Defining an Inclusive Education Agenda: Reflections around the 48th session of the International Conference on Education

Geneva, Switzerland, 25-28 November 2008

UNESCO
International Bureau of Education

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ED/BIE/CONFINTED 48/6

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Preface

As the President of the IBE Council, it was a great honour to prepare and participate in the discussions of the 48th session of the International Conference on Education on the theme "Inclusive Education: The Way of the Future" (Geneva, November 2008). The session was certainly a significant occasion, underscoring that inclusion implies an ethic founded on a concern for others, for nature, and for the harmonious relations we should build between those around us. It was also a timely opportunity, following the global financial crisis, to remember the difference between value and price, and the role of education in tilting the scales in favour of the value of life, that is, in favour of that intangible spiritual wealth that has no price.

We should be grateful to all those present for having used this opportunity so wisely; they shed light on a broader meaning of inclusive education and highlighted the reaching implications for policy-makers, educators, and certainly the learners themselves. As a strong case in point, the words of my esteemed colleague, the vice-President of the Republic of Ecuador, H.E. Mr Lenín Moreno Garcés, leave little more for me to add,

When we talk about diversity we are not referring to students with special educational needs, or pupils with problems, or immigrants or highly gifted children; we are referring not just to support teachers but to a support system, not so much to a special programme for schools but to a flexible curriculum that is suited to diversity ... We can conclude that diversity is consubstantial with human beings; it is positive; it is a support for learning and development, since people grow by appreciating the differences and the need to generate empathy in order to work in a fairer school system and thus build a more equitable society, since diversity emphasizes the role of the school as a factor of social change.

In order to bring about educational and social inclusion, we must work from inside government to promote an inclusive culture and to ensure the elimination of physical, architectural, urban and mental barriers. Ladies and Gentlemen, disability is not in the body but in the mind.

H.E. Mr Raúl Vallejo Corral
Minister of education of the republic of ecuador
and President of the IBE Council

Introduction

"Inclusive education: the way of the future" was the challenging topic discussed at the 48th session of the International Conference on Education (ICE), held in Geneva on 25–28 November 2008. The challenge was certainly accepted with determination and vigour by over 1,500 participants, including representatives from Ministries of Education, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and civil society. The intense, diverse and lively ICE discussions, as well as the conclusions and recommendations, testify to this. In fact, the discussions on the theme of the Conference began before the ICE, with many experts, educators and Ministers involved in preparatory activities aimed at informing the ICE discussions. These broad and diverse contributions proved highly informative, stimulating debate and providing valuable insights on moving the inclusive education agenda forward.

The purpose of this publication is to share these contributions and provide a comprehensive overview of the major issues, challenges and questions related to inclusive education. Benefiting from a rich diversity of fields, organizations and regions, these contributions encompass a broad range of perspectives and approaches.

This publication is organized in four main sections, followed by a content analysis of the messages sent to the Conference by over 120 Ministers of Education worldwide, and concluded by an article on inclusive education as the core of the Education for All (EFA) agenda. The four sections focus on ICE sub-themes—approaches, scope and content; public policies; systems, links and transitions; and learners and teachers—and are introduced by relevant extracts from the reference document of the Conference.

From the outset, it is important to acknowledge that there is a certain amount of overlap in relation to these sub-themes; nevertheless, one can certainly see key areas emerging in relation to each topic. In the first part on approaches, scope and content, for example, all of the contributions highlight the importance of inclusive education for advancing the EFA agenda. They also refer to the evolutionary nature of the concept, with a shift from a narrow perception based on special education or mainstreaming of children with special educational needs towards a broader understanding of an education system that addresses the needs of all learners. Similarly, as regards the sub-theme of public policies, the contributions draw attention to the main challenges, role and responsibilities of States in a new educational policy agenda for inclusive education, including increasing equity and, at the same time, improving quality. The need for appropriate legislation, funding and collaboration were all emphasised.

The contributions related to the sub-theme of systems, links and transitions raise key issues on enabling lifelong learning for all learners through flexible, diverse and relevant education systems and curricula. Finally, the contributions offered valuable insights on teachers and learners, and more specifically, on what is necessary for implementing inclusive education at the classroom and school levels in order to address the needs and ensuring the presence, participation and achievement of all learners. Cooperation from all stakeholders was highlighted, while teachers were referred to as the "cornerstones of inclusive education".

As a whole, all these contributions provided a strong and broad foundation to inform the ICE discussions. It was encouraging to note that these contributions not only addressed inclusive education, but also solidly embodied it—through the sustained and supportive participation and engagement of the authors, as well as through the openness for learning from multiple perspectives. I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all the authors for their generous support and also to express my hopes that this publication may contribute to making inclusive education the way of the future, both in dialogue and in practice.

CLEMENTINA ACEDO
DIRECTOR OF THE IBE

Inclusive Education: Points of Discussion

Approaches, Scope and Content

Over approximately the last fifteen years, the concept of inclusive education has evolved towards the idea that all children and young people, despite different cultural, social and learning backgrounds, should have equivalent learning opportunities in all kinds of schools. The focus is on generating inclusive settings, basically implying: (a) respecting, understanding and taking care of cultural, social and individual diversity (education systems, schools and teachers» response to the expectations and needs of students); (b) the provision of equal access to quality education; and (c) close co-ordination with other social policies. This should involve the expectations and demands of stakeholders and social actors. […]

Inclusive education can be seen as a process of strengthening the capacity of an education system to reach out to all learners. It is, therefore, an overall principle that should guide all educational policies and practices, starting from the belief that education is a fundamental human right and the foundation for a more just society. This rights-based philosophy is outlined in international declarations, conventions and reports relevant to inclusive education. […] In order to realise this right, the international EFA movement has worked to make quality basic education available to all learners. Inclusive education takes the EFA agenda forward by finding ways of enabling schools and other centres of learning to serve all learners in their communities. It focuses particularly on those who have traditionally been excluded from educational opportunities. […]

An inclusive education system improves the efficiency and cost-benefit relationship of education systems and achieving quality EFA. Inclusive education is perceived as an optimization of the use of resources. Schools are likely to be less expensive when all students are educated together, thus giving governments an economic justification to move towards an inclusive education system. (*Reference Document*, 48th session of the ICE, pp. 8-12)

Conceptual Framework of Inclusive Education[1]

Why do we talk about inclusion in education?

Educational and social exclusion are growing phenomena both in developed and developing countries. One of the strongest tendencies of the new economy is the increasing inequality, spatial segmentation and cultural fragmentation of the population[2]. Social exclusion goes beyond poverty as it is linked to the increasing number of people, who do not participate in society nor have access to basic goods and social welfare networks. This situation leads these people being "excluded from society" and living below the levels of dignity and equality which we all have the right to enjoy.

Today, there are certain phenomena that denote a serious crisis in the social relationships; the inequality among and within the countries, the rootlessness resulting from migration, the rural exodus, dispersed families, disorganized urbanization as well as the rupture of traditional solidarity. These phenomena have led many individuals and groups to become isolated.[3] This explains the special importance currently given to cohesion and social justice, as well as to the re-conceptualization of institutions—like schools—which are intended to address social issues.

The pace of growth in today's knowledge society is increasingly dependent on the value added to production and global exchange systems. Access to more productive jobs requires more and more years of study, only possible for the highest socio-economic classes. Many people have become excluded from the benefits of development. As a consequence, it is necessary to significantly increase the educational level of the new generations, as well as the level of effective and updated learning of every individual to break the reproduction of the inter-generational cycle of inequality.

Social inclusion is necessarily, although not exclusively, linked to more inclusive practices in education, that is, to the development of schools or learning environments that cater for the needs of all the individuals of a community and respond to the diversity of learning needs, regardless of their social origin, culture or individual characteristics. An inclusive school has no selection mechanisms or discrimination of any kind. Instead, it transforms its pedagogical proposal into ways of integrating the diversity of students, thus fostering social cohesion, which is one of the main goals of education. However, it is important to ask ourselves if education is really contributing to the development of more inclusive societies or if, on the contrary, it is reproducing the social exclusion and generating different forms of discrimination within education systems.

In spite of the efforts made by different countries, evidence shows that education tends to reproduce, and even increase, the social and cultural segmentation. It provides the most

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1   Prepared by Rosa Blanco Guijarro, Interim Director of the Regional Bureau of Education for Latin America and the Caribbean, UNESCO-OREALC.

2   J.C. Tedesco, Igualdad de oportunidades y política educativa [Equal Opportunities and Educational Policy]. En *Políticas Educativas y Equidad. Reflexiones del Seminario Internacional*, Fundación Ford, Universidad Padre Hurtado, UNICEF y UNESCO. Santiago de Chile, October 2004, pp. 59–68.

3   UNESCO, *Learning: The Treasure Within*. Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, chaired by Jacques Delors. Paris, UNESCO, 1996.

economically deprived sectors with low quality education, which is different from the high quality education made available to middle and high social classes. The traditional role of education as a means to promote cohesion and social mobility has become weakened in the current economic and social settings. There is a dialectic relationship between educational inclusion and social inclusion because, even though education can contribute to promoting equality of opportunities among people to insert them into society, a minimum level of social equity is also necessary to achieve democratization in the access to knowledge. This would allow all people to acquire the competencies required to participate in the different areas of social life.

Most countries adopt the principles of Education for All (EFA) in their policies and laws, but in practice, education is for "almost all" or for "most people" and the people excluded are precisely those who need it most, in order to compensate their disadvantaged social and educational situation. According to the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008, there are still 72 million of children in the world who have no access to primary education and 774 million of young people and adults who are illiterate, 64% of which are women. Access to early childhood care and education, necessary to guarantee equal opportunities, is quite limited in the three first years, and children from the most disadvantaged socio-economic contexts and from rural areas hardly benefit from these services. Access to secondary education has increased by 5%, from 2000 to 2005, reaching 66%. Nevertheless, a greater effort should be made since nowadays primary education is not enough for being included into the knowledge society and emerging from poverty.

Education quality and equality are unresolved matters even in those countries with high schooling rates. There are large disparities among and within countries as regards the access to the different educational levels and the distribution of knowledge. Only 63% of countries with available data have reached gender parity in primary education, decreasing to 37% at the secondary level. Students from economically disadvantaged sectors, rural areas or minorities are those who, due to a structural situation, show higher repetition and drop-out rates and achieve lower learning outcomes. Moreover, segregated schools and programs exist, which are aimed at people with special educational needs, of different ethnic origin, or migrant families. Many of these students are not treated with human dignity; their culture is not respected and they are victims of physical or psychological violence.

Therefore, educational exclusion is an important phenomenon which is not restricted to those who do not attend school because of a denial of access, or because they dropped out of school due to repetition, the lack of relevance of the education, economic obstacles or the students' life circumstances. Exclusion also affects those who attend school but are segregated or discriminated against because of their ethnic origin, gender, social condition, of other individual characteristics or capacities, as well as those who cannot learn due to the low quality of the education they receive.[4]

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[4]   R. Blanco, Construyendo las bases de la inclusión y la calidad de la educación en la primera infancia [Building the fundamentals of inclusion and quality education in early childhood]. *En Revista de Educación*, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Monográfico n° 347 sobre "Atención socioeducativa a la primera infancia", coordinado por la Mª Paz Lebrero Baena (en prensa), [In press].

What do we mean by inclusive education?

The term inclusion has different interpretations in various countries. It is sometimes associated with those students living in marginalized or poor contexts, but frequently it is related to the participation of the disabled or those with special educational needs in mainstream schools. In this way inclusion is considered to be almost the same as integration, when they are in fact two different approaches with different visions and perspectives. As a consequence of this misconception, inclusive policies are regarded as a responsibility of special education, restricting the analysis of all the common forms of exclusion and discrimination that take place within education systems.

UNESCO[5] defines inclusive education as a process intended to respond to students' diversity by increasing their participation and reducing exclusion within and from education. It is related to the attendance, participation and achievement of all students, especially those who, due to different reasons, are excluded or at risk of being marginalized. It constitutes an essential element to advance on the EFA agenda. The concept of Education for All does not imply the concept of inclusion. Even though both are intended to ensure access to education, inclusion involves access to high-quality education without discrimination of any kind, whether within or outside the school system. This requires an in-depth transformation of the education systems. Without inclusion, certain groups of students are likely to be excluded. Inclusion should be a guiding principle for educational policies and programs so that education can be for all and not only for the majority, therefore.

Attendance refers to access and continuation in school or other non-formal settings. Participation means that the curriculum and the educational activities address all students' needs, and that students' opinions about decisions affecting their lives and the school are taken into account. Achievements make reference to the need that all students learn, according to their abilities, what is established in the school curriculum and what is required for their personal development and socialization. Real inclusion goes beyond access; it implies learning at the highest level and developing the potential of each individual.

Understood in this way, inclusion represents a progress compared with the integration movement. The aim of inclusion is wider than the aim of integration. The latter seeks to ensure the right of the disabled to study in mainstream schools, whereas inclusion is intended to realize the right of all people to a high quality education, focusing on those who, due to differing reasons, are excluded or at risk of being marginalized. These groups vary depending on the country but, in general, include the disabled, those belonging to an ethnic or linguistic minority, those from isolated or poor areas, children from migrant families or without a birth certificate, those affected by HIV and AIDS, armed conflict or violence. As regards gender, girls are the most excluded in many countries, however in some other countries, the boys are more excluded.

Moreover, the focus of inclusion is different from the focus of integration. In the case of integration, students enrolled in school have to adapt themselves to the existing school environment (curriculum, methods, values and rules), regardless of their mother tongue,

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[5] UNESCO, Guidelines for inclusion. Ensuring Access to Education for All. Paris, UNESCO, 2005.

culture or abilities. Education systems maintain their "status quo", and actions are more centred on catering for the needs of every particular student (individual programs, differentiated strategies and materials, special education teachers, etc.), rather than modifying those factors of the learning and teaching environment that are barriers to the participation and learning of all.

In the case of inclusion, on the contrary, the focus is on the transformation of education systems and schools so that they can cater for the diversity of students' learning needs resulting from their social and cultural background and their individual characteristics as regards learning motivations, abilities, styles and rhythm. According to this perspective, it is not the students enrolled in school that must adapt to the existing educational provision, but rather the school that should be adapted to the needs of every student, since all students are different.

The key element of inclusion is not individualization but the diversification of the educational provision and the personalization of common learning experiences in order to achieve the highest degree of participation of all students, taking into account their individual needs. This implies advancing towards universal design, where the teaching-learning process and the curriculum consider from the very beginning the diversity of needs of all students, instead of planning on the basis of an "average" student and then carry out individualized actions to respond to the needs of specific students or groups who were not taken into consideration by an education proposal based on a logic of homogeneity instead of diversity.

The response to diversity—an essential condition to achieve high quality education—is probably the main challenge currently faced by schools and teachers, as it involves substantive changes in the existing conceptions, attitudes, curricula, pedagogical practices, teacher training, evaluation systems and school organization.

Inclusion is characterized by the following aspects:

- It implies a different vision of education based on diversity and not on homogeneity. The old tradition of conceiving differences from normative criteria, what is absent or far from "normality", has led to the creation of options segregated for those categorized as different. According to an inclusive education perspective, the differences are inherent in human nature—each child is unique and unrepeatable—and they are conceived as an opportunity to enrich the learning process, which means that they should be part of education for all rather than the subject of differentiated programs or modalities.
- The education system as a whole is responsible for responding to diversity which means that it is necessary to shift from homogenous approaches, where all are offered the same, to education models that consider the diversity of needs, abilities and identities so that education can be pertinent for all people and not only for specific groups of society. To achieve pertinence, the educational provision, the curriculum and the teaching-learning process have to be flexible so that they can be adapted to the needs and characteristics of all students and the diverse contexts in which they develop and learn.
- The curriculum should achieve the difficult balance between responding to commonality and to diversity, offering universal learning opportunities to all students. This should

ensure equal opportunities for all but at the same time give sufficient freedom to schools for defining the learning contents necessary to address the requirements of the local context and the educational needs of their students. Relevance also implies developing an intercultural curriculum which promotes the respect for different cultures and the appreciation of differences, and considers in a balanced way the development of different capacities, multiple intelligences and talents of people.

- It is intended to identify and minimize the barriers encountered by students to access and stay in school, participate and learn. These barriers arise from the interaction between students and different contexts: people, policies, institutions, cultures and socio-economic circumstances affecting their lives. In this respect, actions should be mainly aimed at eliminating the physical, personal and institutional barriers that restrict learning opportunities, as well as at ensuring the full access and participation in all the educational activities for all students.[6]

- It is a never-ending process as it implies a profound change in the education systems and the school culture. The educational institutions should constantly review their values, organization and educational practices so as to identify and minimize the barriers encountered by students to participate and succeed in learning, seeking more appropriate strategies to respond to diversity and learn from differences.[7]

- Inclusion also entails support systems which collaborate with teachers in addressing students' diversity, paying special attention to those who need it most in order to optimize their development and improve their learning. This support implies all the resources to complement or reinforce the pedagogical activity of teachers, additional teachers, students who support students, families, specialized teachers, as well as professionals from other sectors.[8]

Why is inclusive education important?

Inclusive education is based on ethical, social, educational and economic principles.

It is a means to realize the right to high quality education without discrimination and having equal opportunities

Education is a public good and an essential human right from which nobody can be excluded since it contributes to the development of people and society. The right to education in its broadest sense goes beyond the access to free and compulsory education. In order to fully enjoy this right, a high quality education must be provided, promoting the highest development of the multiple abilities of each individual, that is to say, the right to education is the right to lifelong learning[9.] To conceive education as a right and not as a mere service or product, implies that the State is obliged to respect, guarantee, protect

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[6] T. Booth & M. Ainscow, Index for Inclusion. Developing learning and participation in schools. London, CSIE, 2000.

[7] UNESCO, Guidelines for inclusion: Ensuring Access to Education for All. Paris, UNESCO, 2005.

[8] UNESCO, Open File on Inclusive education. Support materials for managers and administrators. Paris, UNESCO, 2001.

[9] UNESCO-OREALC, *Educación de calidad para todos: un asunto de derechos humanos* [Quality Education for All: a human rights issue]. Documento de discusión sobre políticas educativas en el marco de la II Reunión Intergubernamental del Proyecto Regional de Educación para América Latina y el Caribe (EPT/PRELAC), Santiago de Chile, 2007.

and promote this right. The infringement of this right also affects the exercise of other human rights.

The right to high quality education has to be equitably enjoyed, protecting in a special way the rights of minorities and groups with little power within society. Non-discrimination in education implies ensuring that all individuals and groups can have access to all education levels and receive an education with similar quality standards, eliminating separated education systems and institutions aimed at certain individuals or groups, as well as treating all people with human dignity (Convention against Discrimination in Education, adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in December 1960).

Moving towards more inclusive education systems requires a strong political will reflected in the development of long-term policies involving different sectors of government and civil society. It also requires the definition of legal frameworks which would establish the rights and responsibilities, as well as the provision of the necessary resources, in order to strengthen the existing systems for guaranteeing the right to education.

