

**the Master Programme of Special Needs Education
at the Indonesia University of Education (UPI)**

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**By
Didi Tarsidi, UPI, Bandung**

Your excellency Mr. Blokhus - the Norwegian Ambassador to Indonesia, honourable Dr. Ir. Indra Djati Sidi - Director General for Primary and Secondary Education, the Ministry of National Education, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It is indeed a great honour for me to have the opportunity to present to you the master Programme of special needs education at the Indonesia University of Education (UPI) in Bandung.

The history of teacher education for children with disabilities in Indonesia started in 1952 when the first Teacher College of special education, SGPLB, was established in Bandung. This college offered a two-year training Programme for those interested in teaching in special schools for children with different categories of disabilities. The first undergraduate programme of special education was established in 1964 at IKIP Bandung (presently called UPI), and because of the great need for special education teachers, a few years later a number of other universities also opened the special education department. Currently at least nine universities in Indonesia have the special education

department. However, no university has the master programme of special needs education. In 1996, UPI took the initiative of establishing the graduate programme of Guidance of Children with Special Needs, which is a concentration of the Guidance and Counseling Programme, as a preparation for the establishment of the master programme of special needs education. And now the dream is coming true much sooner when in 2001 the Project of Quality Improvement of the education of children with special needs, Directorate General of Primary and Secondary Education, offered to include the establishment of the master programme of special needs education at UPI, in their efforts to accelerate the quality improvement. This project, as you know it too well, receives financial grant aid from the Norwegian government through NORAD and technical assistance from the University of Oslo.

To prepare for the establishment of the master programme, among others, four UPI lecturers (including myself) were invited to stay in Oslo for nine weeks, from January 8 through March 15, 2003. We stayed at Huseby Resource Centre and worked mainly at the University of Oslo. The stay was aimed at developing the curriculum for the master programme, upgrading our profession as lecturers and enriching our knowledge. Our activities included attending lectures specially designed for us, attending lectures for students of the international master programme of special needs education at the University of Oslo, and visits to some Norwegian schools and a resource centre. The knowledge that we gained from these activities was brought into the workshops on the curriculum development. We were also supplied with the latest books related to special needs education And were introduced to the UO curriculum for the master programme. These all have made the curriculum that we were developing to be both theoretically and

empirically based. In developing the curriculum, we also took into account the framework of the master programme at UPI so that the new curriculum would fit well into UPI graduate school system.

The master programme of special needs education is designed for four semesters of study period. The courses consist of two big areas, namely 10 credit points of scientific and Educational Foundations, and 37 credit points of subjects on special needs education (including thesis).

The 10 credit points of scientific and Educational Foundations comprise philosophy of science, applied statistics in educational research, methods of educational research, and theories, process, and social cultural context of education. These are the subjects that are compulsory for all master students at UPI.

- The special needs education subjects include: child development, learning, barriers to learning and development, assessment, early intervention, teaching approaches and methods, compensatory skills, community awareness of special needs education, guidance and counseling with emphasis on special needs education, adult education, research in the field of special needs education, and field study and seminar.

The master programme at UPI will start in September this year (2003), and application for the first group of students is open until the last week of May (this month). The Project provides scholarships for a number of students each year during the project period. To enroll as a student in this programme, one must, at least, have an undergraduate degree in education and be interested in special needs education, with a priority

given to those already in the professions of teachers of children with special needs, lecturers in the department of special needs education, and education administrators – who pass the entrance test.

During the project period (2003-2009), the master programme will be receiving technical assistance from the University of Oslo. The UO and UPI lecturers will be involved in co-teaching and/or team teaching. This cooperation will lead to the well establishment of the special needs education master programme as an integral part of the graduate school at UPI when the project period is over.

Ladies and gentlemen, finally I would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the Norwegian government and the Directorate General of Primary and Secondary Education for helping us to make our dream come true so much sooner. May this endeavor be especially beneficial for our Indonesian children with disabilities who are the ultimate users of our efforts.

Thank you.