

## **ASAPE – Government Collaboration to Improve Quality of Life for Persons with Disabilities as a Part of Education for All**

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### **Introduction**

The World Health Organization estimates that five to ten percent of people are disabled, some three quarters of whom live in developing countries. The world community is agreed on what social policies should be for people with disabilities. This has been enshrined in various declarations of human rights: Education for All (1990), Salamanca Statement (1994) and the Dakar Framework for Action (2000). United Nations member states and international organizations have agreed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. However, their achievability, or the potential will to achieve them, is in doubt.

Disability is a complex, multidimensional, scalar concept (Albrecht, 2006). No universal, global definition of disability is possible, and there are many different and often incompatible approaches to the problems associated with disability. The social model of disability was developed in England in the 1970s. In this model, disability is defined as the relationship between people with impairment and a society. Disability is regarded as an additional burden that is imposed on people with impairment. The slogan of the model is “Disabled by society, not by our body.” *Impairment* is defined as functional limitation within an individual caused by physical, mental, or sensory impairment and the definition of *disability* is loss or limitation of opportunities to participate in the normal life of the community on an equal level due to physical and social barriers.

Disability occurs in every society throughout the world (O’Toole and McConkey, 1995). Common responses towards disability have been shame, prejudice and exclusion from community life. How can we dispel negative public attitudes and increase awareness towards people with disabilities? Our task is to help develop their talents; not just their cognitive abilities but also their physical, social, artistic, and emotional ones. Another role is to create opportunities for people with disabilities, to open doors for them. Furthermore, we should help them self-actualize in every society. Is it possible for us to achieve these goals throughout adapted physical activity? If they can be achieved, how can we approach them?

### **Roles and responsibility of ASAPE in Asian regions**

One of the major roles of ASAPE is the encouragement of international cooperation in education (Nakata, 2006). ASAPE has a great responsibility to close the information gap with affiliated member countries and share with them information on world trends as well as news on relevant existing conditions in each country. The roles of ASAPE have changed with the advent of the age of globalization, and it seems that an additional

role has been given to ASAPE. We have facilitated and promoted international exchanges and shared a variety of research on adapted physical activity/education with ASAPE country members such as Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Indonesia and China. As a result, we have gained a better understanding of the research findings and cultures of these countries. However, many disabled people in Asian nations have experienced negative cultural stereotypes and assumptions based on prejudice, discrimination, myth and the medicalization of disability. Although it is widely accepted that children with and without disabilities have the right to receive schooling, the majority of disabled children in Asian nations do not attend school. Thus, they have never experienced adapted physical activity/education. It is hoped that in-service and pre-service teachers are given opportunities to learn the significance of adapted physical education and inclusive physical education.

ASAPE has a research network and adequate human resources to support and develop special education and adapted physical education in Asian countries. Therefore ASAPE members in affiliated countries may be expected to support adapted physical education and work with physical education teachers of special schools in these countries. This is the additional role and responsibility of ASAPE. The time has come to for ASAPE to pull its weight (if only a light weight) in order to develop adapted physical education and adapted sport, or disability sport, in Asian nations.

#### **Japan-Indonesia joint workshops on lesson study of adapted physical education**

Since 2004, joint lesson studies have been held in various places in Indonesia, e.g., Bandung in 2004, Surabaya in 2005, Padang in 2006, Solo in 2007, Yogyakarta in 2008, and Makassar and Surabaya in 2009. These lesson studies were undertaken in cooperation with the Ministry of Education in Indonesia and Indonesian Universities of Education, and the University of Tsukuba in Japan. The Ministry of Education has approved joint lesson studies as an in-service teacher training for special school teachers. Participants, consisting of in-service teachers, parents/guardians, school principals, university students and board of education members, gained deep insights into not only teaching methods but also lesson plans, teaching materials and teachers' competency. The observers went through all the little processes of teaching and learning at the workshop, and participants gained a better understanding of lesson observation and discovered the significance of the roles that lesson study plays in enhancing the quality of classroom lessons and teachers' competency at the review meeting after the lesson observation.

In the lesson study workshop on adapted physical education held in Padang (Nakata, 2008; 2009), the principals' group gave the following appraisal, among others, of adapted physical education in Japan: (1) there is expertise, (2) learning is children-centered, (3) the lessons can overcome the barriers of languages and culture, (4) the teachers' response to children is good, (5) the examples shown by teachers are attractive and stimulate children's motivation, (6) simple teaching materials make children more active, and (7) such lessons serve as a good model that deserves promulgation. Consequently, the joint lesson study was highly regarded by participants in each place. Lesson study can be an effective means for improving classroom lessons and the quality of teachers. The other side of the coin is that given a good lesson designed to meet their needs, the physical and social development of children with disabilities will improve.