It is a means to advance towards more democratic and fair societies

Quality education for all and the development of schools which receive students from different socio-cultural contexts and with different capacities are powerful tools to contribute to social cohesion. Nevertheless, the development of more inclusive and egalitarian schools and societies cannot only be achieved by means of education, as social equity is necessary to guarantee the basic conditions leading to learning.[10] Therefore, it is necessary to develop inter-sectoral policies addressing in an integral way the factors within and outside the education systems that generate exclusion, discrimination and inequality.

Quality education, from an inclusive perspective, implies a balance between excellence and equity. This means that it is not possible to talk about quality education if just a few students learn what is required to participate in society and develop their life projects. Equity involves providing every individual with the support and the resources required to be in an equal condition. Benefiting from educational opportunities and learning to reach levels of excellence, such education would not reproduce the students' inequalities or determine their future options.[11] The personalization of this support is a key aspect because equity policies are commonly characterized by the provision of equal opportunity for all people, restricting the potential to promote the highest development of individuals.

Equity policies based on remedial, compensatory and focalized approaches have not proved effective to achieve more social and educational inclusion. It is necessary to advance towards equity policies that place people at the centre of a sustainable process of human development, improving their capacities and their options to live with dignity, valuing diversity and respecting all people's rights. Social policies should guarantee the minimum benefits for all people to build more equitable societies in a permanent way, since lengthy focalized policies can end up establishing a segmented system in the quality

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[10] J.C. Tedesco 2004, *cit.*
[11] UNESCO-OREALC, 2007, *cit.*

of social benefits, e.g. education for the poor and for the rest of society, health for the poor and for the rest of society[12].

Achieving quality education without exclusion requires an increase in the investments on education and the equitable allocation of the human, material, technological and financial resources, considering the cost of providing quality education to different people in different contexts. Equity must be at the centre of general policy decisions and not limited to peripheral policies oriented to correct the effects of general policies that are not in tune with a logic of justice or prevention[13].

An equity policy should have a strong preventive nature, instead of solving existing problems. Therefore, it is essential to invest more in policies aimed at early childhood education and care and parents' education, because children start formal education in conditions of extreme inequality.

It is a means to improve the quality of education and the professional development of teachers

Ensuring that all students can learn reaching levels of excellence requires adapting teaching practices and pedagogical support to the needs and characteristics of every student. Inclusive education and the consideration of diversity involve a greater professional competence for teachers, collaboration among teachers, families and students, and more comprehensive and flexible educational projects which favour the participation and learning of all. It also requires the development of a pertinent curriculum which should be balanced with respect to the type of learning it promotes, a variety of learning situations and activities, a wide range of teaching strategies and a school environment in which all are received and valued as equals, particularly supporting those who need it most. In short, the challenge of inclusion is to advance towards education for all, with all and for each individual.

Addressing and integrating diversity in the classroom is a complex task which involves enhancing teachers' motivations and competencies, transforming teachers' training and creating good working conditions. Teachers have to take risks and be open to change, seek new ways of teaching and reflect critically on their practice in order to transform it, value differences as an element of professional enrichment, and be able to work together with other teachers, professionals and families. Teachers should know their pupils very well, be sensitive to students' needs and emotions, offer multiple opportunities and have high expectations as regards all students' learning[14].

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[12] Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL) [Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean (ECLAC)]. *Panorama social de América Latina.* Santiago de Chile, CEPAL, 2005.

[13] J. E. García Huidobro, *La igualdad en educación como bien democrático y de desarrollo.* [Equality in Education as a democratic good for development]. Ponencia presentada en la Reunión del Comité Intergubernamental del PRELAC, organizada por la UNESCO-OREALC, Santiago de Chile, 6 y 7 de diciembre 2005.

[14] R. Blanco, Los docentes y el desarrollo de escuelas inclusivas. [Teachers and the Development of Inclusive Schools]. En *Revista PRELAC,* UNESCO-OREALC, Santiago de Chile, n° 1, June 2005, pp. 174–178.

It is a means to learn to live together and build our own identity

Inclusive education is based on a series of conceptions and values regarding the type of society to be built and the ideal of person to be developed. If we want to have more inclusive societies, which are more peaceful and respectful of differences, it is essential that students have the opportunity to develop and experience these values in their education, whether in schools or non-formal settings.

Educating "in and for diversity" is an essential means to learn to live together, developing new ways of doing so based on pluralism, mutual understanding and respect, democratic relationships and the development of values that promote cooperation, solidarity and justice. Moreover, the perception and the experience of diversity enable us to build and reaffirm our own identity and distinguish ourselves from others, that is to say, make it possible to "learn to be"[15]**.** The inclusion of any individual or group could not be possible if his/her personal or cultural identity were disregarded, as no real participation or effective learning would be achieved.

It is a means to improve the efficiency and cost-benefit relationship of the education systems

It is less expensive to have schools where all students are educated together than a complex system of different kinds of schools specialized in different groups of students. If inclusive schools offer an effective education to all their students, there will be a higher cost-benefit relationship when providing Education for All[16]. A study carried out by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 1994 showed that the inclusion of students with special educational needs into regular schools can be from seven to nine times less costly than their education in special schools[17]. Furthermore, various studies have showed that an inclusive education approach is not only less costly but also more efficient as it improves school performance and the results obtained by all children.

It is also necessary to optimize the use of resources in order to achieve a higher cost-benefit relationship. High repetition rates registered in many countries as a consequence of not adopting preventive measures, have led to a waste of resources and inefficiency. The financial resources aimed at the students who repeat[18] could be quite useful to improve the quality of education for all, especially if we consider the minimal impact of repetition on the level of students' learning outcomes and its negative effect on students' self-esteem. The expenses resulting from repetition could be invested in teacher training, supply of materials and computers and the provision of additional support for students who have difficulties in their education, contributing to the improvement of the quality of education.

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[15] UNESCO, *Learning: The Treasure Within*, 1996.

[16] UNESCO, *Open File on Inclusive education*, 2001.

[17] S. Peters, *Educación inclusiva: lograr una educación para todos, incluidos aquellos con discapacidad y necesidades educativas especiales.* [Inclusive Education: achieving Education for All, including disabled people and people with special educational needs]. Documento preparado para el grupo de discapacidad del Banco Mundial, Washington, Banco Mundial, 2003.

[18] For example, in Latin America repetition implies a cost of US$5.6 billon in primary education and US$5.5 billon in secondary education at the exchange rate of the year 2000, UNESCO-OREALC, 2007, *cit.*

Moving towards more inclusive schools and education systems involves a series of conditions both at the macro and the school level, as well as at the level of pedagogical practices. Some important aspects to be considered in the educational agenda of all countries are the following:

- Debating and building a broad approach of inclusive education, shared by all the stakeholders, enable the identification in each country of the main barriers against guaranteeing the right to a quality education for all citizens, as well as the identification of those who faces such barriers.
- Defining long-term educational policies based on human rights and social participation and strengthening the existing systems for guaranteeing the right to education without any discrimination.
- Developing policies which articulate expansion with quality and equity, fostering a debate on the real meaning of quality education without exclusion.
- Developing inter-sectoral policies which address in a comprehensive way the factors that generate exclusion from and within education and define strategies of inter-sectoral and inter-institutional articulation at the local level.
- Shifting from standardized strategies where all are offered the same towards approaches which consider the diversity of needs and identities with social cohesion.
- Developing equity policies based on the development of individuals, paying special attention to preventive measures, as well as early childhood education and care and also parents' education.
- Making education systems flexible so as to offer different options with equal quality to access or complete studies in any stage of life, both in formal and non-formal settings. Ensuring articulation between the different educational levels and modalities to facilitate the transition, coherence and continuity of educational processes.
- Strengthening public education and improving its quality in accordance with its historical role of ensuring equal opportunities for all and promoting integration and social cohesion.
- Revising students' admission policies in order to avoid the situation where certain schools (generally public schools located in the most vulnerable areas) mainly enrol students excluded from other schools.
- Developing curricula, teaching strategies and evaluation systems which take social, cultural and individual diversity into consideration.
- Analyzing financing policies and models to identify and modify the economic obstacles which are restricting the right to education and allocating resources in an equitable way.
- Revising the decentralization models in order to avoid inequality and strengthening the participation of the different local stakeholders and the families in the processes of inclusion.
- Developing comprehensive policies related to teachers and other educators to provide them with the competencies, incentives and conditions necessary to address the diversity of learning needs.
- Establishing support systems to collaborate with schools and teachers in addressing students' diversity.
- Paying special attention to the emotional factors which are very important for the development of inclusive schools and have a great impact on students' learning.

- Promoting studies and research in order to identify strategies and practices that promote the development of inclusive schools.

Some questions for reflection

What is the relationship between educational inclusion and social inclusion? What factors within and outside of education systems generate exclusion in your country? Who are the most excluded from educational opportunities in your country?

How is inclusion conceptualized in your country? What are the main arguments for and against inclusion?

How is the right to education conceived in your country? How are rights made explicit in the legislation and policies of your country? What should be the role of the State and civil society in order to guarantee the right to quality education without exclusion?

What is the approach to quality education in your country? How can inclusive education contribute to the quality and equity of education?

What are the main implications of inclusion for educational policies and practices? What factors contribute to the development of more inclusive education systems and schools?

The Way of the Future: Approaches, Scope and Content[1]

Conceptualization

How one approaches the topic of inclusive education largely determines one's perspective. For too long, inclusive education has been the almost exclusive purview of individuals and organizations whose primary concern is students with special educational needs. This has been the starting point of Inclusion International, a global federation of families of persons with intellectual disabilities. A federation of national federations in over 115 countries, Inclusion International maintains consultative status with ECOSOC and the World Health Organization and collaborates with multi-lateral institutions including other UN agencies, the World Bank, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and other disability and development non-governmental organizations. Inclusion International is a member of the Global Campaign for Education, and most member organizations at the grass roots were founded by parents precisely because their children were not accepted by the regular education system.

Initially, most member organizations at the community level started their own schools as the only way to ensure an education for children with intellectual disabilities. In some countries, notably Brazil, the network of schools operated by the national member organization has remained the foundation of the education system for students with an intellectual disability. In regions such as Africa, where many such schools are still relatively young, they are still operated by our member or by other non-government organizations, but in much of the world the responsibility for educating children with disabilities has been assumed by governments—both financially and administratively.

Families were largely responsible for creating special classes and special schools, and yet now, achieving inclusive education is one of our top priorities. To our members this means that children with disabilities should be able to go to the same schools as their non-disabled sisters and brothers, and be educated in classes with non-disabled peers as an essential component for securing a fulfilling life in the family, and the community.[2] For this reason, Inclusion International was an active participant in the UNESCO conference in Salamanca in 1994, and a strong supporter of the Declaration of Salamanca.[3] The Declaration of Salamanca helped to re-conceptualize the participation of students with disabilities in regular education from "integration" to "inclusion". Early attempts at integration essentially attempted to place children with disabilities in the regular system, with supports going to the student, but little change in the structure of education. Inclusion means transforming systems so that all students can be included.

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[1] Prepared by Diane Richler, President, Inclusion International, Canada.
[2] Inclusion International, *Hear Our Voices: A Global Report, People with an Intellectual Disability and Their Families Speak Out on Poverty and Exclusion,* Toronto, Inclusion International, 2006.
[3] UNESCO, *The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education*. Adopted by the "World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality", Salamanca (Spain), Paris, UNESCO, 7–10 June 1994.

Unfortunately, until the planning for the 2008 ICE, discussions about inclusive education have remained largely within the "special education" sphere. A small number of leaders in the field of regular education have begun to recognize that the conditions that make inclusive education work for students who have a disability are the same conditions that can create quality education for all. Until inclusion is widely seen as one of the key variables that produces effective, efficient quality education for all students, it will be perceived as the perspective of special interests, and students with disabilities, as well as other marginalized groups such as ethnic minorities, students from poor families, child labourers, and others will remain excluded.

Key questions, concerns and issues

Why is inclusive education essential for children with disabilities?

From a global perspective, inclusive education provides a vehicle for achieving the goals of Education for All that are otherwise beyond reach. While data is incomplete, the 2008 Global Monitoring Report on EFA states that children with disabilities are only half as likely to be in school as their non-disabled peers. It is estimated that as many as 1/3 of children currently out of school have a disability. Even in countries which claim to have reached or are close to reaching universal primary enrolment, children with disabilities are often not the responsibility of Ministries of Education and so they are not included in official data. In emerging economies, if children with disabilities are receiving any services, they are usually outside of the education system. Given the huge numbers of children with disabilities out of school, it is financially and practically impossible to create separate schools or even separate classes in order to meet the current demand.

From the perspective of children with disabilities, inclusive education offers numerous advantages. If the school serving his or her siblings does not accept a child with a disability, there is a significant probability that the child will not receive any education, and education for children with disabilities opens the same doors as for other children—to improved health, employment possibilities, income, reduced family size, more autonomy, and social capital. Putnam defines social capital as "the collective value of our "social networks" [who people know] and our will to do things for each other [norms of reciprocity][4]. While social capital is essential for all, it is especially important for people with disabilities who are often isolated even within their families, and the social engagement of inclusive education fosters its creation.

According to a publication of the Inter-American Development Bank[5],

The education system needs to be a pillar of the democratization process. To be left out of the education system entirely or to be segregated and isolated from peers, exacts a cost in lost knowledge and skill to the individual. The costs are clearly economic and effect income and standard of living. The cost of lost of relationships is harder to define…There is a human and relationship loss which effects people with disabilities throughout their lives, and one which spreads to families, peers, and the entire community.

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[4] R. D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone,* New York, Simon & Schuster, 2000.
[5] G. Porter, *Disability and Education: Toward an Inclusive Approach,* Washington, Inter-American Development Bank, 2001.

What are the implications of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for inclusive education?

Although the Universal Declaration of Human Rights clearly proclaims a right to education for all that right has not been generally applied. The United Nations recognized the need for more explicitly outlining the rights of persons with disabilities in a new Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), adopted by the General Assembly in December 2006 and entered into force in 2008. As of February 2, 2009, 137 countries have signed the Convention and 47 have ratified it. While governments negotiated the final text, participants of civil society—notably of organizations of persons with disabilities and their families—were key partners throughout the process, and the final text marks a strong consensus among all stakeholders.

Article 24 of the CRPD explicitly guarantees the right to "an inclusive education system at all levels and specifies the obligation of States to ensure:

• Quality and free primary education and secondary education on an equal basis with others.
• Reasonable accommodation.
• Effective individualized support measures.
• Qualified teachers.

How can the objectives of the CRPD be achieved?

In his 2007 report, on which Inclusion International collaborated, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education outlined a number of steps which could be taken by governments wishing to move towards more inclusive systems. They include:

• Eliminating legal barriers: in some countries Ministries of Education have no mandate to provide education to children with disabilities.
• Ensuring that one ministry and one school system are responsible for education: in many countries social ministries have the responsibility for educating children with disabilities and separate school systems exist.
• Transferring special education resources to assist mainstream system: Few countries can afford to run two systems—one general system, and one for students with disabilities.
• Training educators to respond to diversity: General educators need to be able to teach a spectrum of learners in every class.
• Addressing teaching conditions: Poorly paid teachers working several shifts cannot adequately meet the needs of their students.
• Investing in inclusive early childhood education (ECCE): Children should arrive at primary school with preparation.
• Providing training to parents of children with disabilities: Parents should be able to support their children's education and have realistic expectations for outcomes.

Are there different challenges in developed and emerging economies?

Successful progress towards the goal of inclusive education will depend very much on how countries define quality and success in education. On the one hand are pressures to

achieve efficiency and accountability. On the other are questions about social, academic and intellectual engagement. Stein points out the dilemmas in measuring efficiency and effectiveness when objectives are unclear.[6] In order to measure whether our schools are effective, we need to know, "effective at what? At producing literate students? At producing critical thinkers? At producing young, engaged citizens?"

Education systems in developed and emerging economies perceive different potential benefits to inclusive education. Credit can be given to all member states of the United Nations for recognizing that inclusion in regular education is the way to respect the right of individuals who have a disability to education. Pragmatically, many governments have also seen inclusion as a potential cost-cutting measure. While it is true that few countries could muster the resources to run two quality parallel systems, one that would be inclusive for all who chose it, and another specialized and segregated system for those preferring that option, inclusion should not be seen as a way to save money by eliminating the need for special education and replacing it with a system that cannot meet the needs of students with special educational needs.

In emerging economies, including students with disabilities in regular education makes economic sense: it is not feasible to build enough special schools, train enough special teachers and then run two parallel systems. Furthermore, it is cost-effective to build new schools that are fully accessible to all, and to prepare teaches who can respond to diverse learning styles.

In countries that already have large investments in segregated systems; those resources can be redirected to help the general system provide the accommodation required by some students with special educational needs while at the same time improving the system for all students. In both cases, providing quality education to all students requires investment.

Challenges to achieving inclusion

While many children are out of school because of systemic barriers within the education system, there are many other issues that go beyond the responsibility of Ministries of Education. Children with disabilities may be out of school for many reasons. In many places, there is still major stigma associated with disability. Children with disabilities may be kept hidden because of the negative consequences of having a disabled family member. For example, siblings may be less desirable as marriage partners and either be unable to marry or command lower dowries. In countries where there is a cost to birth registration, families may opt not register a child with a disability, later denying that child the right to an education. If a family has limited resources, money for clothes, shoes, and materials needed for school may go to non-disabled siblings. Challenges of transportation or physical accessibility keep other children with disabilities out of school.

Current investment strategies in development assistance often diametrically oppose a move to inclusion. Often the only way for children with disabilities to receive any service is through non-government organizations, which often apply medical and rehabilitation models rather on educational models; reach small numbers of participants and provide

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[6]   J. G. Stein, *The Cult of Efficiency,* Toronto*,* House of Anansi Press, 2001*.*

limited coverage; segregate persons with disabilities; do not address systemic exclusion; and are expensive and unsustainable, while relieving short-term pressure on public resources.

Given the disproportionate number of children with disabilities out of school, there needs to be greater recognition that the goals of Education for All and the Millennium Development goals cannot be reached if children with disabilities continue to be ignored. But children with disabilities cannot be an afterthought: they need to be considered at the outset of education sector planning. Policy commitments are not enough without corresponding investment, and influencing investment means influencing both donors and recipients.

Ultimately, advocates for students with disabilities and those working in the field of special education cannot achieve inclusion on their own. As long as key decisions about educational priorities ignore those students who are either out of school or who are experiencing discrimination through various forms of exclusion, efforts to include those students will be a patchwork of Band-Aid solutions and will fail.

Inclusive systems have the potential to respond to the learning styles of each and every student, to teach values of respect for diversity, foster collaborative approaches and build social capital. Top students around the world will do well even if their education systems are flawed and do not meet the needs of all students but only a select few fall into this category. Will parents and educators be satisfied if that is the best we can accomplish? We have a moral and legal responsibility to build systems that support all students to reach "the full development of human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth and the strengthening of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and human diversity" (Article 24 CRPD).[7]

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7   See also: http://www.un.org/disabilities/; http://www1.worldbank.org/education/pdf/EdNotesDisability.pdf.

