbally
5. Not married and will not get married while receiving service

The Program provided in the form of 1) physical guidance, 2) mental-spiritual guidance, 3) psychosocial guidance, 4) skills guidance (can be seen in picture 1)

KURIKULUM BIMBINGAN MENTAL, FISIK, SOSIAL DAN KETERAMPILAN	
1	Bimbingan Mental a. Agama b. Kepramukaan
2	Bimbingan Sosial a. Bahasa Indonesia b. Penyesuaian Dunia Kerja c. Kewiraswastaan d. Sistem Isyarat Bahasa Indonesia e. Aktualisasi f. Bimbingan Hak dan Kewajiban Pekerja g. Konsep Diri h. Bina Wicara
3	Bimbingan Fisik a. SKJ b. Peraturan Baris Berbaris c. Olahraga dan Kesehatan
4	Bimbingan Keterampilan a. Komputer b. Desain Grafis c. Handycraft d. Menjahit Putra e. Menjahit Putri f. Tata Boga g. Salon h. Las i. Pertukangan Kayu j. Sangkar Burung k. Gerabah

Jakarta, 31 Desember 2018
Kepala Seksi Rehabilitasi Sosial

Figure 1. Curriculum followed by program participants

Vocational training participants receive guidance that focuses on work skills. Participants must choose one of eleven existing skills. Eleven skill courses to choose from include: computers, graphic design, handicraft, men's sewing, women's sewing, cooking, salon, welding, carpentry, bird cages, and pottery. Following Ben's statement (Dasel & Marcus, 2019) which explained that vocational training consists of several fields, including sewing, carpentry, weaving (cloth, baskets, mats), designing and making bags, raising livestock, farming, gardening, masonry, cooking, and sewing.

Participants who pass will be given a training completion certificate which is expected to help them find work. As explained by (Baldwin & Brusco, 2011) that vocational training is defined as any approach in which participants go through a preparatory stage (work in a sheltered environment, transitional work, or pre-employment training) before seeking competitive employment (full-time or part-time work in a regular work environment).

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In addition, at the end of the program, participants will be given 2.5 million rupiahs as initial capital to support their job search. Furthermore, several participants with superior qualifications will be distributed to several companies. From 2014 to.d. As of 2019, 247 out of 525 participants were distributed to several companies (melati.kemsos.go.id, 2021)

Furthermore, we tried to interview four participants of the 2018 Balai Melati Rehabilitation Activities along with their parents with the following interview results:

No.	Informan profile	Success/Current Condition
1.	A.F. 24-year-old male. Still waiting to be married. Originally from Bogor. Only child. Parents' economic condition could be better. Able to speak using voice enough.	Now he works for a national company with a regional minimum wage set by the Tangerang City government. A.F. lives alone by living in a boarding house. Both parents give freedom in choosing a job. It is known that A.F had previously tried working as a Gojek driver
2.	M N. 25-year-old woman. Not married yet. Originally from Tasikmalaya. The second child of three brothers. Parents' economic condition is good. Speech is not very clear.	Now not working. Still living in one house with this family. Unstable emotional state. Parents did not give freedom to M.N. to work outside the home. Her parents were not trusted to leave the house alone. Not able to ride a motorcycle.
3.	R. Male, 26 years old. Not married yet. Originally from Depok. Last child of five siblings. Parents' economic condition is poor. Able to speak, although not very clearly	Now he works in a supermarket in Depok, West Java, with the regional minimum wage. He works as a helper who helps organize and sort goods on shelves and warehouses. R. lives with his parents in the Depok area. Parents gave freedom A.F. in making choices. It is known that R. is quite independent and able to travel long distances by motorbike
4	A.T. is a 25-year-old woman. Still waiting to be married. Originally from the city of Bandung. The first child of two brothers. Occupation of parents of beauty salon owners. Able to speak even though it is not clear	She is still working, only occasionally helping at her parents' salon. Not allowed to work outside the city because women have attended vocational training. Parents think that their children must be protected because if they work outside, they are afraid they will disappoint the company owner because of AT's deaf disability

Table 1
Interview result

Empowerment in the form of capacity building is carried out individually and collectively (Eger et al., 2018). Individually, establishing an

'agency' for participants with hearing disabilities in Balau Melati has been seen. This is indicated by the formation of awareness, the ability to aspire, and self-efficacy through social guidance, especially through social guidance: 1) adjustment to the world of work, 2) entrepreneurship, 3) actualization, 4) guidance on rights and obligations to work, and 5) self-concept. The existence of certification and graduation, which parents must attend at the time of graduation, also shows that this program wants to generate collective 'recognition' to parents that trainees are capable of being independent and must be given the freedom to have an 'agency' at work. The purpose of empowerment is to increase the ability of individuals to survive in their environment (Sihotang, 2004).