As shown in Fig. 1, we built a model based on the joint workshops on lesson study that

were held in Indonesia every year from 2004 to 2009. First, an executive committee is set up at a university in the host country. Then, communications are arranged, and roles are divided. Once a school is chosen to host the workshop, information about the special school and the children with disabilities who go there is conveyed to the Japanese side. It is desirable to make arrangements beforehand at the place where the workshop is to be held, if possible. Japanese participants go to the location several days before, visit a school, meet children, and establish rapport. Teachers from Japan are encouraged to obtain information about the educational needs of children with intellectual disabilities by having conversations with teachers of the host school. A lesson plan should be prepared in both Japanese and Indonesian languages in all cases. The two countries should work together to make it possible to hold a lesson study workshop on an equal footing. Grasping the educational needs of the children is particularly important. To ensure this, enough time should be secured for consultation between the teachers of the host school and teachers from Japan. It is desirable to include university students and people who are engaged in welfare to the list of observers, in addition to school principals and teachers, university professors, administration officials, and guardians (parents, etc.). Regarding the substance of the survey, preliminary consultation should be held with members of the local executive committee. After the workshop, a report should be sent to members of the executive committee, the Ministry of Education and other involved parties without fail, and it should be utilized in preparing for the next workshop. Lecturers in universities have proven to be of great support in international cooperation. It has become evident that international cooperation in the field of adapted physical education can be achieved in Indonesia.

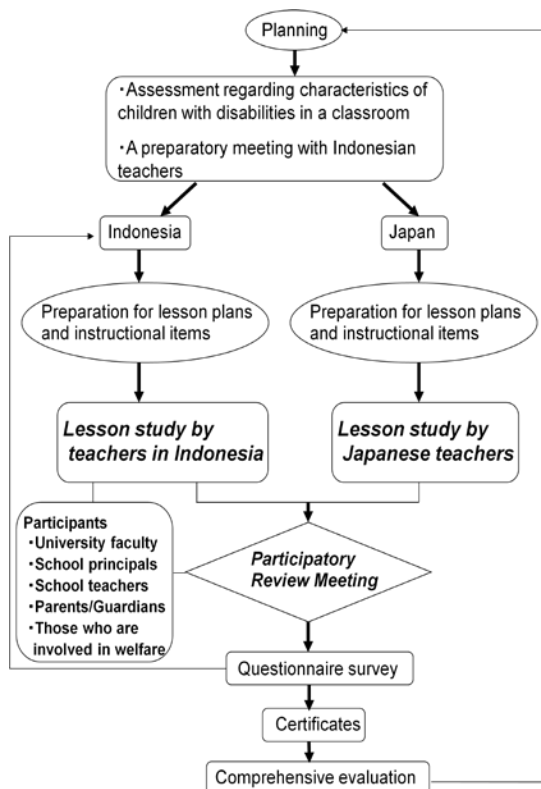


Fig.1 An educational cooperation mode

### **Possible collaboration between ASAPE and the government of Indonesia**

The six-year joint workshops on lesson study held at various places in Indonesia demonstrated that the method of lesson study developed in Japan is effective for improving the quality of class lessons and teachers' competency. This is a good example of the "*gotong-royong*" principle found widely in Indonesian societies. All work on the joint workshops has been undertaken with "*gotong royong or gotong rojong*", meaning cooperative public work, mutual assistance and mutual aid (Koentjaraningrat, 1967; Bowen, 1986). The deepest meaning of *gotong royong* can be explained as a philosophy of life that takes the collective life as the most important (Bowen, 1986). It is believed that the philosophy of *gotong royong* as a part of Indonesian culture has made the joint workshops successful and valuable. In other words, it is suggested that this principle has enabled the joint workshops to be carried out with better management and efforts of the government in collaboration with universities and special schools. Staff members of universities building a strong network among relevant departments have played a central role in conducting the joint workshops. The term *gotong royong* may be becoming obsolete among the youth of Indonesia, but the spirit of the term was found in their cooperative activities performed at each joint workshop. A philosophy similar to *gotong royong* exists in all Asian cultures. Asian people should probably be able to easily understand the meaning of *gotong royong*. Although this philosophy may be also becoming obsolete in other Asian nations, ASAPE country members should recall cooperative public activities that have been done by villagers, such as the raising of the roof of a house, rice planting, harvesting, and activities associated with the marriage of a child or the death of a relative, and so forth. Asians have a philosophy of life similar to *gotong royong* deep within the unconscious mind.

A research network among ASAPE member countries has been built through previous ASAPE symposia. ASAPE member countries have good examples of research and practice developed through adapted physical education/activity in each nation. Other Asian countries wish to share the good practices of ASAPE member countries, and learn adapted physical education as a science and ways to improve the physical and social development of children with disabilities. It will be possible for ASAPE to contribute to the development of adapted physical education in cooperation with the government of Indonesia. In this sense, as a first step the author would like to propose to the government a low-profile project for improving adapted physical education. The following will be discussed in the context of Indonesian cultures.

- In-service teacher training
- Lesson study
- Practical study
- Identifying good examples and good practices
- Development of a new curriculum
- Measurement of physical strength of children with and without disabilities
- Study on health and fitness
- Development of new games, adapted dance and sport
- Compiling information and resources into a teacher's guidebook or a textbook

An evidence-based approach is also needed in adapted physical education. We need scientific data on physical and social development of children with and without

disabilities to grasp their needs. Moreover, we have to learn how to conduct research and write papers or reports on the health and fitness of children with and without disabilities.

One role that ASAPE plays is to meet the expectations and needs of the government of Indonesia and other Asian nations. The system of reciprocal or mutual aid called *gotong royong* may work very well for the development of adapted physical education in Indonesia. A bottom up rather than top down approach, or a participatory method, is recommended (Kogi, 2006).

In conclusion, the collaboration between the government of Indonesia and ASAPE will be possible in the field of adapted physical education through international educational cooperation, provided that both have a deep understanding and mutual respect for diverse cultures.

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