Inclusive Education as Incorporation to Citizenship[1]

This text addresses "inclusive education" from the perspective of public policies on education and it is analyzed in relation to the regulatory and institutional aspects of education systems. Three aspects are considered: the first one, which is more conceptual, suggests a viewpoint to analyze inclusive education; the second one refers to the quantitative background in this respect; and lastly the author raises some questions that should be clarified in order to advance on an inclusive educational policy.

What should be understood by inclusive education?

Extending the concept of inclusion

There are many ways of making reference to inclusive inclusion. Probably, it is more commonly used when referring to those excluded from school.[2] At first, inclusion was used to promote the integration of those who, due to physical or psychological limitations, attended special schools, from where the demand for the inclusion of the excluded was intensified. Today, it is conceived as the way of the future to think of education according to a right-based perspective.[3] Aguerrondo presents the development of education from the years 30-40 onwards as a succession of strategies to overcome the mechanisms of social selection existing within the education systems from the beginning of their expansion process, mainly evidenced by drop-out and repetition. These strategies which have moments focused on welfare, educational psychology and compensatory policies, are today re-conceptualized in a new strategy: inclusion.[4] The emphasis was put on the cultural skills that school should provide, therefore, "exclusion means not having the opportunity of developing the thought processes that make it possible to understand, live together and develop oneself in a complex world" (Ibid) and inclusion means the opposite, that is to say, having achieved the knowledge offered by school to participate in society.

Without disregarding this perspective, which stresses the unquestionable importance of the fact that school should guarantee the access to the knowledge used and accepted by society, it would be interesting to visualize inclusive education from a complementary viewpoint resulting in the following question: where are we included in by being incorporated into school?

If we analyze school considering its role of "rite of passage", going to school—inclusion in school—should have the virtuosity of incorporating children and young people into something greater: society. School is the way to society. In order to do so, schools should have the characteristics of the society they include. This is the only way for students who leave the private world of their families and go to school to move closer to the social and public world and be prepared to be active and responsible individuals. Therefore, should

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[1]   Prepared by Juan Eduardo García-Huidobro, Dean of the Faculty of Education, University Alberto Hurtado, Santiago de Chile, Chile.

[2]   The term "school" is used as a generic concept. Thus, it means education and includes secondary education, as well.

[3]   R. Opertti, & C. Belalcázar, "Trends in inclusive education at regional and interregional levels: issues and challenges." *Prospects*, n° 145, March 2008, pp. 113–135.

[4]   I. Aguerrondo, "Altering the model: a challenge to achieve inclusion" *Prospects,* n° 145, March 2008, pp. 47–64.

school have all the characteristics of society? Certainly, it would be both impossible and undesirable. Which should be the connection between school and the society it must include? In order to define which are the relevant characteristics it is necessary to return to the role of the "rite of passage".

The rite of passage is in all societies an experience that allows young people to reintegrate into society with a capacity and a role they had not had before. In democratic societies, compulsory education, understood as rite of passage, is the social experience aimed at promoting equality among people as citizens, despite the differences. Equal in rights, equal in citizenship. Equal in the capacity of tolerance and respect for the others' differences.

The democratic theory and the desire of a political community composed of equal citizens, establish that equality is not "natural"—we are born with different talents, with families economically and culturally different—but a historic creation that is necessary to teach and learn. Democratic education should be a space so that all citizens can gather together and recognize themselves as equals, where democracy is an educational experience. However, this experience of inclusion can only be possible if schools are socially representative of societies and not segregated. If schools are distributed to students according to their socioeconomic and cultural level or if the elite educates their children separated from the rest of the society, our schools cannot be the way to an inclusive society.

Well then, being education thought as the way to take part in a society of equals; it is necessary to achieve an education that enables us to recognize ourselves as equals, treats us as equals, integrates us, joins us together and leads us to mutual communication in spite of our differences. This is the inclusive education—because it really includes—we need. In Latin America, the situation is quite the opposite, with variations among countries. School segregation confines those students belonging to different social groups to relate among themselves and be separated from the different people even when they, hypothetically, have the tools to participate in society. From this point of view, an inclusive education that fosters social mix and integration is the only way to generate inclusive environments where different people respect, understand and accept diversity in its multiple forms and expressions.

The democratic citizenship has obviously conceptual bases that can be measured and are, in fact, subject to standardized tests, but it also has the appropriate conditions for its development that can only be achieved by means of the experience of inclusion, conceived as social mix and integration in school life. This experience referent is considered a solid basis for social cohesion and social and cultural integration.

Levels of inclusion

Taking that perspective into account, various degrees of educational inclusion or exclusion can be distinguished:

- The totally excluded, *those who do not attend school*, are placed at the bottom. Among them, we can distinguish those who have never attended school, now just a few people

in Latin America[5] and those who dropped out before completing their studies. As regards this last form of exclusion, the earlier it happens, the more serious it is, as it will determine the level of cultural skills achieved. This population is usually measured using the data on coverage and drop-out for the different education levels. The levels of repetition and over-age are very important since they may be the cause of drop-out. In fact, repetition has been shown as a way of "expulsion" from the education system[6].

- In a second level of inclusion/exclusion we can find those who learn versus *those who do not learn at school*. Among us, a sharp way of inclusion: education has become massificated, but is has not been able to ensure the cultural competencies necessary to live and act in society for those who are apparently included. Braslavsky talks about "marginalization due to inclusion" to indicate the segmentation of the educational service in circuits of different quality which imply, for some social sectors, staying in the school system without guaranteeing the access to knowledge. Circuits of different quality have been generated within the school system. "The process of 'education for all' ended up being a process of '*different* education for all'".[7] We know much in this respect and we are learning even more, by means of the national systems of learning measurement[8], as well as regional measurements such as LLECE and international ones such as TIMSS and PISA. These systems make it possible to learn about the level of knowledge achieved by students and connect it with a wide set of related factors, both social—such as place of residence, socioeconomic or cultural level or the way of labour insertion of parents—and educational such as type of institution and teachers' characteristics.

- We suggest adding a third level of inclusion to the two previous levels. It should make reference to *the social integration achieved in educational institutions.* In this case, "inclusion" is linked to a school experience that means a way of participating in society, some knowledge of the different individuals in terms of cultural tradition and wealth or poverty versus "exclusion", evidenced by the segmentation of the school system when privileged sectors and majorities are educated separated from the rest, generating the impoverishment of the school experience which does not lead to include students in society, neither ones nor the others. It is no longer about the inclusion of just a few people, or about the education received—good for some of them and poor for the others. It is about the fact that education does not "integrate" individuals because it is not the same for everyone. The access to education seems to open the way to society, but most people stay in the lobby talking among themselves, without any contact with the hosts. This situation was socially accepted when exclusion took place within the framework of a school system in process of being constructed which could not include everyone; but at present, it cannot be tolerated since apparently all receive the same type of education and, however, the system is segmented, leading to "educations"

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[5] In the world, there are still 72 millions of children who do not attend school. 2, 7% of them live in Latin America, approximately 1,980,000, UNESCO, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008—Education For All by 2015, Will We Make It?* UNESCO and Oxford University Press, Paris and Oxford, 2007.

[6] C. Braslavsky, *La discriminación educativa en la Argentina* [Educational discrimination in Argentina]. FLACSO/GEL, Buenos Aires. 1985) refers to these two ways of exclusion as marginalization due to total exclusion (not to attend school) and marginalization due to early exclusion (or expulsion from the education system) cited by I. Aguerrondo, "Altering the model: a challenge to achieve inclusion", *Prospects,* n° 145, March 2008, pp. 47–64.

[7] I. Aguerrondo, "Altering the model: a challenge to achieve inclusion", *Prospects.* n° 145, March 2008, pp. 47–64.

[8] As the *National* Department of Information and Assessment of Educational Quality in Argentina, the national System of assessment of basic education and the National Exam of Secondary Education in Brazil and the Educational Quality Measurement System (SIMCE) in Chile.

that belong to different circuits and places. This perspective regarding inclusion is also linked to an increasing demand for equality among the Latin American societies. School massification, despite its limits, has generated the hope for a more open society: apart from a globalized culture that offers many experiences common to social groups, however different they may be from one another, which causes demands in this regard.[9]

The most traditional measure to observe the level of integration or social segregation of the education systems in Latin America has been the number of private schools, which were the places used by the elites so as not to be together with the majorities after the process of massification[10]. Moreover, the segregation of systems has started to be measured by calculating the probability that students can meet a socially different classmate in their schools.[11] Duncan's dissimilarity index is being used, at the school level, to measure the levels of geographical or space segregation of cities, which would show the number of students who should change to other school in order to achieve a good level of "integration".[12]

Historical background

This perspective of inclusive education as inclusion or not in society can also be considered in connection with three moments in the brief republican history of the school system developed in Latin America.

At the beginning, in the nineteenth century, the idea was to achieve a civilized society; therefore, education systems were created in order to respond to that idea. In the late nineteenth century and during the first quarter of the twentieth century, those systems intended to be massive became consolidated. That was the time of the compulsory primary education law which promoted the expansion of citizenship and the strengthening of the republic and the national states. This led to a long process of expansion of education that took a considerable part of the twentieth century, focused on coverage. Behind this process there was a morally stimulating idea: education is a social good that we all have the right to enjoy. The twentieth century ended with a series of Educational Reforms, still in process in many countries, stimulated by two "star" concepts: quality and equity.[13]

Within this new context, the "goals" and the present purpose of education systems were redefined and became more complex. The questions concerning equality, linked to inclusion/integration, are raised. The motto of Education for All was changed to "high quality education for All" and today, it was improved by fostering "equal" education for

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9   S. Bernardo and D. Martuccelli, *El Desafío Latinoamericano—Cohesión Social y Democracia* [The Latin-American Challenge—Social Cohesion and Democracy]. San Pablo, Instituto Fernando Enrique Cardoso, 2008.

10   Interesting examples of state schools with a high percentage of social mix could be found when education, especially secondary, was aimed at the social elites. This has maintained in the social imaginary the idea that state education was democratic and a way of social mobility.

11   Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe (CEPAL) [Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean (ECLAC)]. Santiago de Chile, CEPAL, 2007; Delacqua, 2007.

12   J. Valenzuela, *Segregación en el Sistema Escolar Chileno: en la búsqueda de una educación de calidad en un contexto de extrema desigualdad*. [Segregation in the Chilean School system: seeking a high quality education within a context of extreme inequality]. Santiago, Universidad de Chile, 2008.

13   C. Braslavsky. Los conceptos estelares de la agenda educativa en el cambio de siglo [The key concepts of the educational agenda in the change of century]. En: *Re-haciendo escuelas. Un nuevo paradigma en la educación latinoamericana*, Buenos Aires, Santillana, 1999.

All[14]. It is an emerging issue, which has not led to a shared demand yet, but there are increasing signs that indicate it will be the main matter of concern of the future. Inclusive education conceived as educational equality, as equal education for all, seems to be the new idea required by the education policies of our democracies.[15]

The situation of "inclusive education" in Latin America

The educational background around inclusion/exclusion in Latin America will be presented following the three aspects stated above: to attend/not to attend school, to learn/ not to learn at school, and to be with everybody at school or to be in a segregated school space. Having the situation been described, its consequences will be considered.

Description of the situation

• Coverage

The advance on education in Latin America has been considerable and, over the last years, rapid. Primary school is practically universal (97%). Among the children and teenagers who should attend the first years of secondary school (12-14 years old), school attendance grew from 84% to 94% between the years 1990 and 2005; and among the population aged between 15 and 18 it increased by more than 15 percentage points, reaching 76%. It increased by seven points among the young people who should attend the tertiary level (from 28% to 35%). In the pre-school level, the growth has been moderated, in spite of its importance to stimulate the learning process during the rest of people's life.[16]

These advances have been quite different and very determined by the cultural and socio-economic level of the students' families (SEL). SITEAL 2007 shows a complete outlook of these differences, according to the educational level and the labour insertion of the families. These differences can be particularly illustrated by the students' permanence in the education system, which shows that those students belonging to better socio-economic classes were more likely to succeed. Generally, their parents had also higher schooling levels. The advances have not been significant for the poorest sectors, who still have serious difficulties to complete secondary school and especially to complete it in due time. Consequently, the disparity in the number of students who fell behind has increased. The ratio between the percentage of slow students of the first and fifth quintile of per capita income varied between the years 1990 and 2005 from 2,5 to 3,8 times.[17]

The most substantial advances have been observed as regards the completion of school levels. In 2005, about 92% of the teenagers aged between 15 and 19 had completed

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[14] I have analyzed the situation in Chile, comparing the present social demands with those of the early 1990s.

[15] A very clear example of social demand was the mobilization of Chilean secondary students that took place in 2006. The students who have benefited from the expansion were precisely those who denounced, despite those benefits, the profound educational inequality. See: García-Huidobro, Positive Discrimination in Education: its justification and a Chilean example, *International Review of Education*, XL, 3-5, 1994, pp. 209–221; Delacqua, 2007.

[16] CEPAL, 2007, *cit.*

[17] *Ibid.*

primary school[18]. The completion of the first years of secondary school (12-14 years old) grew between the years 1990 and 2005 from 53% to 71% and the most significant growth was registered in the second cycle of secondary school, where the percentage of students who completed the level during that period of time grew from 27% to 50% among the young people aged between 20 and 24. Great progress was also made as regards the completion of tertiary school, though the magnitude was quite modest: the percentage of young people aged between 25 and 29 who have completed at least five years of higher education grew from 4.8% to 7.4%.

To sum up, the unequal access to education has been reduced. Nevertheless, in higher educational levels, the disparities increase and the students who fall behind are generally the most economically deprived.

Apart from the differences due to SEL, there is still in Latin America a strong difference between the rural sector and the urban sector and differences due to the ethnic origin of students. The same document elaborated by CEPAL, which is herein mentioned, states this: at the primary level, whereas 94.5% of the non-indigenous urban population completes primary school, only 65.8% of rural indigenous population do achieve this. At the secondary level, 56.7% of non-indigenous urban students and 17.4% of the rural indigenous population.

• Learning

To understand that educational problems are within the schools is now a question of common sense in Latin America: the most important issue is no longer about the access to the education system but it is about learning at school. Evidence gathered in this respect is solid and consistent: the knowledge learnt in Latin American schools are not enough and here we can also notice significant differences in the outcomes, resulting from the different SEL, place of residence and ethnic origin of students, as observed in the learning measurements of the countries. Some data should be considered. According to PISA (2006), in the Latin American countries only 8.1% of the population have achieved high performance levels (4 and 5) contrasting with 29.3% of the population of the OECD countries who achieved this performance level. Practically 25.9% of the Latin American population is placed below the level 1 (which implies not to understand a simple text), whereas 7.4% of the OECD population is in that level. Well then, these performance levels are very clearly related to the socio-economic level of students, as observed in the measurements of various countries.

• Integration/Segregation

These concepts refer to the efficiency in school life as experience of inclusion in society, which is closely related to school segregation in the educational institutions of Latin America. In order to analyze school segregation, private education in Latin America and its social characteristics have been studied. In Latin America, private education covers 17.1% of primary school enrolment and 19.3% of secondary school. There are

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[18] This number does not reflect the serious situations of some countries such as Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras and El Salvador where the numbers are considerable lower and range between 58% for Guatemala and 76% for El Salvador, CEPAL, 2007, *cit.*

polar situations among the countries. On the one hand, the number of private educational institutions in Chile is distinguished since it is higher than the number of state educations. The same situation can be seen in Guatemala regarding secondary education (59.8%)[19]. On the other hand, Mexico, Bolivia and Brazil register the lower proportions. The social status of the students from these countries (over 30% of private school students in Latin America belong to the more wealthy decile and only 2.5% to the poorest decile) suggests that, at least in the extremes of the distribution, there are institutions very socially homogenous and, therefore, strongly segregated, which is clearly evidenced by the study of CEPAL that, resorting to data from PISA, shows that the school communities belonging to a high social status have only one poor student every 10 students of high social status. This situation is doubled in the case of Chile and Peru (1 every 20) and in the OCDE countries, it decreases by 1 every 5.[20] Pereyra analyzes the unequal income distribution among students from state and private institutions and concludes that, in general, the countries with a lower percentage of private enrolment (Brazil, Mexico, Bolivia) show more significant students' SEL differences according to the sector. In the Chilean case, for example, the level of segregation is very high, as herein described and evidenced by the study of Elacqua and Valenzuela, but it can also be found within private education[21].

In order to compare the Latin American situation with the rest of the countries, Valenzuela resorts to the Socio-cultural Index of the data collected by PISA 2006, applied to 15-year-old students from 57 countries—30 countries member of OECD and 27 countries that are not members–.[22] This indicator considers the parents' education and the cultural and material goods of the students' families. On the basis of this information, he calculated the socioeconomic segregation of students in every country measured through the Duncan's Index for different percentage of students of higher and lower SEL. The results showed that Chile and Brazil have the highest degree of segregation, occupying the second place behind Thailand, when considering the 10% of students with higher SEL and Chile shares the first place with Thailand when considering the 30% of students with higher SEL. The rest of the Latin American countries which have available information (Uruguay, Colombia, Argentina and Mexico) are also among the countries with the highest degree of segregation, with indexes close to or higher than 0,60.

Consequences of school segregation

- The first consequence of segregation is that it inhibits the capacity of the democratic citizenship education that school can/must have. If we want to teach equality, education must be equal for all.
- In addition, there are some previous experiences which show that social segregation in schools, that groups students according to their SEL and their cultural characteristics, inhibits the "peer" effect and affects negatively the learning of majorities and the equality

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[19] It has been pointed out that both Chile and Guatemala have extreme situations from another point of view: in Chile, private education is growing due to the support of the State, whereas the high enrolment rate of private secondary education in Guatemala is caused by the scant State initiative in that level, Pereyra, 2008.

[20] CEPAL, 2007, *cit.*

[21] In Chile, poor people also attend private schools, but poor students are concentrated in a few schools. Elacqua states that almost half of the students attending subsidized private schools do not have any poor classmate, whereas in the municipal state schools this situation is experienced by only 3% of the students. In short, the school experience of the Chilean students from both sectors is absolutely different.

[22] J. Valenzuela 2008, *cit.*

in the outcomes of general education. As shown by PISA by comparing countries, those schools with a greater social mix of pupils are quite better for poor students' learning and, therefore, it is easier to achieve the goals of compulsory education. Without social integration policies, it will be difficult to improve the learning quality of the majorities.

- Segregation hinders the presence of people with "voice" in society in all types of schools. The people who have power, prestige or professional knowledge are concentrated in specific kinds of schools, generally private, and the parents of those students who attend schools for majorities have not social influence to demand good schools for their children. This is other consequence that links segregation, that is to say inequality, to low quality education.

Inclusion and educational policies: Questions and suggestions

What is left to do to advance towards a more inclusive education? Towards an equal education for all, aware of its role as the birthplace of a democratic society?