Deaf youth participants are allowed to work according to their respective abilities in the vocational training program at Balai Melati to have social and financial independence in the future. The definition of empowerment is expressed by Rappaport (1987) as a process and mechanism by which people or groups gain access to resources and mastery that allows them to overcome their difficulties.

In the case of deaf individuals, the implementation of vocational training is positioned as the provision of ongoing support services. Several studies have found a significant relationship between the implementation of vocational training and competitive behavior in pursuing work (Tucker & Degeneffe, 2017; Johnstone et al., 2003).

In the case of M.N., it is known that there are obstacles to empowerment on the family side, especially from the father figure. From observations and interviews, the father of M.N. was an overprotective figure making it difficult for M.N. to become independent. In addition, the family's affluent economic factor made M.N. continue to strive to meet the needs of M.N., different from the family condition of A.F. and R., who is less able to encourage both of them to work. Gender is also thought to have an effect because M.N. is a woman considered protected by her father until she marries.

Just like M.N., A.T. has yet to work even though he has conducted vocational training. AT's parents owned a salon, so A.T. was hired as an employee. Having excessive worry was seen in both parents of female research subjects. Women with disabilities face far greater barriers in both public and private sectors concerning housing, health, education, vocational training, and work (Kothari, 2012).

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Empowering women with disabilities seems easy to understand but difficult to implement. Even though the empowerment of persons with disabilities in the Indonesian economy has become one of the concerns of the government, practitioners, and academics (MEITHIANA & Riyadi, 2019). Without proper support, women with disabilities cannot contribute effectively to their communities' societies and economies. Women with disabilities are prejudiced as employment for women is seen as second isolated to men.

There is still a view that deaf youth as individuals who must be protected and separated exclusively from social life has proven to be an obstacle to the empowerment process. The empowerment process for persons with disabilities is based on a trust-based relationship. The overly protective role of the family will exclude persons with hearing disabilities from society. Supposedly, the empowerment process proves they are not a burden on the family and can meet their own needs. Empowerment for persons with disabilities can produce trust-based relationships (Prasetya & Mawardi, 2019)

In the male informants, namely A.F. and R, vocational training encouraged them to work immediately. The work involved is in the service sector as workers in supermarkets and computer operators in national companies. There are demands from parents who are in the middle to lower economic conditions for male informants because they are considered responsible for the family's welfare. Having a child with a disability affects the allocation of financial resources. Most children with disabilities live with families with limited outside support, and families play an important role in ensuring the survival and prosperity of children (Kamiya, 2021)

Vocational training needs to be evaluated yearly, whether the graduates are working and empowered. Despite having received vocational training, when employed, individuals with disabilities tend to work longer hours, earn less, have fewer opportunities for advancement, are more likely to work in the informal labor market, and are at greater risk of experiencing long-term unemployment (Roulstone & Prideaux, 2012; Tripney et al., 2013)

The implementation of vocational training contributes to efforts to reduce the powerlessness of persons with hearing disabilities in the economic field. Studies examining the impact of approaches to vocational training programs in persons with disabilities have positively affected livelihood outcomes, such as employment and the acquisition of social skills for work (Hunt et al., 2022).

Persons with disabilities are found to be in a disadvantageous position both in accessing and retaining jobs and other forms of economic activity; therefore, vocational training attempts to overcome them (Tripney et al., 2015). The aim of implementing vocational training is to equip deaf persons with the skills they need to meet economic needs, open up new opportunities, and expand access to decently paid work.

Services regarding guidance and counseling carried out by professional counselors have yet to be carried out at Balai Melati. The existence of a negative stigma against deaf adolescents allows them to need guidance and counseling services, including career counseling in them. Boeltzig-Brown et al., (2017) stated that vocational training should include career and workplace assessment, individual and group career counseling, specific training (professional preparation, job search, and soft skills), case management and referral services, interpreting services, including professional transition services from high school.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Balai Melati is part of the Indonesian Ministry of Social Affairs, which provides vocational training for deaf people to be independent and play an active role in society. The rehabilitation process is known to have succeeded in increasing the agency of deaf participants at the individual and collective levels. Several participants have succeeded in becoming independent and have agencies. However, some participants still needed to be independent due to empowerment factors at the family level. Deaf women face more obstacles, and various stigmas exacerbate the limited educational and professional opportunities.

This has a direct impact on practitioners working with adolescent deaf persons. Given the significant stigma and oppression that deaf people have systematically faced throughout their career development, it is likely that stigma and oppression are internalized and need to be addressed during career counseling.

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