

# Inspirational Story: Imam, A Student with Low Vision Successfully Accepted at UGM


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Being a person with visual impairment does not diminish the spirit of Akhlaqul Imam (18). Even though you have a visual impairment in low vision, it seems like achieving your dreams does not even slack off. He has accomplished in proving to those around him that people with disabilities can still acquire several achievements.

Currently, the alumnus of SMA N 2 Payakumbuh, West Sumatra, has been successfully accepted to study at UGM, specifically in the Department of Communication Sciences, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences UGM, through the Search for Outstanding Seeds (PBUB) in the 2020/2021 school year. He has successfully obtained various achievements at the national to international levels despite his physical limitations. Some of them are ranked 2nd with disabilities with national achievements (2019), won a bronze medal at the UGM National Geography Olympiad (2019), the best 3 Youth Parliament for the Indonesian Parliament (2018), one gold medal, and two bronze medals from the Global IT Challenge for Youth with Disabilities (2017), a silver medal in the ICT Jamboree for Persons with Disabilities (2017), a silver medal at the National Science Olympiad for Social Sciences (2016). Meanwhile, he has never left the class champion's title from his hands since elementary school to high school.

Imam said that he had a low vision since he was a baby. Being born prematurely at the gestational



age of 6 months and ten days makes imperfect growth in the retinal blood vessels resulting in eye disorders Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP). Also, it is due to high oxygen exposure while in the incubator.

"Due to born prematurely, and he must use an incubator for 50 days, resulting in impairment in his eyes. This condition makes his visibility is only on a maximum of 1.5 meters and a reading distance of 5 cm," he explained on Monday (7/9).

To maximize his eyes' function, Imam is still routinely doing check-ups and consultations with ophthalmologists in Jakarta. Meanwhile, to assist in his daily activities, Imam uses magnifying glasses, binoculars, and cylindrical glasses.

"Starting from junior high school, I can adapt my reading. I am no longer using a magnifying glass. So, I only use binoculars to see the writing on the blackboard and now use your cellphone then zoom in," he said.


Even though his condition was different from other children in general, he did not feel inferior. In fact, he managed to complete his education from elementary to high school in public schools and actively participates in various competitions. This condition cannot be separated from his parents' support, who patiently and constantly motivates him always to be enthusiastic and think positively in living life, likewise, with people surrounding him, teachers, and friends.

"There has never been discrimination in the environment, but we still have different capacities, especially about mobility. It is difficult if asked to do assignments swiftly because fast reading won't be possible," he said.

Imam realized that he was born with a different condition. However, that situation did not discourage him. He believes he has the same opportunities out there to gain success.

"Don't make your limitations a barrier and focus on lamenting those limitations. Always think positively and be sure of your shortcomings. There must be advantages behind it," said Imam.

After graduating from college, he wanted to take a master's degree abroad, one of which was in Turkey. He has a dream to become an academician in the future, so he must take further studies.



"I want to be an academician. Still, there is also a desire to work in an institution or become an entrepreneur. Not so narrow, it depends on the future opportunities," he said.

Imam is the only son of Yasril (62) and Erlis Idris (59), who currently lives in Padang Laweh, Batu Payuang, Lareh Sago Halaban, Fifty Cities, West Sumatra. His father works as a private employee, and his mother is a high school teacher. Yusril said that Imam was the only son born after a long wait of more than 11 years.

"So, the Imam is the 7th child after six times his mother miscarried. I'm happy after more than 11 years to finally have children," he said

Yusril said that because he was born prematurely, his son had vision problems. Even so, he is still grateful for his son's condition.

"I believe this has been the best given by Allah to our family," he explained.

He and his wife always support and motivate the Imam to be confident in mingling in society, even with special needs conditions. He always emphasized his son not to give up easily and always be grateful and still remember his God. Then you can control yourself and have the knowledge to deal with everything.

"Since I was a child, I emphasized myself to be confident, limitations are not a barrier," he said.

Yusril revealed that since he was a child, Imam often participated in various competitions both in the village and at school. Indeed, he doesn't always win, but he asked his son to see failure as a whip for a better future from that failure.

"Alhamdulillah, Imam can achieve some achievements. Besides, he also memorizes Al-Quran up to 30 juz on 18 October 2019," he said excitedly.

Yusril conveyed that until now, Imam has also succeeded in establishing three tahfidz huts for memorizing Al-Quran in the Payakumbuh area and one tahfidz hut in West Pasaman with nearly 300 students. Relatives and teachers assisted the establishment of the tahfidz hut. Apart from teaching at the tahfidz school, Imam often attended as a speaker in various activities and motivation classes in between his busy life as a student.

Yusril also said he was happy and grateful for his son's achievement to be accepted at UGM. He was worried that later he would be far apart from his son.

"I was indeed worried about the current situation, but again I leave it to Allah. Hopefully, Imam can study well in his studies and accomplish the whole dreams," he explained.

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