Firstly, it is necessary to define the goal. Before thinking of "policies" it is necessary to define "the" policy. We sustain the thesis that there is not an equal education, first, because we do not want to have it and we do not want to have it because it involves individual sacrifices that people are willing to do only if they are convinced that they are really necessary and they will result in a very important benefit for everyone.

Actually, we do not have that conviction. As societies, we do not have a socially shared and rationally justified interest in educational equality, in a genuinely inclusive education. We still have educational inequality, with important degrees of exclusion, because we have got used to it. It has become "natural" and acceptable that the people who have money can offer a good education to their children and the most economically deprived sectors have to resign themselves to a low quality education.

This happens due to powerful tendencies. In fact, this issue is related to the tension existing between family and State which dates from the time of Plato and Aristotle in education. On the one hand, the family—and we are all "family" and we will always be—wants to offer the best and the most secure to their children and it generally opts for what is known, which tends to segregation (to gather with peers and be separated from the others). On the other hand, the State—and we do not always act "stately"—must seek to achieve social integration, educate the democratic citizenship and that everyone can access to the cultural goods guaranteed by schooling. A school socially and culturally heterogeneous seems to be necessary to achieve these objectives.

It is time to reconstruct a shared sense on education, in accordance with the current development of the education systems that have already completed the cycle of massification, and with the demands for equality and inclusion faced by democracy in a globalized world. To conceive this sense, it is necessary to open a rigorous debate in our countries on what kind of education we want and for what kind of society. This debate must, firstly, weight up the consequences of social disintegration that this inertia can cause and then, raise a series of questions of the political philosophy of education that are generally not considered when questioning education in the region. This need of a sense perspective can be regarded as the normative framework. It implies a double reference:

on the one hand, a utopian referent that allows to link the analysis of the reality to the perspective of a better future, intended, on the other hand, to a shared moral energy that enriches the individual action according to the perspective of the supportive construction of a common good.

This search for a sense is not abstract. It should serve as the rational explanation for a series of complex definitions: What is required to establish a genuinely egalitarian education? Even more, what is required so that education can be democratic and ensure an equal incorporation into society in societies so deeply unequal, as ours? These questions lead to politically and theoretically complex issues. Today, it is accepted, and evidenced by the quantitative background, that the State provides an education for all (hope it is a high quality one) and that those who have economic resources pay a better education for their children. To ensure an egalitarian education with social mix implies that families should not be allowed to use their economic resources to provide a better education for their children and that there should be free systems for all. Which may be the convincing arguments for this? That a genuine democracy implies eliminating the transmission of privileges from generation to generation? Are these arguments so solid as to delegitimize and eliminate the private education?

Otherwise, can a mercantile social order still be legitimate? What other argument of legitimization of the market can be sustained apart from meritocracy, that is, the people who have more talent and work harder are those who succeed? Having this been taken into consideration, doesn't a meritocratic order need precisely an equal and socially mixed education which can symbolically redistribute the opportunities in each generation?

Other issue with a similar complexity is the conciliation between equality, necessary to integrate, and the respect for diversity. The most important characteristic feature of the demands of today's culture, called reflexive modernity by some people and post-modernity by others, is the simultaneous demand for more justice and equality, as well as tolerance and respect for diversity. We should wonder about the institutional forms of an inclusive education common for everyone, but at the same time respectful of freedom and diversity.

Finally, this is the beginning of a long way. The starting point is to reach a consensus on the aim, the goal to be reached. The process starts there. The massification of education took almost a century. We do not have so much time to democratize it; it is not a question of days. To know if we have made some progress, it is necessary that year by year the distribution of education can be more equal than the distribution of incomes and that the educational institutions can be less segregated than the cities.[23]

[23] J. Baeza Correa, *Educación inclusiva y tareas de la orientación* [Inclusive education and orientation tasks]. Chile Califica / Centro de Estudios en Juventud (CEJU)—Universidad Católica Silva Henríquez, s.f.

Public Policies

Legislation is important in the development of a more inclusive education system. […]

Inclusive education may be part of a system-wide reform of the position of marginalized groups in society as a whole, or may be linked to an attempt to address issues of poverty, illiteracy and marginalization. Inclusive education can also be part of more fundamental democratic reforms aimed at forging and consolidating open and inclusive societies. In many countries in transition, for instance, it is not possible to separate the move to inclusion from a wider effort to rebuild democracy and refocus on human rights. […] All government agencies and civil society organizations need to work together—it is not only a matter for educationalists, but for advocacy organizations, families and communities, professional associations, researchers, teacher educators and service providers. […]

Countries have to be prepared to analyse their own situations, identify barriers to and facilitators of inclusion, and plan a process of development that is appropriate for them. […] The starting point for making decisions about what to monitor should be an agreed definition of inclusion. There is a need to "measure what we value", rather than "valuing what we can measure". Evidence collected at the systems level needs to relate to the presence, participation and achievement of all learners, with an emphasis on those groups of learners regarded to be at risk of marginalization, exclusion or underachievement. (*Reference Document*, 48th session of the ICE, pp. 13-19).

Policies for Inclusive Education[1]

Brief consideration on the concept of inclusive education

Today, the concept of inclusive education can be understood as a general principle used to reinforce the conditions for achieving the Education for All (EFA) goals according to a comprehensive or holistic perspective. It implies overcoming those conceptualizations that restrict the concept to special educational needs or social needs, such as refugees.

Due to the nature of the formation of these concepts, there is sometimes little difference between the conceptualization of inclusion and integration. Integration represented the progress which enabled the rejection of the idea of different types of schools for different types of students, by enrolling all students in the same school. Despite the unquestionable good intentions, in practice this has often not produced changes in the curriculum or in the pedagogical approach since, according to these models, it is quite common that students have to *adapt themselves* to the rules, styles, habits and practices of the traditional education system, instead of all these elements adapting to the students' needs. Thus, it is not surprising that drop-out rates of students with special needs increase when they are integrated into schools which have not implemented a serious and comprehensive curricular and pedagogical change.

Inclusion, however, can be understood either as a guiding principle to achieve reasonable levels of school integration for all students or, in a broader context, as the conception and implementation of a wide range of learning strategies aimed at responding to the diversity of students.

In this respect, education systems are bound to respond to the needs and expectations of all children and young people, taking into account that, within the integration scheme, the capacity of providing effective learning opportunities is in fact limited.

Within this framework, the debate between inclusive education and integration is not focused on a dichotomy between policies and models of integration or inclusion (as if integration without inclusion or inclusion without integration could be possible), but it is based on the fact that it is necessary to identify to what extent each school has made progress towards understanding its moral responsibility for the inclusion of all. This obligation becomes more urgent for those education systems that still have to solve some basic educational problems, such as non-attendance to school, repetition, over-age, drop-out, or the low learning achievement that negatively affect the objectives and the operation of education all around the world.

The real inclusion is access to knowledge

Beyond the differences between integration and inclusion, the main challenge to be incorporated into a new policy agenda for education for discussion by the ministries of education and the society as a whole, is the need to overcome the idea of inclusion as

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[1] Prepared by Inés Aguerrondo, Consultant of the International Institute for Educational Planning (UNESCO-IIPE), Regional Office Buenos Aires, Argentina.

incorporation into the education system and conceive it as *access to knowledge*. Today, quality education means an education system which allows everyone to access valid knowledge.

The traditional role of education as a means to promote cohesion and social mobility has become weakened in the current economic and social setting. Education systems may maintain their historic capacity of counteracting the tendencies towards inequity, currently stressed as a result of the new globalized capitalism, provided that they are able to distribute the type of education and the knowledge competencies required by the information society and the knowledge society.

As long as there is a new vision, the school as an institution and the new emerging learning environments can offer more integration in an unequal world. The knowledge valid for modernity is not the knowledge valid for the knowledge society. Education systems were organized to spread the rational knowledge model of enlightenment among society and they succeeded. However, this model is also outdated in the present world that generates knowledge as a part of social progress.

In this context, the focus should rest on the *transformation of the education systems and the schools so that they can cater for the diversity* of students' learning needs (resulting from their social and cultural origin and their individual characteristics as regards learning motivations, abilities, styles and rhythm). Building on these differences, they can ensure that all students have access to knowledge.

Policies on inclusion

Within the framework of the globalized processes of economy, technology and communication, the State is still an essential element of economic regulation, political representation and social solidarity, but within important structural and cultural limits and acting in a historically new way. There is a wide range of possible State interventions in the economy, in the processes of democracy and in the increase of social solidarity. The State can lose sovereignty as understood by the classical canon, but it does not lose its capacity of action if it changes in order to manage complex processes in a complex world.

The role of the State is extremely relevant with respect to education as a public good, since these transformations, as well as educational development, can only be possible with strong State intervention. Even though society also has an important role to play, it only collaborates with the State to generate policies in tune with these challenges.

Educational policies dealing with inclusion should go beyond the dichotomy mentioned above. They should also overcome the remedial and corrective approaches and responses, as well as those solutions focusing on the establishment or increase of the number of special education schools, curricula and teachers, as these solutions often mean the increase of segregation and the isolation of those students with different characteristics.

Policies must focus on generating inclusive environments, which basically implies two perspectives. On the one hand, it means respecting, understanding and recognizing cultural, social and individual diversity (both at the education system level and as regards

the schools' and teachers' response to students' expectations and needs); and on the other hand, providing equal access to quality education.

A broader concept of inclusion, as understood in this Conference, makes it possible to overcome the mere remedial or compensatory policies and open the way to the emergence of new educational responses aimed at a knowledge society capable of integrating all people. Therefore, it is necessary to clearly define the responsibility of educational institutions as regards the multiple existing needs, especially in the case of the most deprived populations, and ensure an effective coordination with other social policies. This should involve the expectations and needs of the community and other social actors.

The State must be able to understand the development of inclusive education programmes within the framework of education as a public good, therefore. It should also have the planning and management capacity and be able to articulate co-design and co-implementation strategies together with civil society as a whole.

Questions to orientate the discussion

The discussions which took place in the preparatory regional workshops on inclusive education focus on the concern that educational policies should foster a deeper reflection and discussion regarding what kind of society we desire, overcoming exclusion within the framework of social justice, and leading to a social consensus on what kind of education we need.

What are the strategies applied in your country in this respect? How is the idea of inclusion used to support, justify or encourage innovations oriented to quality? How are social representations analyzed so that the community can accept these new definitions? To what extent can the shift from inclusion viewed as *incorporation to the education system* to the idea of *inclusion as access to knowledge* can be accepted?

The need to revise national legislation in order to incorporate notions of inclusive education (such as in the case of the Convention on the Rights of the Child or the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) was another matter of concern pointed out in the regional meetings.

What is the situation of your country as regards the ratification of international conventions in this respect? Are long-term policies with a right-based approach and a high degree of social participation defined? Have the existing systems guaranteeing the right to education without any kind of discrimination been strengthened? How can the design of new legal frameworks be oriented towards more open inclusion policies? Does the Ministry of Education promote instances of legislative work in this respect?

It is evident that, in most cases, there is a significant distance between the laws and their effective fulfilment, which entails the risk that inclusive education has only a rhetorical space in educational reforms. The workshops in all regions made reference to this situation as regards inclusive education.

What level of real implementation do the laws and the political strategies as regards inclusive education have in the different countries?

The impact of poverty on education is more evident in some areas than in others, especially in rural areas or in the marginalized urban zones surrounding the big cities. All the preparatory regional workshops pointed out the importance of inclusive education as a tool to fight against poverty, adopting a wide range of institutional and pedagogical practices that make it possible to cater for the different needs of each population.

Within what framework are strategies and policies on inclusive education established? Is the provision of differential equipment and financial resources, as well as specific policies aimed at the most deprived populations, taken into account?

As poverty is a complex syndrome where many other elements apart from education are to be considered, the regional workshops suggested taking into consideration the needs of children and young people through a multi-sectoral comprehensive approach. These policy strategies, commonly used to cater for early childhood, should also be present in the education policy as a whole. Different social sectors can collaborate in activities, share funds and make a coordinated and comprehensive effort. The private sector can also take part in this shared action. Are there forums of public discussion on the needs of social and educational inclusion for the knowledge society? What is the effort made to learn about successful experiences in other countries as regards inclusion strategies? Are there inter-sectoral policies addressing the factors that generate exclusion from and within the education systems in an integral way? Are strategies of inter-sectoral and inter-institutional articulation at the local level defined? Do civil society, social actors, community groups and the representatives of the excluded participate in the design and implementation of these policies?

Inclusive education: Policy to Rhetoric but What about Practice?[1]

Within various educational interventionist research projects, that I have been involved in over the past 8 years an important factor has always arisen, that of policy—rhetoric versus practice. Within modern states and those of the third world are found too often socio-political structures and policies that appear to comply to human rights and equality but in depth research highlights massif contradictions of the nature mentioned above. I argue that implementation of change should firstly be undertaken at all levels, macro to micro, that is from political aspirations and practices to that of social structures, agents and finally families. Secondly for such practices to become enduring and meaningful each member of a society, of a social practice should be called to become aware of his and her beliefs in order to visualize, conceptualize and realize higher and more equal universal rights in general and educational rights in particular.

IBE workshops and conference outcomes over the past several years have resulted in an impressive clearly and extensively elaborated documented sent to all participants of this debate. The documents touch on all areas of the debate surrounding inclusive education from the definition to policy building, the dangers of such policies being translated into rhetoric but not into practice and the pragmatics of implementation on a national and multi-complex horizontal/vertical scale. This text shall therefore discuss within greater detail the problems linked to pragmatics of implementation, how and who for. This text shall discuss two different research fields that deal with educational implementation: 1) Switzerland and rhetoric/practice of refugee persons and 2) Botswana and the implementation of ICT in schools as a tool to understanding the complexities of inclusive education. Although these two fields are not comparable they both bring to the debate inconsistencies between rhetoric and practice due to a lack of knowledge of what is being changed, who is involved and how to go about it.

Case study 1: Refugee mothers and homework tasks in an area in Switzerland

Switzerland is comprised of 26 000 F permit holders[2] Various NGO's have complained to Swiss organizations about F permit holders suffering from institutional prejudices and exclusion from the society.[3] Due to the pertinence of the above findings, a subgroup of an organization "Suisses Immigres" developed the concept of a homework group, "*mère-enfant*", mother–child, to help immigrant mothers understand the Swiss school homework system. The ethos of this group is that the mothers have deficits and these are transmitted to their children and reflected within the production of their school work. People that have different histories and that probably have different values and norms need to find meaning and make sense of other social patterns of expression. Many "F" permit holders suffer from various illnesses in mind and body due to a lack of self worth and continuity of various "I/me's" due to society that requires of them to behave correctly without defining

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what and why.[4] As too many good intention projects end up as shipwrecks, the researcher proposed to make use of Change laboratories in order to "facilitate both intensive, deep transformations and continuous incremental improvement".[5] This resulted in a new charter being drawn up but the contradiction of "cultural perceptions of otherness" appeared difficult to negotiate at that time. That is to say, clarification of specific reasons as to why mothers remain largely within their homes where only vaguely inspected. A preconceived perception of mothers remaining at home because of cultural gender dictates was, for the group, the only motive that drove behaviour. Therefore learning was based on the teacher/escorts prerogatives and not on those of the learner. The elaboration of this project is not the intention here. What is of relevance is that after two years of intensive work with four refugee mothers it became clear that they face many difficulties in changing their perceptions and values of childrearing and education to those of the host society. The double bind of the host society's strong desire that they change and their difficulty to transform creates depression manifest many days spent suffering from feelings of loss of self worth and lack of orientation. The response is to stay behind closed doors and to watch television. As mentioned above projects come from above and not from a dynamic intermingling of notions of learner to learner. Children perceive and internalize their parents' feelings of exclusion and carry these with them into the school arena. Such images of self and world create deviant (non-normative) ways of interacting with school work and peers. Children that do not perform to school measurements are considered a problem and although in their rhetoric concepts of inclusive education are supported in reality the message is "I need to find a way to get rid of this child" and that is usually by sending him/her to the special education section.

Questions for debate:

- Are the socio-cultural historical concepts of education, ownership being perpetuated here?
- If so how does the concept of inclusive education propose to deal with this during implementation of new socio-educational concepts?

Case study 2: Botswana ICT project (Universities of Botswana and Helsinki)

Until 1961, primary schooling was completely financed by tribal treasuries, with some tribes spending up to 70% of their budgets on education. Between 1985 and 1994, the government launched a major program of secondary school construction.[6] As of 1999, public expenditure on education was estimated at 9.1% of GDP. Contemporary Botswana has a strong political commitment to education which is concretely manifest in the allocation of 20% of the national developmental budget.[7] The government aims to achieve

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[4] See: J. W. Berry, J. S. Phinney, D. L. Sam, & P. Vedder, Immigrant youth: Acculturation, identity and adaptation. *Applied psychology: An International Review, 2006;* D.S. Newnham, "Heart of thorns stem of roses. Cultural diversity. A case study of problems linked to integration in the classrooms." In *Navigating Multiculturalism Negotiating Change*, Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006.

[5] Y. Engeström, J. Virkkunen, M. Helle, J. Pihlaja, & R. Poikela, *The Change laboratory as a tool for transforming work*. Lifelong Learning in Europe, 1(2), 1996, pp. 10–17.

[6] http://www. nationsencyclopedia. com / Africa/Botswana

[7] A. E. Arua, P.G. Moanakwena, T. Rogers, R. J. Tierney & K. Lenters. *Improving the quality of literacy learning in the content areas. Situational analysis of secondary level education in Botswana*. UNESCO section for general secondary education, division of secondary, technical and vocational education. International reading association. Paris, UNESCO, 2005.

universal education. Education at the primary level lasts for seven years, though it is not compulsory. Implementation of educational facilities has followed a rapid upward curve in the past ten years without neglect of rural areas. At the same time, many teachers were formed to cope with the increasing educational demands. "In 1996 Botswana had 318,629 students and 12,785 teachers at the primary level and 109,843 students" enrolled in general secondary education, with 6,214 teachers. The pupil-teacher ratio at the primary level was 27 to 1 in 1999. As of 1999, 84% of primary-school-age children were enrolled in school, while 59% of those eligible attended secondary school.[8] In, Maruatona (1998) figures of 50:1 are elucidated for the future. In the region of Takatokwane, 2007 the student teacher ratio has risen to 40:1. The shift in statistics appears to be due to penury of teaching staff and an increasing number of students. The national education department of Botswana appears well aware of the initiatives that need to be taken and maintain that "the practical difficulties in the short and medium term should not be underestimated. The possible expansion of education is limited by the pace of national development in a variety of other areas".[9] In line with UNESCO's Education for All (EFA) goal, the Government of Botswana provides ten year universal access to basic education, which consists of seven years of primary education and three years of junior secondary education. As NDP 9 indicates[10], "a 100% transition rate from primary education to junior secondary education has been achieved."[11] However, the reader needs to be aware that "there is no legal right to education in Botswana and to complicate matters the Constitution provides that a child under the age of 18 can be kept in school by his/her parents or by a court order without his/her consent. In other words, the Education Act provides that a child may start school at 7 years, but school attendance is not compulsory."[12] Children therefore decide to not go to school and many parents say that "they have no way of talking to them". Ideologically, the aim of providing EFA, as enunciated in Botswana's Vision 2016, is to build an educated and informed nation. Education is thus seen "…as investment that will lead to a higher quality of human capacity and productivity in the future, and to a better quality of life for everyone"[13] Within "A long term vision for Botswana-Vision 2016" the global aspirations of most Batswana are clearly enunciated; "Botswana will have a system of quality education that is able to adapt to the changing needs of the country as the world around us changes".

In the field (2007-2008) it was found that Botswana is faced with a massive task. The last statistics obtained from a Health clinic in Botswana were as high as 33% of women. The head reported that men would not be tested. Due to several reasons many children are orphans and teachers say that they are difficult to teach as the government gives them food baskets and so they will not listen to anyone. Dropout rates are moderately high 7 for 1200 students. However deficit school results are spectacular. In a school of 900 students in a junior secondary school in a rural area as many as 70% achieved less than 40% in their final grades. Teachers blame this on parents' lack of interest and high alcohol consumption and parents in turn blame it on modern technology that corrupted their children's minds.

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[8] http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Botswana-EDUCATION.
[9] *Vision 2016*, p. 30.
[10] Government of Botswana, 2003, p. 272.
[11] http://www.unesco.org/education.
[12] *Dow and Mogwe—The Rights of the Child in Botswana*, UNICEF, Gaborone, June 1992.
[13] Government of Botswana, 1997, p. 28; A. E. Arua, P.G. Moanakwena, T. Rogers, R. J. Tierney & K. Lenters, UNESCO, 2005, *cit.*

Visually impaired do not have brailed text books and lack specialized teachers. Many teachers are not in the classrooms in the afternoons so much so that a school principal devised a system where inspectors would check teacher presence at random moments of the day. Teaching pedagogy is under question in Botswana. There is a lack of cross curriculum teaching both horizontally and vertically. It has been found that teaching is "basically anti-dialogic and designed to stifle the potential of the learners to develop a critical perspective towards the programme they are taught". This promotion of silence in the classroom happens across the curriculum because the learning situation is teacher-centred rather than learner-centred. Arua et al. observed that subject areas are taught in isolation including literacy and computer studies. Teachers are apparently not using these tools to stimulate learners' problem solving, inquiry or critical thinking strategies. They therefore suggest that teaching should be more learners orientated. While this is part of the answer it was found that the teacher and organizational institutions do not collaborate. [14] Tabularwa, a professor at the University of Botswana provokes thought with his argument on western cultural perception and practice being infused into developing countries through curriculum and pedagogy. Is this the reason or is it due to teacher transfers to areas that de-motivate them as they are far away from their families, lack of materials, low wages, and lack of leadership?

Questions for debate

- If protagonists of these countries believe that western pedagogy infuses western nations' cultural practices into developing countries, then how does this reflect inclusive education?
- Is the resistance to finding ways to make it work a cultural manifestation of national identity?
- If so, how does a system go about changing teacher /school attitude and practice and parents/students attitude and practice?

The conception of policy changes do not appear to be too problematic due to several communities and specialists debating on such issues, rhetoric was found to largely reflect policies drawn up but to bridge the two to practice appears to be problematic even when time is not a factor. I argue that there needs to be an ongoing questioning at all levels of the society vertically and horizontally for such massif socio-cultural change to be successfully realized. If this is not done then all that is obtained is a practice that is "going through the motions" verbally but practically repeating old models. Through the use of an intervention method called Change laboratories schools and ministries can be guided to negotiate such massif socio-cultural change.

Our intervention in ICT implementation in Botswana makes use of Developmental work research in order "facilitate both intensive, deep transformations and continuous incremental improvement".[15] Two models of the DWR shall be displayed below.

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[14] A. E. Arua, P.G. Moanakwena, T. Rogers, R. J. Tierney & K. Lenters, UNESCO, 2005, *cit.*
[15] Engeström, et al., i*bid.*

• J. Virkkunen, from the Developmental Work Research centre at Helsinki University proposes a multilayered model of interaction where school is seen to be part of the wider socio-cultural environment and where each component and the interconnecting relations of each activity is scrutinized.[16]

Expansive instrumentalization

INSTRUMENTS
A new artifact made into a collective instrument

A NEW ROLE AND IDENTITY OF THE SUBJECT
SUBJECT

PRODUCTION

EXPANDED OBJECT > OUTCOME
OBJECT > OUTCOME

EXCHANGE

DISTRIBUTION

NEW RULES
RULES

EXPANDED COMMUNITY
COMMUNITY

NEW DIVISION OF LABOUR
DIVISION OF LABOUR
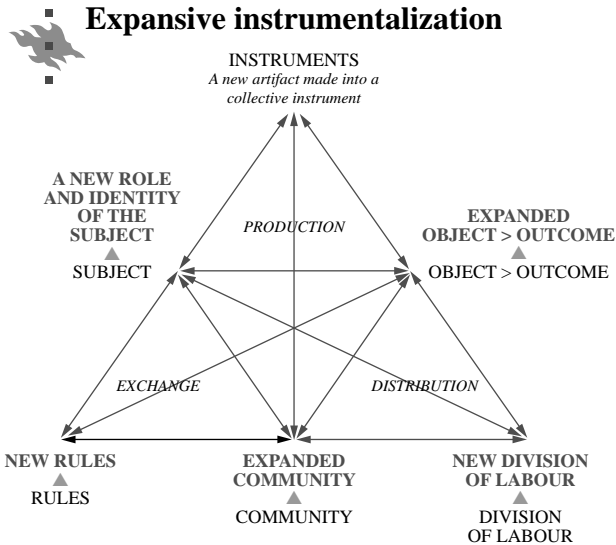
Reconceptualizing the object and outcome of the joint activity.
Creating a new form of the activity.

Definition of terms utilized:

Subject: the individual/subgroup chosen as the point of view in the analysis.
Tools: physical or psychological.
Community: individuals/subgroups who share the same general object.
Division of labor: division of tasks between members of the community.
Rules: explicit/implicit regulations, norms, conventions that constrains action/interaction
Object: "the "raw material' or "problem space' at which the activity is directed and which is molded or transformed into outcomes" "The object is depicted with the help of an oval indicating that object-oriented actions are always, explicitly or implicitly, characterized by ambiguity, surprise, interpretation, sense making, and potential for change" (Engestrom, 1999a).

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16 J. Virkkunen, (not released) Making new ICT artifacts into instruments in teachers and students' practices in schools.

Yamazumi using the same theoretical concepts has elaborated his diagram to include several activities to intervene with and understand socio-cultural change in an educational system in Japan.[17]
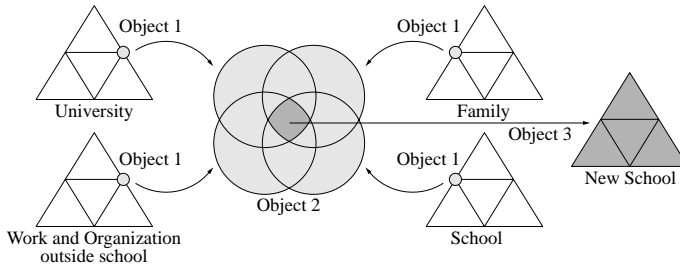
The object needs to be understood as the driving force behind change. Each triangle represents and activity system and the all activity systems need to be brought to an awareness of a common object which here is the design of a new school, a new school that represents and interweaves with its socio-cultural and natural environment.[18]

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[17] K. Yamazumi. (not released). Not from the Inside Alone but by Hybrid Forms of Activity: Toward an Expansion of School Learning.

[18] See also: Y. Engestrom, "Expansive visibilization of work : An activity-theoretical perspective." In *Computer Supported Cooperative Work,* Netherlands, Kluwer academic publishers, vol. 8, 1999, pp. 63–93; Y. Engestrom, "Innovative learning in work teams: Analyzing cycles of knowledge creation in practice." In *Perspectives on Activity Theory*, Y. Engeström, R. Miettinen, R.-L Punamäki,. (Eds), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999a; B. Goalathe,. *Long term vision for Botswana. Towards prosperity for all.* Presidential task group for a long term vision for Botswana, 1997; K. Hiwaki,. *Developing Creativity: A Sound Culture for Sound Creativity. CD-ROM Culture for Sound Creativity. CD-ROM Proceedings of the Third Intern.* Workshop "Developing Creativity and literacy. 2006 ; D.S Newnham, *Les solutions ne s'achètent pas au supermarché* [Answers are not available in the supermarket]. Educateur, Monthey, Imprimerie Montfort SA, 2005 ; K. Winograd, *Complexity in Paradise. International aid agencies, learner-centred pedagogy and political democratization.* Review of an article. Blog chronicles, 2007.

Responding to Diversity and Striving for Excellence

An Analysis of International Comparisons of Learning Outcomes with a Particular Focus on Finland[1]

Introduction

Discussion on inclusive education had developed through several phases and involved many different discourses.[2] An additional distinction is that whereas much of the earlier discussion on inclusive education originated from within the field of special education, today inclusive education is most often understood as a wider process of building a "school for all". Inclusive education is conceptualized more as an effort to build schools systems that welcome all children rather than identifying those students who are at risk of being excluded and then devising mechanisms for integrating these students (back) to school.

There are many barriers, like attitudes and inadequate funding, on the road towards more inclusive education. A comment too often heard is that it is not realistic to talk about access to all disabled students given the challenging situation of millions of children currently excluded from basic education and the dire need of more educated teachers in many poor countries. The recently effected Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons provides a good counter argument to this claim: according to this new human rights instrument signed by 136 countries and ratified by 41 countries the state parties have agreed that nobody can be excluded from education on the basis of disability.[3] However, one major challenge is: how to increase availability of education and the quality of education at the same time. This challenge is well recognized within the Education for All movement and it is understandable that there are doubts whether the goals of increased participation rates will override issues of quality.

The purpose of this paper is to address this very question whether and how is it possible to reform education system and strive both for increased equity and improved quality. I approach this question first by a short review of some study findings on the outcomes of inclusive education and special education, especially findings on what effects do they have on the learning outcomes of students. Secondly I will discuss the Finnish education system, introducing first the recent findings on the international student achievement studies, especially PISA[4] studies. After this I will discuss role of educational policies and the role of existing support service system (especially special education) in producing the Finnish outcomes. Finally I will make conclusions on what the studies and comparisons and our knowledge of the Finnish education system performance suggest on the topic of the paper and claim that striving for excellence and equity at the same time are not necessarily competing objectives for educational reforms.

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[1] Prepared by Hannu Savolainen, Professor, Department of Special Eucation, University of Joensuu, Finland.

[2] A. Dyson, "Inclusion and inclusions: theories and discourses in inclusive education". In *Inclusive education. World yearbook of education 1999*, H. Daniels & P. Garner (Eds.), London, Kogan Page, 1999, pp. 36–53.

[3] United Nations. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, http://www.un.org/disabilities/.

[4] OECD Programme for International Student Assessment.

Review of research on the effects of inclusive education and special educational interventions

For many obvious reasons, it is very difficult to find conclusive research evidence on the effectiveness or outcomes of inclusive education. First, inclusive education is usually understood as a goal but also as a process. This process is undoubtedly well under way in many countries but truly inclusive systems (on a nation-wide scale) do not exist. Secondly it is difficult to find evidence on the effects of educational approaches (inclusive education, special education) on a large scale as there are no matching comparison or control groups. That is, while we may observe for example that special education systems leads into less than satisfactory learning and social outcomes at the individual level we do not know what would the outcomes have been if the services had not been there. A second example, while we may always discuss the costs of building an inclusive education system with all reasonable accommodations in place, we cannot exactly estimate what the costs would be if nothing was done. One possibility to evaluate effectiveness of inclusive education is to see whether the level of inclusiveness is related to outcomes. This is an approach taken by a group of researchers using very large sample of students records in England to find whether the level of inclusion, defined as the number of pupils identified as having special educational needs studying in mainstream class, has any effect on social or academic outcomes of the schools. The major finding from the study were that the effects of inclusivity, although mostly negative, were very small and could probably be explained by for example the fact that the schools with higher levels of inclusivity tended to be school serving a more disadvantaged, i.e. lower attaining student populations.[5] Somewhat similar outcomes were presented in a review of other studies on the effects of inclusivity on the academic and social outcomes of education.[6] Although the 40 different findings in the analysis were somewhat mixed, the effects of inclusivity were mostly neutral (53%) and the proportion of findings on positive impact (23%) was higher than the proportion of negative impacts (15%). The authors then concluded that "*findings indicate that placing children with SEN in mainstream schools is unlikely to have a negative impact on academic and social outcomes for pupils without SEN*".

The second interesting approach is to see what research evidence tells us on the effects of special education. The problem in many experimental studies is that they are based on relatively small samples that are not representative of the national education system they belong to. One way around this obvious challenge is to collect findings from several studies as was done by Forness who published a meta-study based on several previous meta—studies.[7] The idea of a meta-study is to systematically compare the findings (usually expressed as effect sizes) found in different studies and come to an average effect found in a large sample of studies. Conclusions based on such a study are naturally more credible than findings in a single study. The interesting outcome of this meta-study was that the interventions addressing learning directly (e.g. direct teaching, reading comprehension

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[5]   A. Dyson, P. Farrwel, F. Polat, G. Hutcheson, & F. Gallannaugh, *Inclusion and pupil achievement*. Department for Education and skills, Research Report, n° 578, University of Newcastle, 2004.

[6]   A. Kalambouka, P. Farrell, A. Dyson & I. Kaplan, "The impact of population inclusivity in schools on student outcomes." In *Research Evidence in Education Library*. London: EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London, 2005.

[7]   S. Forness, "Special education and related services: what have we learned from meta-analysis." *Exceptionality 9,* 2001, pp. 185–197.

strategies, behaviour modification) seem to be more effective than the approaches that are targeted to some theoretically defined and assumed prerequisites of learning (e.g. psycholinguistic training, modality instruction). Furthermore, unlike commonly expected, the positive effect of reducing class size was minimal and the effect of special class placement was not only small but also negative. Forness concludes that *"Special education interventions that emphasize 'education' are far more effective than 'special' education practices that attempt to treat special education students by overcoming negative effects on learning caused by a variety of hypothetical and unobservable constructs (e.g., modality and perceptual-motor factors)"*.[8]

Finnish education system—policies for quality and equity

Finnish education system has got a lot of attention in the recent years, mainly because of the good results in the international learning outcomes comparisons (PISA). From the Finnish perspective, the major finding has been that Finnish 9th grade students are top achievers in reading literacy (PISA 2000), mathematics (PISA 2003) and in science (PISA 2006).[9] An interesting observation in these results is that not only the average performance of Finnish students is good but also the variance of results between schools of between students from different socio-economic background is very small.[10] Thus the Finnish education system seems to have succeeded in producing learning outcomes both with high quality and excellent geographical and social equity. Achievement results of the growing number of immigrant students or students whose mother tongue is not Finnish or Swedish (the two official languages) are clearly lower than the results of other students, especially in reading literacy. However, the difference in mathematics is smaller and the Finnish immigrant students' mathematics results are very close to the OECD average of non-immigrant students and higher than e.g. the average for non-immigrant students in the United States.[11] Results on gender equity are not as promising as there seems to be relatively large difference on the average outcomes of male and female students, although the difference in reading literacy has decreased.[12]

All these results are quite convincing, but perhaps even more interesting is the finding that the positive difference between the performance of Finnish students and the OECD average is highest among students in the lowest achievement percentiles. As figure 1 shows the Finnish students' performance is clearly above the OECD average across the ranges of different achievement levels, but the difference increases towards the lower achievement levels described in figure 1 by percentile groups.

8   *Ibid.* p. 192.
9   OECD, *Knowledge and Skills for Life. First results from PISA 2000.* Paris, OECD, 2001; OECD, *Learning for Tomorrow's World. First results from PISA 2003,* Paris. OECD, 2004; OECD, *PISA 2006. Science Competencies for Tomorrow's World,* vol. 1. 1, 2006.
10 J. Kivirauma, & K. Ruoho, "Excellence through special education? Lessons from the Finnish school reform." In *Review of Education*, n° 53, 2007. pp. 283–302.
11 T. Itkonen & M. Jahnukainen, "An analysis of accountability policies in Finland and the United States." In *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, n° 54 (1), 2007, pp. 5–23.
12 P. Kupari, J. Välijärvi, P. Linnakylä, P. Reinikainen, V. Brunell, & K. Leino, et al. Nuoret osaajat. PISA 2003 etutkimuksen ensituloksia. [Young learners. First results of PISA 2003 study]. Jyväskylä, Koulutuksen tutkimuslaitos. 2004.
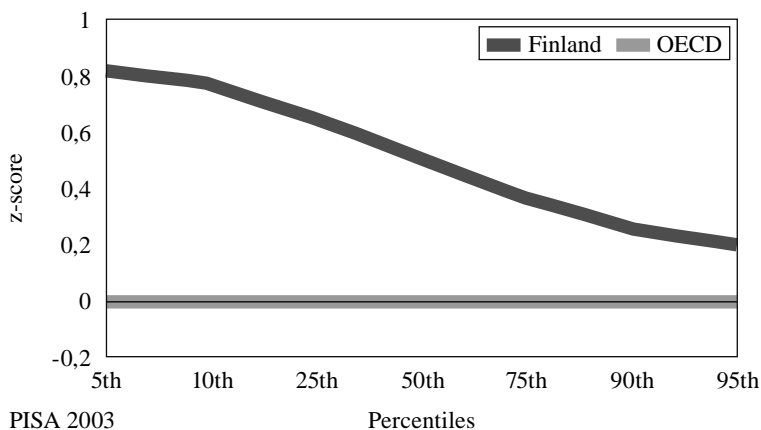
Figure 1: Reading comprehension performance of Finnish 9th grades by percentiles compared to that of the average of students in the OECD countries.[13]

Explanations for the Finnish success are many and several authors have discussed the issue in recent years. There are no easy explanations, as the result is probably caused by many intertwining factors. However, for the purposes of this paper the following two perspectives of explanation deserve a closer look: the role of educational policies and the role of existing learning support services, especially part-time special education, in producing the Finnish outcomes.

Educational policy for equity and excellence

The development of Finland into an education society is quite recent and is based on the establishment of the Nordic type of welfare state. The important features of this Nordic model are: citizens equal rights, responsibility of public authority for the welfare of all citizens, narrowing difference in income and gender equality, goal of full employment. The starting point of the development of the education system for the welfare state was the extension of the compulsory education into nine years which lead into the comprehensive school reform implemented in Finland in the 1970s, few years later than in Sweden.[14] This reform was quite radical. In the former school system pupils were divided after fourth grade into two streams, the grammar school and the civic school, first of which was sometimes described as suitable for the "theoretically gifted" and the other for the "practically gifted".[15] In the comprehensive school reform ideology education was seen as an important way to carry out broader social reforms. Comprehensive school reform aimed at increasing both the socio-cultural, geographical and gender equity.

[13] S. Moberg, & H. Savolainen, "Reading literacy and special education—The particular case of Finland." In *Proceedings of the Symposium on Special Pedagogy. State of the art in practical work, research and education,* A. Lascioli & M. Onder (Eds.), Verona, University of Verona, 2006, pp. 481– 494.

[14] A. Antikainen, "In search of the Nordic model in education." In *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, n° 50 (3), 2006, pp. 229–243.

[15] J. Kivirauma, K. Klemelä, and R. Rinne, "Segregation, integration, inclusion—the ideology and reality in Finland." In *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, n° 21 (2), 2006, p.117–133.

The reform was preceded by active political debate in Finland, just like in Sweden a few years earlier. Some of the arguments given in Finland in 1960s were interesting in that they were very similar to arguments given in the inclusive education debate during recent years. For example, prior to the implementation of the reform, some politicians were worried that a unified comprehensive school would be a threat for the quality of education, especially from the point of view of the most gifted children. Other fears expressed were e.g. that comprehensive school would be too demanding for students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds, diversity would lead into disciplinary problems and all this would be a threat for the learning of majority of students and the working conditions of the teachers. The debate over comprehensive schooling was active and much more politicised as the debate of inclusive education today.[16] (Rossi 2007). Nevertheless comprehensive school reform was gradually introduced throughout the country in the 1970s.[17]

The foreseeable challenges created by the increasing diversity were met by encouraging teachers to adopt principles of differentiated teaching and by creating a system of part-time special education that will be dealt in detail below.[18]

The principles of policy reform implemented with the gradual development of the comprehensive school system in Finland have proved to be different from the policies adopted by many other industrialised countries. According to Sahlberg there have been three major education policy reform strategies that have been globally introduced to improve the quality of education. These are (i) standardization of education, (ii) increased focus on literacy and numeracy and (iii) consequential accountability. Educational policies in Finland have taken different routes in all these aspects. For example whereas many countries have introduced centrally prescribed performance standards for schools, teachers and students as a mechanism to increase quality, Finnish system has continued to trust on building on good practices and school-based curriculum development and setting of learning targets. Also instead of a strong focus on literacy and numeracy, Finnish educational policy has taken a more broad approach giving more equal value to different aspects of individual growth, creativity, knowledge and skills. The third approach, consequential accountability where school funding is connected to their performance, measured often with standardised testing of students, has not been adopted at all in Finland. Instead of this the Finnish educational policy has been based on what Sahlberg calls "intellectual accountability with trust based professionalism". Intellectual accountability refers to an approach where schools are accountable for learning outcomes and education authorities are held accountable to schools for making expected outcomes possible.[19]

[16] J. Rossi,. *Erityisopetusdiskurssin määrittyminen koulutuspoliittisessa valtiopäiväkeskustelussa vuosina 1963–2002.* [The determination of special education's discourse in parliamentary sessions during 1963—2002]. University of Joensuu, Faculty of Education, Department of Special Education, Master's Thesis, 2007.

[17] Comprehensive school system was adopted gradually starting from the northern part of the country and moving gradually to the southern regions.

[18] E. Kangasniemi, *Valmistakaa tietä peruskoululle; peruskoulun väliaikaisesta Opetussuunnitelmasta 30-vuotta* [Ready for basic education—30 years of primary school's provisional curriculum]. Kasvatus 28 (5), 1997, pp. 415–428.

[19] P. Sahlberg, "Education policies for raising student learning: the Finnish approach." In *Journal of Educational Policy,* no 22 (2), 2007, pp. 147–171.

Some authors have argued that an accountability policy based on the comparative success of schools is likely to use sanctions like reduction of government support for the failing schools. However if the policy is framed around equity its implementation is more likely to include ways of capacity building and distribution of additional resources. It is very interesting that many countries that show good outcomes in international achievement outcomes comparisons, like Finland and South Korea, have adopted the latter approach which involves giving additional resources to schools that have more disadvantaged students.[20]

An important feature in the Finnish educational policy is that measurement of student achievement is largely left as the responsibility of individual schools and no standardised achievement tests are taken in the Finnish comprehensive school[21]. Furthermore it is a common practise that numerical grades are given for students only from sixth grade onwards. Before that descriptive verbal evaluations are given and parents are invited to elementary schools together with their child at the end of each school year to discuss teacher evaluation which is often compared to child self-evaluation.

In the Finnish system much responsibility on building the curriculum details and assessing how well students meet the objectives set in the curriculum is left at the local school district and school level. One reason why this kind of flexible policy seems to work well is that is based on what Sahlberg calls a "culture of trust".[22] This culture of trust can be described as an approach where "education authorities and political leaders believe that teachers, together with principals, parents and their communities, know how to provide the best possible education for their children and youth". The culture of trust must be a two-way street: authorities trust the education professionals; the professionals have to value themselves as professional educators and trust that their leaders respect them and do their best to facilitate good resources for teaching.

An important factor behind this kind or working culture is also the overall status of teaching profession, which in Finland is relatively high. This fact is established in many studies.[23] Important factor in the teachers' professional status is the fact that teacher education for elementary school classroom teachers, special education teachers and subject teachers have since late 1970s been carried out in universities in different Masters Degree programmes. Elementary school teachers and special education teacher have their own degree programmes and subject teachers take a 60 ECTS pedagogical study programme together with their major and minor subject studies. Interesting anecdotal evidence was published recently in a Finnish newspaper that had commissioned a Gallup study (representative of the population of Finnish people between 15-74 years) on the importance of occupations for selecting a spouse or a partner and asked the interviewees to name five favourite occupations in this regard. For female respondents teacher's

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[20] T. Itkonen & M. Jahnukainen, 2007, *cit.*

[21] In fact the only real nationally standardized test is the matriculation examination taken at the end of upper secondary education (the 12th grade of the academic track of secondary education).

[22] P. Sahlberg, 2007, *cit.*

[23] E.g.: A-R. Nummenmaa, & J. Välijärvi, Opettajan työ ja oppiminen. [Teacher's work and learning]. In *Koulutuksen tutkimuslaitos,* Jyväskylän yliopisto, 2006.

occupation was on third position right after doctor and veterinarian and for males teacher ranked first before nurse, doctor and architect.[24]

Importance of good teachers for quality education is emphasised also in a recent comparison of 25 school systems world-wide that sought to find what is typical for the top ten education systems in the world and what might explain why their students perform so well compared to others.[25] Two of the major explanations were related to the quality of teachers. The top ten countries seem to get the "right" people to become teachers, because they enough applicants and use more elective mechanisms for selecting people of teacher education. The selection is usually done before teacher education. Although in these countries teachers' starting salaries are at or above the OECD average (relative to per capita income), most of them spend to education less than OECD countries on the average. The other common feature in the top ten countries was that they seem to be able to develop their teachers into effective instructors. Some of the ways to accomplish this are that their teachers can build practical skills during the initial teacher training, coaches are placed in schools to support teachers, education systems manage to select and develop effective instructional leaders and teachers are enabled to learn from each other.

In summary, the policy approach taken by Finland show that an education policy aimed at equity may also lead into good achievement outcomes, that is, be both "socially" and financially cost-effective.

Increasing the learning outcomes by supporting the disadvantaged

The comprehensive school reform implied changes in the special education system. Special education had been a separate system but now pressures increased to bring it closer to regular education. A major change was that a wholly new form of special education, part-time special education, was introduced by the comprehensive school act in 1968. Part-time special education was introduced as an essential part of the new educational policy as it was foreseen that increased heterogeneity in the 9-year comprehensive school would bring about pedagogical challenges that needed new kind of attention.[26] What makes part-time special education different from traditional types of special education, is, that students do not have to be diagnosed with a problem or disability to be eligible for this support. Instead, part-time special education support can be launched immediately when a child has difficulties in school and both the intensity and duration of the support can vary according to individual needs. The traditional special education support that involves an official decision on eligibility for special education, given usually by local schools boards, has continued to co-exist with part-time special education, and a common feature has been that the scope both types of support have continued to increase (see figure 2).

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[24] Helsingin Sanomat (HS). Koulutuslilite 27.2.2008. [Helsingin Sanomat newspaper, Educational supplement].

[25] McKinsey & Company. *How the world's best performing school systems come out on top,* 2007, http://www.mckinsey.com/locations/ukireland/publications/pdf/Education_report.pdf.

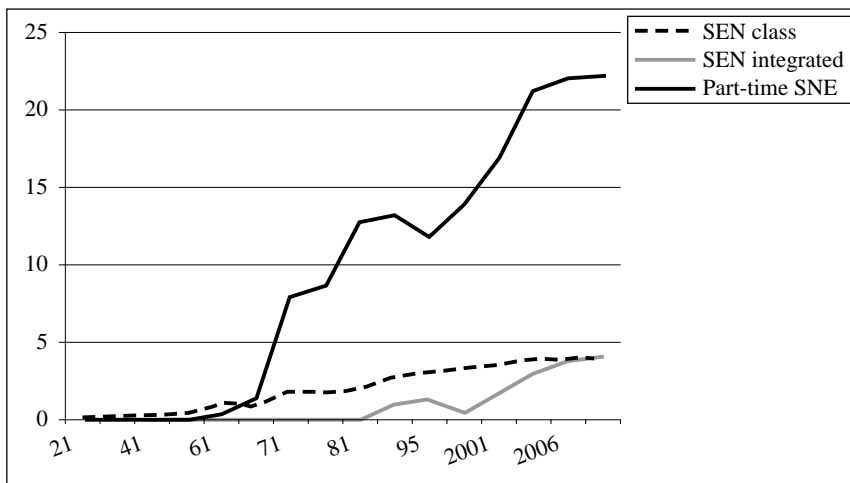[26] J. Kivirauma, & K. Ruoho, 2007, *cit.*

Figure 2. Development of special needs education services in Finland

According to latest statistics 8,1% of students have been identified as having special educational needs and are given instruction either in special schools, special classes or in an partially or fully integrated arrangement with mainstream education classrooms. Three distinctive features in the development of these forms of services can be noted. First the major reason for the latest quite sharp increase in the number of students identified as having special educational needs is in the increased support given in integrated arrangements. The integrated learning arrangements include today more than half of all students identified as having special educational needs. Second, the proportion of students being taught in special schools has clearly been decreasing. Third, part time special education provision has continuously increased with the exception of the short decline in the middle of 1990s. It cannot be a coincidence that during this very time Finland experienced heavy economic recession and banking crises.[27]

Typical to the Finnish comprehensive education system is its profile of giving extensive support services for learning problems through the two types of special education. These services, in particular part-time special education, are targeted especially to first few school years in comprehensive education and to supporting pupils in learning basic skills in literacy and numeracy.[28] It would not be reasonable to say that special education is a separate system of education in Finland today. Vast majority of special education support is given within the mainstream school campuses where special education teachers are part of the staff of the local school. Special education teachers are trained in two types of programmes. The traditional form of training is a post-graduate diploma training that already graduated teachers (with Masters Degrees) can complete while partially working

[27] M. Jahnukainen, Laman lapset. Peruskoulussa erityisopetusta saaneiden oppilaiden osuuksien tarkastelua vuodesta 1987 vuoteen 2001. [Children or depression. Review of numbers of students receiving special education from 1987 to 2001]. *Yhteiskuntapolitiikka*, n° 68, n° 5, 2003, pp. 501–507.
[28] J. Kivirauma, & K. Ruoho, 2007, *cit*.

during one year's time. The other type of training is directly through Masters Degree Programme giving qualification both for elementary teacher post and different special education positions. Training is not organized in disability oriented streams but rather aimed at giving wide variety of knowledge and skills that can be applied in various settings and situations.

The reasons for the increase of the special education in its two forms are many and discussed from various perspectives, but it is probably impossible to provide any simple set of conclusive reasons. For the purposes of this paper it is sufficient to conclude that the increase is a developmental process where special education system has reacted both to the pressures created by the comprehensive education system with its increased academic demands and the individual learning needs of pupils.

Although we must be critical toward this rapid increase in special education support, we cannot avoid making the hypothesis, that perhaps this support targeted to disadvantaged students is at least a partial explanation of the PISA results that showed clearly that the proportion of poorly performing students is lower in Finland than in the OECD countries on the average. Furthermore, those who perform poorly are far better than their poorly performing counterparts in other countries. Two further arguments can be given as evidence for this hypothesis. First, the performance of Finnish students has not always been so excellent. For example a look at earlier comparative studies shows that Finnish students performance in mathematics show gradual improvement from early 1980s position that was slightly below the international average to the current top position in PISA.[29] Second, a Finnish study compared equally representative and comparable samples of 9th graders that were tested with exactly the same reading comprehension instrument in 1965 and 2005.[30] The results showed, first, that reading literacy skills of the youth today are far better than the skills of the students 40 years ago, i.e. a few years before the comprehensive school reform, was implemented. Second, the difference between the performance of students across the achievement percentiles showed the same pattern as found in the PISA studies: especially the students belonging to the lowest percentile categories were far better than their counterparts 40 year ago (see figure 3).

These findings suggest that comprehensive school has gradually succeeded in narrowing the gap of achievement between good and poor students. This increase in equity of achievement has taken place during a time marked with an increase of special education support, in particular that of the part time special education support.

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[29] P. Sahlberg, 2007, *cit.* p. 160.

[30] S. Moberg & H. Savolainen, "Suomalaisten 9- ja 15-vuotiaiden lukutaidon muutos 1960-luvulta 2000-luvulle." [Changes in reading skills of 9 to 15-year-old Finnish pupils from the 1960s to 2000s]. *Kasvatus* 39 (1), 2008, pp. 31–38.
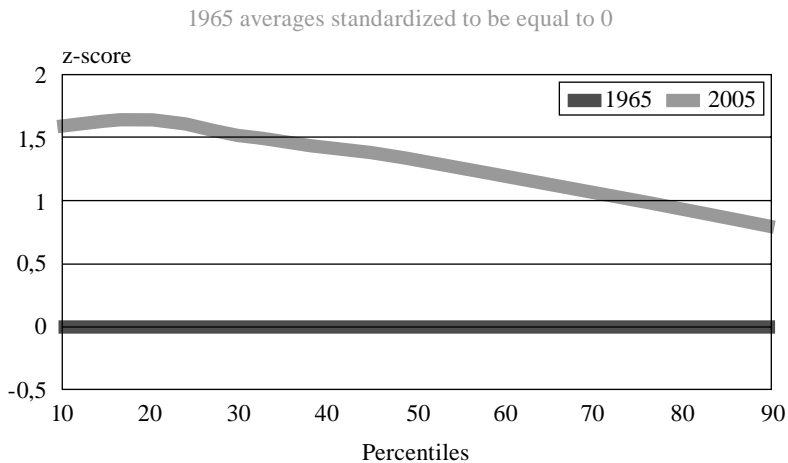
Figure 3. Reading comprehension performance of Finnish 9th graders by percentiles in 2005 compared to that in 1965[31]

Conclusions

The major conclusions of this paper can be expressed by the following statements:

- The role of teachers and special education teachers is central as facilitators of inclusive education.
- Classroom practices are more important than classroom settings.
- Increasing equity can also lead into increased quality.

The role of teachers is essential in good quality education. As the recent study highlighting the role of teachers in the top ten countries in the world put it "The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers".[32] It is perhaps surprising how few studies there are on teacher effects on learning outcomes as compared to numbers of studies on different teaching methods or other educational interventions. However those few that exist clearly suggest that teacher effect may be much higher than the effect of other factors like class size, the reduction of which is often proposed as a remedy for increasing quality. Development of good standards for teacher education and getting the "right" persons to become teachers should without a doubt be an essential part of an educational policy that aims to building good quality education systems.

It is very interesting that studies suggest that pupil heterogeneity in a classroom seems to have a smaller effect compared to that of the teacher quality.[33] This finding probably at least partially explains the fact that special class placement as such has not shown

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[31] *Ibid.*
[32] McKinsey & Company, 2007, *cit.*
[33] McKinsey & Company. 2007, *cit.*

to be an effective intervention across multiple studies.[34] From this we might conclude that what actually happens inside the classroom, how teacher teaches and what kind of interaction students and teacher have may be much more important in producing good learning outcomes than the class arrangement or setting as such. The large scale study in England clearly supports this hypothesis: increased classroom inclusivity did not have any meaningful negative effect on the learning outcomes of students.[35] Thus, inclusive classrooms that welcome all learners with different abilities and interests should not be regarded as a threat to quality of learning.

Finally striving for equity does not mean a threat to quality, quite contrary, an education policy approach aiming for equity can lead into increased quality. Both the analysis of the Finnish education system reform and its results and comparison of countries with best student achievement outcomes give support to this claim. Increased equity was the leading philosophical and practical principle in the Finnish education system reform that led into the current comprehensive school with a unified curriculum for the first nine school years. Despite of the increased heterogeneity, the school system has become one of the top systems in the world and at the same time increased geographical and social equity and narrowed down the achievement gap between poor and good learners.

The findings in the analysis of the top ten education systems confirm this idea: a common feature to all top education systems was they systematically aim at delivering good education for every child. Part of this process is that these systems not only set high expectations for what all students should achieve but also target resources to the students that need them the most. All this requires close monitoring of learning outcomes both at the school and student level.[36] Having an extensive learning support system a major part of which is part-time special education for students who have difficulties in learning is a typical feature of the Finnish education system. There are good reasons to argue that this extensive special education learning support is an important factor behind the good learning outcomes of Finnish students. Building the part time special education system was one of the policy decisions on which the education system reform was built. This approach together with the decisions to follow a policy approach different from many other OECD countries with regard to e.g. student testing and accountability seem to have been effective in producing both equity and quality.

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[34] S. Forness, 2001, *cit.*

[35] A. Dyson, P. Farrwel, F. Polat, G. Hutcheson, & F. Gallannaugh, 2004, *cit.*

[36] McKinsey & Company, 2007, *cit.*

Inclusive Education: Public Policies[1]

This paper answers four questions developed for this sub-theme by the conference organizers.

What are the current dimensions of the phenomenon of exclusion from and within education? What kind of indicators and data are used to inform inclusive education policies?

Katarina Tomasevski, a Special Rapporteur on the right to education of the UN Commission on Human Rights, tells us that the first step in exposing exclusion is to ask the big Why? She convincingly argues that quantifications rather than causal analysis have become a hallmark of every international strategy. In education, poverty is typically quantified and treated as a given in terms of exclusion. However, "if we fail to ask why people are poor, we cannot tackle poverty when it results from denials of human rights."[2]

The structural antecedents of the systemic links between poverty and other status markers such as race, and disability are rarely considered in research and policy in terms of asking the big Why? For example, in the United States, African-American children are over-represented within the special education category of mental retardation in 38 of the 50 states. In five of these states, the rate is four times greater than a white child.[3] Artiles argues that this over-representation is related to the structural correlates of poverty, e.g.; resource-poor schools, poor or non-existent affordable health care/social services) and the social structures of educational settings (e.g., attitudinal barriers to participation).[4]

The dimensions and structural correlates of exclusion named above are probably best illuminated by referring to Tomasevski's itemization of the contemporary pattern of exclusion.

To answer the second question in this section, statistical census-taking is most often used to inform inclusive education policies. It is thought that numbers reveal the extent and scope of a problem as well as assist policy-makers in assessing supply and demand for access to a given service. In addition, demographic data provide decision-makers with information needed to target services to specific geographic areas (urban or rural), age-groups (infants, children/youth adults) and other important status markers (gender, race, economic level). However, numbers alone do not tell the whole story. Data sources are not reliable due to significant cultural, economic and political factors. In addition, statistics are easily manipulated through policy decisions involving priorities, quotas, and funding formulas. For example, the United States spends as much as 40% of the education budgets allocated to "special education" for the purposes of diagnosing and labeling children with mild (and often "hidden" disabilities) such as those labeled as learning disabled (LD). Currently, in the US, almost 50% of six million children receive special education services under the label of learning disability. The definition of LD is highly contested, with some

[1] Prepared by S.J. Peters, Associate Professor, Michigan State University, United States.
[2] K. Tomasevski, *Education denied: costs and remedies*. London, Zed Books, 2003, p. 126.
[3] T. Parrish, Racial disparities in the identification, funding and provision of special education. In *Racial Inequity in Special Education*. D. O. G. Losen, (Ed.), Cambridge: Harvard Education Press, 2002, p. 21.
[4] A. J. Artiles, Special education's changing identity: Paradoxes and dilemmas in views of culture and space. In *Harvard Educational Review*, vol. 73(2), 2003, pp. 164–202.

Tomasevski's Exclusion from education from A to W[5]

Abandoned children	Indigenous children
Abused children	Institutionalized children
Arrested children	Married children
Asylum-seeking children	Mentally ill children
Beggars	Migrant children
Child Labourers	Nomadic children
Child mothers	Orphans
Child prostitutes	Poor children, children of poor parents
Children born out of wedlock	Pregnant girls
Conscripted children	Refugee children
Delinquent children	Rural children
Detained children	Sans-papiers, children without identity
Disabled children	papers
Domestic servants	Sexually exploited children
Drug-using children	Sold and purchased children
Girls	Stateless children
HIV-infected children,	Street children
children affected by HIV/Aids	Trafficked children
Homeless children	Traveler children
Illegal alien children	Unaccompanied refugee,
Illegally adopted children	displaced or migrant children
Illiterate children	War-affected children
Imprisoned children	Working children

researchers estimating that as many as 80% of all children attending public school (K-12 grades) in the US could be labeled as learning disabled depending on policy definitions at the local school level. However, the federal government has established a cap on educational funding of 12% of the total population, arbitrarily delimiting overall numbers. When revenue and access to services in the form of governmental funding formulas are attached to identification, statistical numbers vary greatly.

Key question/issue to consider

We need to ask tough questions about the role of culture and power, and the visions that inform the policies we create which impact children and youth who have historically faced great adversity.

Which inclusive education issues have been, are, or are going to be relevant for educational policies in your country?

Undoubtedly, the key issue in the United States—as in many other countries today and in the foreseeable future—focuses on the push for accountability. In the United States, this focus stems from federal legislation, research and policy aimed at closing the achievement gap between white middle and upper class children/youth and particular subgroups: racial/

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[5]   K. Tomasevski, 2003, *cit*., p. 126.

ethnic minorities, those from low socio-economic backgrounds, those with disabilities, and those with second-language challenges. This focus forms the basis of current federal mandates contained in the 2002 No Child Left Behind Act.

NCLB is driven by a market-based view of education that values competition, productivity, and individual achievement. This market-based view incorporates a system of accountability that reflects a shift from inputs (quality teachers and well-resourced schools) to outputs of individual student performance. Specific assumptions inherent in a market-based view of education include:

• Schools exist to prepare productive citizens in the global market place.
• Productive citizens perform well in core subjects of reading, writing, math and science.
• Performance is best measured by standardized tests that are aligned with grade level expectations set by the nation/state government in the core subjects.
• All students must achieve the same level of proficiency set by the nation/state government and within a set period of time (per year by grade level).

The consequences of these assumptions and accompanying mandates for "Annual Yearly Progress" (as measured by results of standardized tests) have been devastating. According to Fusarelli, a report by the American Federation of Teachers found that only 29 states in the United States have clear and specific standards in core subject areas.[6] In addition, there is growing evidence that states are watering down their tests and manipulating cut-off scores in order to avoid failure to meet Annual Yearly Progress (AYP). For example, Arkansas, with considerably lower standards than other states, has no "failing" schools, whereas Michigan reported more than 1500 such schools in 2003. Michigan's response was to redefine AYP by lowering the percentage of students required to pass state exams from 75% to 42%, reducing overnight the number of failing schools from 1500 to 216.

Several states have also abandoned tests that require demonstrating mastery through authentic assessment, preferring machine-scored multiple-choice tests that are less expensive to score. All of these behaviours render test results virtually meaningless and have led to lowered standards for performance.

Reports from several states indicate that higher numbers of failing schools are reported every year (most in urban areas). Qualified and experienced teachers are migrating out of these schools, creating a fundamental and inequitable lack of opportunity for students to achieve.

High drop-out rates of low achievers have been reported. The US has not improved graduation rates for 25 years, and graduation rates are now going down as requirements for an educated workforce are going steeply up.

• States graduation rate of 71% for African American students in the class of 2002 dropped to 59.5% in 2003. (Darling-Hammond, 2004: 21)
• States showing the steepest increases in tests scores have the highest retention and dropout rates. (The "Texas Miracle" was accomplished when a freshman class of 1,000

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6   L. D. Fusarelli, "The potential impact of the No Child Left Behind Act on equity and diversity in American education." In *Educational Policy*, vol. 18, n° 1, 2004, pp. 71–94.

dwindled to fewer than 300 students by senior year. The miracle is that not one dropout was reported. (Darling-Hammond, 2004: 21)

There has been a large jump in the number of students identified with disabilities:

- 3 times as many third graders and six times as many 6th graders have been classified as in need of special education since accountability policies were put in place (White & Rosenbaum, 2008:102).
- A new operational definition for learning disabilities has emerged: students are labeled as LD if they have such low test scores that they seem unlikely to meet the pass level by the time of the next test. (White & Rosenbaum, 2008:104).

These negative consequences of market-based assumptions concerning education have resulted in increased exclusion because they have ignored several important dimensions of inclusive education policy:

- Schools are not equally resourced to provide equal educational opportunities.
- Many children and youth come to school with significant disadvantages—poverty and poor health among the most influential.
- School improvement is best accomplished through systems of reward and incentives, not negative sanctions.
- Tracking and segregation of students can have devastating consequences for children. Foremost, once a student falls into a lower track, it may prove virtually impossible to move out of that track. In addition, students are aware when they are being tracked into lower—or higher-level ability groups. Consequently, students may begin to believe that the labels associated with such groups like "smart" or "dumb" accurately portray their personality and ability. As a final point, students that are tracked into lower-level courses often have the newest and least content-prepared of teachers; whereas more reputable educators are often given advanced classes in which discussion and higher-order thinking skills are bolstered.
- Children and youth have individual differences, talents, and levels of ability. Standardization of education for all students encourages a culture of blaming and shaming, resultant ostracism, and exclusion of students (as well as their teachers); reinforces a system with the potential to increase segregation, tracking, and dropping-out. In this type of system the processes that occur within schools are virtually ignored. Skirtic refers to this type of system as a "machine bureaucracy" in which expectations are passed down and schools are expected to produce the desired outcomes.[7] In this model little or no attention is paid to the processes involved in obtaining such outcomes. Rather, a system of punishment functions to regulate those who are considered "successful" or "unsuccessful" in meeting pre-established criteria for what constitutes learning.

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7   T. Skrtic, *Disability & Democracy: reconstructing [special] education for post-modernity.* New York, Teachers College Press, 1995.

Key question/issue to consider

What are the alternatives to market-based assumptions about education? This question forces attention on an even more basic question: What should be the purposes of education in schools? (Education for whom? To what ends?)

What groups are considered to be most vulnerable to various forms of exclusion from and within education? Who are the excluded groups that current policies have yet to take into account?

It is predicted that by the year 2025, the number of people with disabilities will have risen from the current 600 million to 900 million worldwide, of which 650 million will be in developing countries. The reasons behind this phenomenal projection are many: the HIV/ AIDS epidemic, increased war, and poverty, among the most influential. For example, in 1997, antipersonnel mines were responsible for creating disability in 68 countries, and the figure increases at a rate of 800 individuals per month. Moreover, it has been suggested that a significant number of children in Tomasevski's Exclusion List have disabilities; e.g., working children, delinquent children, and street children. This growth of the disability experience worldwide in and of itself has provided an impetus for change, prompting J. D. Wolfensohn, recent past president of the World Bank, to observe that "addressing disability is a significant part of reducing poverty."

The historical, cultural, economic and socio-political dimensions of exclusion and marginalization for persons with disabilities are staggering. Only 1-2% of disabled people in countries of the South experience equity in terms of basic access to education. As a result, equity in terms of quality education, production of achievement, and realization of results are severely compromised for this group. Recognizing these inequities, the Dakar Framework for Action places a special emphasis on these children as among the most vulnerable, and clearly sets inclusive education as a key strategy to address them. Current policies do not take these children into account.

Key question/issue to consider

Consider this: If marginalized children are denied educational opportunities, then it is the lack of education, and not their differences that limit their opportunities. This consideration begs the question: What would happen if policy-makers considered these children as resources instead of sources of problems? As investments instead of expenses?

In what ways do current educational reforms address inclusive education?

Several international guides have been developed that provide practical tips for implementing Inclusive Education. However, these guides lack an overall policy framework for how the system should work as a whole. The model of educational reform proposed here draws from an extensive review of the literature, as well as from reports of international consumer organizations whose members have been traditionally marginalized from education.

National-level outcomes for a Diversity Rights in Education Model
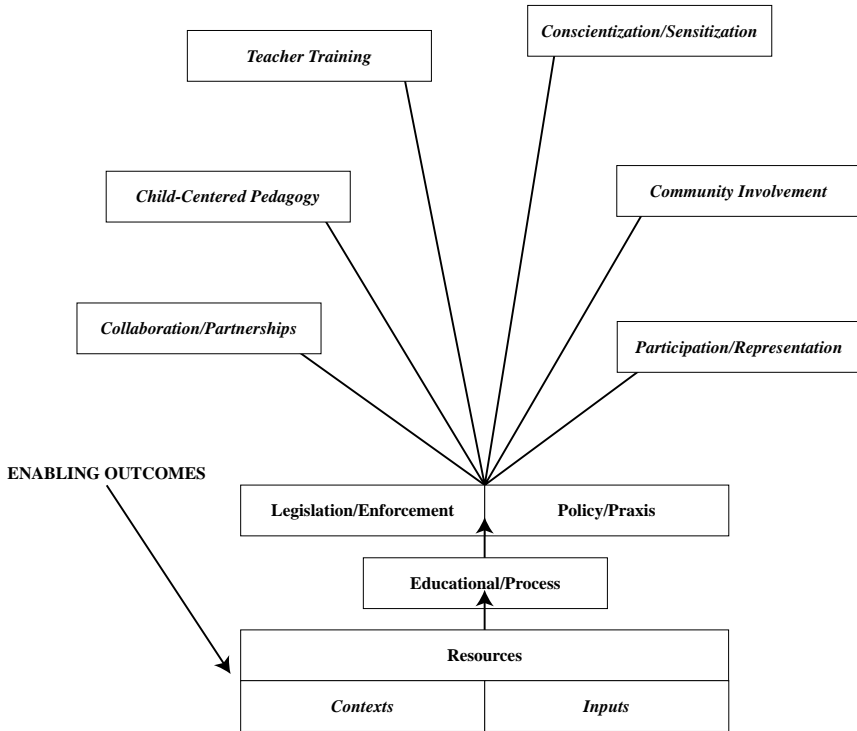
Figure 1. Diversity Rights in Education Model

In this model, enabling outcomes provide the basic conditions needed for six national outcomes at the top of the model to be effective. The enabling outcomes of policies and legislation in support of Inclusive Education must be accompanied by mechanisms for enforcement. These enablers provide the essential link between outcomes at the top of the model such as community involvement and collaborative partnerships on the one hand, and the process, resources and contexts on the other. Without these enabling outcomes, resources may not be activated, nor national level outcomes achieved.

The outcomes in this model must interact together. For example, teacher training is envisioned to include considerations of child-centered pedagogy, and to emphasize conscientization and sensitization of the abilities and needs of marginalized children and youth. Without attention to teacher beliefs about the abilities of these children, child-centered pedagogy may not effectively include their active participation. Collaborative partnerships and community involvement interact with teacher training to support relevance and satisfaction, which are important links to local level outcomes.

Six basic principles are inherent in this rights-based approach to Inclusive Education:

- Social Protection: emphasizes not only education rights, but the pre-requisites needed to exercise these rights—adequate health care, family welfare, and basic needs of food and shelter.
- Accessibility: concerned with identification and removal of barriers, not only physical, but attitudinal, organizational, and distributive.
- Participatory decision-making: Inclusive education is a process that recognizes the value and dignity of marginalized children/youth and their inalienable right to self-determination. Decision-making and capacity-building both require the meaningful and active participation of these individuals to effect this principle.
- Control/capacity building: Under conditions of scarce resources, priorities and values influence capacity. The cost of providing education for people with disabilities is not as costly as the costs to society for failing to provide education. Natural resources and community involvement through coordination and collaboration are sources of support that are largely underutilized and would greatly enhance capacity to provide education for all.
- Consciousness Raising: It is at the point of discrimination that the cycle of poverty and disability can be broken. Negative attitudes inherent in a charity/deficit approach to disability constitute arguably the most significant barriers to equity.
- Two-way accountability: Accountability for outcomes rests not only with students, but with schools. Opportunity to Learn Standards such as measures of teacher quality, access to a relevant and appropriate curriculum, materials and resources should be incorporated in accountability standards.

The Diversity Rights in Education Model and its principles allow us to look at developments in Inclusive Education across widely disparate national contexts. We find three common arenas of reform emerging from this model: Educational Reform, Diversity Reform and Social Reform. If totally separated, these three arenas for reform are almost inevitably isolated, sporadic and ephemeral in the changes they attempt. If the interaction is only partial, then equally predictable error patterns emerge in the move from policy to practice. So, for example, as long as diversity reform is not seen as part of civil rights for social reform, then the primary developments occur in educational equity do not occur. If educational reform frames itself without reference to social inequity or rights, then the pedagogical reforms focus on the "typical" child and leave unchallenged the educational structures and assumptions that have led to the exclusion of marginalized children and youth. Finally, if social reform initiatives fail to interact with educational and diversity arenas of change, then the rhetoric of equality and participation quickly becomes a divisive reminder of the "us and them" polarities that led to exclusion in the first place.

Key question/issue to consider

Consider this: Do our fiscal/policy priorities say more about our values and our philosophical commitment to education for marginalized and excluded children than they do about our capacities to provide education? Do conditions of marginalized children at the edge of a society reveal more about the state and progress of a society than conditions at the middle? [8]

[8] See also: S. Peters, (in press). "A Rights-based approach to education for people with disabilities: Cases from Asia and Africa Region." In *International Handbook on the Inequality of Education*, D. B. Holsinger and W. J. Jacob (Eds). Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer; L. A. Oliver, and S. Peters, *No Child Left Behind and People with Disabilities: Mapping the terrain in urban schools and beyond*, Paper presented at the 21st Annual Society for Disability Studies Conference, New York City, New York, June 2008; S. Peters, "Education for All? A Historical Analysis of International Inclusive Education Policy and Individuals with Disabilities." *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, vol. 18, n° 2, 2007, pp. 98–108; S. Peters, C. Johnstone and P. Ferguson, "A Disability Rights in Education Model for Evaluating Inclusive Education." *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, vol. 9, n° 2, 2005, pp. 139–160; S. Peters, *Inclusive Education: Achieving Education for All by Including those with Disabilities and Special Needs.* Prepared for the World Bank Disability Group, April 2003; L. Darling-Hammond, "From "Separate but Equal" to "No Child Left Behind": The collision of new standards and old inequalities." In *Many Children Left Behind*, D. Meier and G. Wood (Eds.), Boston, MA: Beacon Press. 2004, pp. 3–32; K. White and J. Rosenbaum, "Inside the black box of accountability: How high-stakes accountability alters school culture and the classification and treatment of students and teachers." In *No Child Left Behind and the reduction of the achievement gap,* A. Sadovnik et al. (Eds.), New York, Routledge, 2008, pp. 97–116.

Systems, Links and Transitions

The main goal of inclusive education should be to create education systems that enable lifelong learning for all. Emphasis is increasingly being placed on providing access to early childhood education and care, as a basis for learners to cope successfully with future requirements in basic education and higher education stages. […]

In many countries, education systems and their administration are themselves barriers to inclusive practices. Often special and mainstream education is administered through different departments or teams, with different decision-making processes, regulations, funding arrangements and so on. Co-ordinating existing services and interest groups is an essential first step towards inclusive education. […] The curriculum is the central means through which the principle of inclusion is put into action within an education system. It therefore has to be flexible, relevant and adjustable to the diverse characteristics and needs of learners. […] Governments need to mobilize human and intellectual resources, some of which they may not directly control, if inclusive education is to become a reality. The involvement of the family is particularly crucial. (*Reference Document*, 48th session of the ICE, pp. 20-25)

Creating Education Systems which Offer Opportunities for Lifelong Learning[1]

One of the greatest problems faced by the world today is the growing number of the excluded. These are people who are excluded from participating in the economy, in society and in life as a whole. Such unjust and inequitable societies are neither efficient nor safe. More far-reaching policy measures and broader socio-economic and cultural investments are called for, and education is one of the means to address such issues. In landmark documents such as the Faure Report[2] and the Delors Report[3], UNESCO has acknowledged lifelong learning as one of the guiding and organizing principles of educational action and reform, as well as a concept which is integral to a meaningful human life and capable of equipping people to tackle and anticipate whatever challenges they face throughout their lives. This document will attempt to prompt a discussion on a broader understanding of the features and characteristics of various learning systems addressing different facets of exclusion with a focus on non-formal and informal approaches. It stresses that lifelong learning is by nature and design a system that leads to organic and broad inclusion.

How can we achieve an understanding of a broader concept of inclusion and what are the main barriers to inclusive education?

For many years, the notion of inclusive education was associated with the provision of education for children with special needs.[4] (e.g. the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education of 1994). However, it is misleading to think that inclusion mainly concerns the disabled. The concept has moved far beyond the narrow perception of inclusion as a means of understanding and overcoming a deficit (*defectology*). Today, it is defined much more broadly and encompasses issues of universal involvement, access, participation and achievement. UNESCO now defines inclusion as the "process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all […] and a conviction that is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all."[5]

Inclusion thus emphasizes those groups of learners who are at risk of marginalization, exclusion or underachievement. It is now widely accepted that inclusion also concerns issues of gender, ethnicity, class, social conditions, health, and human rights. This means that inclusion policies must ensure that all citizens, whatever their social or economic background, have opportunities to access knowledge and facilities as fully and freely as possible in school and society as a whole, to participate completely, to achieve at the

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[1] Prepared by Adama Ouane, Director of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UNESCO-UIL).

[2] E. Faure, *Learning to Be*. Paris, UNESCO, 1972.

[3] UNESCO, *Learning: The Treasure Within*. Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, chaired by Jacques Delors. Paris, UNESCO, 1996.

[4] UNESCO, *The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education*. Adopted by the "World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality', Salamanca (Spain), Paris, UNESCO, 7–10 June 1994.

[5] UNESCO, *Guidelines for Inclusion: Ensuring Access to Education for All*. Paris, UNESCO, 2005, p. 13.

highest level and to enjoy a high quality of life. Inclusion is the full manifestation of the effective exercise of the right to education and learning. It is about learning to live with diversity and learning to learn from difference, not only in a certain period but throughout the entire lifecycle in a variety of contexts. Thus, inclusive education opens the path to inclusion in society.

Several measures are required to achieve inclusion for all:

• The needs of all learners (infants, children, adolescents, young people and adults) must be catered for.
• Gender disparities must be addressed, and education and learning adapted to the needs, interests and expectations of boys, girls, women and men.
• Socio-economic, cultural, ethnic and racial discriminations and privileges having incidence on access and participation must be combated.
• Learning must be articulated and integrated organically into the different levels of the education system from early childhood education right through to higher education.
• All forms, types and styles of learning must be integrated (informal, non-formal and formal, face-to-face, self-directed, open and distance education), as must the different learning objectives (general, artistic, technical and vocational).

Each individual and every group has different learning needs and demands, interests, strategies and styles, all of which can be hampered by various obstacles, exclusion being among the most severe. In order to overcome such barriers, it is therefore important to identify these needs and interests, and adopt the most appropriate strategies, content and modalities to address them.

Lifelong learning for all: an important facilitator for social inclusion

Lifelong learning or learning throughout life is now recognized and actively pursued as the key to education and human development in the twenty-first century. Current social and economic realities in both developed and developing countries demand new, wider and more complex competencies in order to understand anticipate and deal with both the enormous potentials and the growing risks that accompany globalization and the fast-changing new social and economic order.

Lifelong learning has increasingly been acknowledged as an important element in the response to social exclusion as it has a range of benefits to offer both individuals and society. However, the role of lifelong learning in solving the problem of social exclusion is complicated because those who are most likely to experience social exclusion are also those who are least likely to participate in education. Hence, "different forms of exclusion seem to question the capacity of the educational systems to provide effective learning opportunities based on a restricted concept of integration. Exclusion can also come from within the mainstream educational system. Repetition, over-age and dropout intermingle, so as to perpetuate exclusion—empirical evidence clearly indicates that a student who repeats the first school years has a strong probability of dropping out in

secondary education –, based many times on pervasive and regressive institutional and pedagogical practices." [6]

Lifelong learning is not a fiction, a utopian idea or a mere piece of rhetoric. Lifelong learning is a continuous process, present in all cultures, societies and religions, which takes place throughout life. It offers opportunities to communities, individuals and organizations capable of handling and using knowledge, values and competencies confidently and effectively, and of contributing to their creation and transformation, and provides these opportunities throughout their respective life spans.

The idea of lifelong learning for all, really applies to **all**, irrespective of age, gender, social conditions, or phases and modalities of learning. It centres on combining learning and living both (a) *vertically*, i.e. over an individual's whole life from birth to death, and (b) *horizontally*, i.e. to involve all aspects of a person's life, including his or her general and vocational education. Lifelong learning for all also integrates all learning environments—family, community, study, work and leisure—and cuts across all levels of the *educational stages* through which an individual passes, i.e. early childhood, primary education, secondary education and higher education. It is horizontal also in the sense of taking place within all the *modalities* of learning systems—formal, non-formal and informal—and using all *means* of learning—face to face, self-learning, open and distance media, etc.

Lifelong learning enables individuals to lead fulfilling lives and understand themselves, their surroundings and the consequences of their actions. It helps them to take responsibility not only for themselves, but for others as well. It allows them to perform, confidently and with ease, the roles and functions required of them in different settings, so as to be able to lead full lives as family members, friends, workers, employees, and entrepreneurs, members of society, citizens of a nation and, ideally, world citizens. It enables individuals to participate and to be included.

Three broadly prevailing misconceptions should be dispelled with regard to lifelong learning:

- Lifelong learning is neither a new concept nor a system for rich and developed countries only.
- Lifelong learning is not limited to adult learning or higher order learning in secondary and higher education. It concerns children, youth and adults engaged in all forms of education.
- Lifelong learning is not linked merely to academic education, vocational training, employability and the world of work; it also entails active citizenship, social participation, leisure, self-fulfilment and learning for pleasure and enlightenment.

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6 UNESCO-IBE, *Background Note*, Preparatory meeting of the forty-eighth session of the International Conference on Education, Nairobi, Kenya. July 2007.

Which education system offers opportunities for lifelong learning and inclusive education?

How can the concept of inclusive education be integrated into the curriculum structure of basic education?

Connecting learning worlds, bridging education and learning levels, integrating content and valuing all kinds of learning and training achievements—these are the essential aims of lifelong learning. The lifelong learning approach to the organization of curriculum—in particular its combination of general knowledge, practical life skills, specialist work and business-oriented skills—can be the integrative aspect that links the different forms and types of learning and creates the conditions needed to meet the learning needs of all.

The curriculum—and constituent elements such as policy, delivery, and training of personnel, monitoring and evaluation—should be designed, developed and formulated in such a way as to enable inclusion in all the dimensions mentioned above.

An inclusive school system should be a community in which excellence in learning is evident and reflects its members' lifelong learning skills. It should be flexible and adjustable to individual needs, so that everyone benefits from a commonly-accepted basic level of quality education. For example, it should allow students to vary the time that they devote to a particular subject, offer teachers greater freedom to choose their working methods and allow more time for guided classroom-based work.

Programmes targeting various marginalized and excluded groups have often functioned outside the mainstream. Many have centred on special measures, specialized institutions and specialist educators. Too often, such programmes have succeeded only in producing second-rate educational opportunities that offer few or no possibilities for further study. In these cases, the result has been exclusion. Lifelong learning, however, is by definition holistic and inclusive and offers a form of curriculum development that provides diversified contents, caters for the needs and demands of different groups and covers general, technical and vocational education and training. An inclusive curriculum addresses the individual's cognitive, emotional and creative development and should be based on the four pillars of education for the twenty-first century: learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together.[7] It should also be based on an additional fifth pillar: learning to change and take risks.

Curriculum plays an instrumental role in fostering tolerance and promoting human rights. It is a powerful tool for transcending cultural, religious, linguistic and other differences. With regard to linguistic differences, one means of enabling inclusion is to adopt a multilingual educational approach, in which language is recognized as an integral part of a student's cultural identity. In Burkina Faso and in Zambia, for example, mother-tongue-based bilingual education has been promoted and shown to have a positive effect on the quality of learning and rate of participation.

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[7]   UNESCO, *Learning: The Treasure Within*, 1996.

Bilingual education, intercultural education and learning strategies recognizing and valuing the distinctive identity, languages, cultural specificities and norms of indigenous people and empowering them to cope with and master new challenges have been used as strategies to achieve social integration in Latin America (Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua and Peru). Although most of the countries involved have implemented broad constitutional, legal and policy frameworks to support these intercultural and bilingual approaches, the vigour and funding mechanisms to implement them are still lacking.[8]

Is inclusive education conceived as a way of democratizing opportunities for lifelong learning? Is the system flexible enough to allow access for all in education and developing lifelong learning? Does it reflect tolerance in order to meet the learners' differences and needs?

Facilitating access and increasing inputs are not enough. Reducing drop-out rates or increasing participation levels are also not sufficient. Improving quality can only be effective if it is translated into relevant and meaningful learning and achievement for all. Since the poor have to start from a position of greater economic and social disadvantage, which has a negative impact on learning, efforts have to be made to ensure that quality and equity gaps are reduced. What the poor need is not remedial education, just high-quality education, tailor-made to meet their learning needs and demands.[9]

The following examples show that methods of delivery, learning opportunities, pedagogic goals and achievements need to be highly diverse to reflect the diversity of learners: China, Ethiopia, Nigeria and Uganda have developed successful learning programmes to cater for the learning needs of various nomadic populations. In Uganda a curriculum has been re-designed to reach out to semi-nomadic cattle herders living in the north-eastern region. The revised curriculum has been geared to the learning and skills requirements of the children. It includes indigenous knowledge, positive cultural practices and basic skills relevant to pastoral life, such as environmental protection and early warning systems.[10]

In Thailand the hill tribes are among the most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in society. Although some limited government initiatives have been taken place, the hill area development, while considered very important, has not been integrated into mainstream development policies. Currently there are eleven ministries including the Department of Non-Formal Education (DFNE) and various other organizations involved in hill area development. In order to enhance education opportunities for hill tribes, the DFNE launched a policy in 1998 aiming at developing highland non-formal education based on the community centre model (promoting literacy among the hill tribes). The hill area education project aims at providing education services responding to the needs and problems of these people. In addition, the non-governmental organization Inter-Mountain People's Education and Culture in Thailand (IMPECT) has existed since 1991 and

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8 UNESCO-UIL and GTZ-PACE/Guatemala, *Workshop on Literacy in Multilingual Contexts.* Guatemala City, February 2008, pp. 9–14.
9 R.M. Torres, *Lifelong Learning: A Momentum and a New Opportunity for Adult Basic Learning and Education (ABLE) in the Developing Countries.* (Draft version), 2002, p. 21.
10 UNESCO, *Including the excluded: Meeting diversity in education. Example from Uganda.* Paris, UNESCO, 2001.

endeavours to ensure that indigenous peoples have the freedom and the right to preserve and revitalize their cultures and customs. In promoting educational opportunities, efforts should be made to harmonize modern knowledge and technologies with local wisdom and practices.

In Brazil, *Lua Nova* is a non-governmental project, launched in 2000 in Sorocaba, which works in collaboration with community centres and local education authorities. It aims to reach out to Brazil's vulnerable and socially excluded young people, including drug users and people with HIV and AIDS. As well as providing non-formal courses in literacy, *Lua Nova* runs locally-financed training programmes in entrepreneurial skills. Another key feature of such projects is the provision of micro-credit, which can transform the lives of people who have in the past been marginalized and excluded from access to loans. These micro-credit schemes have demonstrated the value of creating a sense of ownership and the importance of community-based support in ensuring their success.[11]

Lifelong learning should be offered within a framework of democratic values, such as justice, independence and autonomy. It should also be underpinned by such values such as respect for the traditions of indigenous peoples, for different religions, for the environment. Lifelong learning can, in turn, help to promote and cultivate these values. It can develop people's capacity to fulfil effectively the various roles demanded of them: as social beings, as citizens, as employees, as entrepreneurs or as members of a family. It can inculcate certain key competencies such as critical thinking and critical acting. It can help to transform inequality, poor conditions of dependency and one-sided, excessive behaviour. Lifelong learning and the development of key competencies can help individuals to live and create social cohesion within an equal and democratic society, free from extremism. Any system of education that aims to be inclusive, and to cater for the needs of all learners, must therefore embrace lifelong learning.

What is the role of non-formal and informal education in achieving the goals of inclusive education?

Basic learning needs for human development are multifarious, complex, multidimensional and constantly changing. They concern children, youth and adults. They involve a wide range of knowledge, skills, talents, values, attitudes and practical experiences that must be further developed.[12] Consequently there must be diverse and flexible forms of provision. Lifelong learning is of a holistic nature and presupposes that learning opportunities are available outside the formal school system. Learning needs and demands cannot be fully met in one type of institution or one particular form of education. Rather, they can only be met through multiple educational modes, diverse learning situations (home, community, workplace, school, place of leisure etc.) and a variety of media (books, computers, games etc.) Non-formal and informal modalities therefore play a vital role in lifelong learning alongside more formal approaches. This naturally has implications regarding recognition and validation of learning.

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[11] UNESCO, *Another Way to Learn. Case Studies*. Paris, UNESCO, 2007.
[12] R.M. Torres, *cit.*, p. 27.

How can different kinds of learning be recognized and validated?

Recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning have become an issue of considerable importance at the level of international educational policy. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has launched the programme "Recognition of Non-Formal and Informal Learning" (RNFIL) and the European Union has developed the Lifelong Programme (2007-20013), which unites the four separate programmes of formal school education (COMENIUS), higher education (ERASMUS), vocational training (LEONARDO) and non-formal adult education (*Grundtvig*). Nevertheless there is still a widespread lack of awareness of the importance, the real contribution and the pervasive nature of non-formal and informal education. A built-in mechanism of recognition, validation and certification of all kinds of formal, non-formal and informal education must be part and parcel of lifelong learning.

It is important to underline that such a system of recognition and validation would bring important benefits for society as a whole, not only in the area of economic productivity but also in terms of equity and social empowerment. Policies should recognize the plurality of educational forms, which should serve various needs in various ways, but under a common education framework involving a close co-operation between all education sectors and systems, mutually reinforcing each other as well as networking at national and international levels.

Conclusion

Inclusion properly understood is precisely about ensuring that every child receives quality and appropriate education within the school system. It is also about learning opportunities and modalities outside school and for youth and adults. Inclusion is about access to education that involves no discrimination or exclusion for any individual or group within or outside the school system. Inclusion is also about offering learners the possibility for full self expression and the fulfilment that successful achievement brings. "The key challenge is to ensure that the broad vision of Education for All as an inclusive concept is reflected in national government and funding agency policies. Education for All […] must take account of the need of the poor and the most disadvantaged, including working children, remote rural dwellers and nomads, and ethnic and linguistic minorities, children, young people and adults affected by conflict, HIV/AIDS, hunger and poor health; and those with special learning needs […]."[13] The EFA goals will not be achieved if these groups are excluded.

Inclusion should be the guiding principle for UNESCO and other agencies' interaction with governments and other providers within the Education for All initiative.

Adopting lifelong learning as a new paradigm for education and learning in the twenty-first century is not adopting a slogan or opting for an abstract "edutopia". It implies defining in each particular context, even for each individual learner or group of learners, the kind of learning content, modalities and goals that are called for. It is therefore linked to inclusive education.

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[13] World Education Forum Drafting Committee, *Expanded Commentary on the Dakar Framework for Action*. Paris, 23 May 2000, paragraph 19.

UNESCO has not created a uniform model of lifelong learning and inclusive education, and does not advance a uniform implementation strategy to be followed by all countries. There cannot be no "common system" of lifelong learning purely because the education and learning needs and responses vary not only over time but also within and between regions, countries and different fields of study. Hence, cultural, linguistic and national diversities have to be kept in mind and be respected and reflected in tailor-made, learner-centred strategies.

Provided that lifelong learning succeeds in reaching and encompassing all sectors of life and society, its potential for transformation is immense. It can help to alleviate poverty, ensure democracy, combat inequality and extremism, promote world peace and create better balance between developed and developing countries. It equips people to address and analyze power relations and potential conflicts of interest, and thus by extension establishes and fosters conditions that encourage an achievement of a good standard of living as human and social beings in a harmonious society, understand and respect themselves and others, tolerate difference and diversity, and remain consistently open to dialogue and new perspectives. Hence, lifelong learning can ultimately help to build and sustain inclusive societies.

Elements for broad policy discussion on how to make Lifelong Learning effective

The Faure Report proposed to use lifelong learning as guiding principles for the implementation of educational reforms.[14] Under the present circumstances, how can lifelong learning be a guiding and organizing principle of education addressing issues of inclusion and integration? How can lifelong learning be considered among the basic priorities of education?

The following main core concepts could be discussed during the forty-eighth session of the International Conference on Education:

- Lifelong learning is essential and affordable. It is not only for rich countries. It can help poor countries address their educational and developmental challenges.
- Lifelong learning should be addressed at the "foundational" level and not the higher level of education. It requires two essential notions: globality, and most importantly continuity. It is therefore important to create bridges between the different levels of education.
- Lifelong learning entails integration-articulation and complementarity between different forms of education and consequently requires a system of recognition and validation of all types of learning.

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[14] E. Faure, 1972, *cit.*

What Makes an Inclusive School—an Interview[1]

This interview brings together an amalgam of observations and interviews I have conducted in several countries over the past decade or so. It could have been carried out in my home country, New Zealand. The participants are as follows: the school principal (SP), a teacher (T), a special needs adviser (SNA), a parent of a child with special needs (P) and myself as the interviewer (DM).

DM: As you know, I am shortly travelling to Geneva to address an important UNESCO conference on inclusive education. The participants in that conference will be very interested to learn about your views on inclusive education: how your school community feels about it, how you make it work day-by-day, minute-by-minute in the school as a whole and in your classrooms. Could you please begin by describing your school?
SP: Yes, ours is a primary school which caters for children from the age of 5 to 12. We have 450 pupils, divided into 16 classes, with an average class size of 28, ranging from 20 for the junior classes to just over 30 for the senior classes. We are a "decile 1" school.

DM: What is a decile 1 school?
SP: It refers to the fact that we are one of the 10% of schools with the highest proportion of students from low socio-economic communities. In other words, many of our parents work in the lowest skilled occupational groups, many receive social welfare benefits, many of our families live in over-crowded homes, and so on.

DM: So, many of your students have special needs?
SP: That's right: many have special needs arising from poor living conditions. As well, we have several children from new migrant families where English is not their first language. We have a whole range of ethnicities here. And, of course, we have some children with special needs arising from their disabilities.

DM: Could you tell me how you see inclusive education? Are you an inclusive school?
SP: Of course! We don't often use that term, but that's what we are—an inclusive school. We prefer to say that we are "A School for Everyone". We pride ourselves in serving all children in our neighbourhood. None are turned away. We welcome the diversity of our children and do our best to meet their different needs.
T: Yes, we believe that children who play and live together should learn together.
P: I second that. My child has Down Syndrome and has been welcomed at this school right from the beginning. She comes to school every day with her two brothers.

DM: Why is your school an inclusive school or, as you say, a School for Everyone?
SP: Two reasons: It is government policy that all schools should be inclusive. Indeed it is against the law to refuse entry to any child, irrespective of their background or ability. But even if the government didn't require it, our school believes it is simply a basic right for all children to be educated in their neighbourhood school and it is our responsibility to remove any barriers to their learning.

Also, could I just say that one of the reasons more and more schools are becoming fully inclusive is because of the advocacy of parents of children with disabilities.

P: That's dead right! For some parents it is a real battle, but I was lucky to strike such a receptive school.

T: We also believe that in inclusive schools everyone benefits from the mix of backgrounds and abilities.

SNA: Yes, and that's what the research shows. If inclusion is properly implemented, not only children with special needs benefit academically and socially but the other children also benefit. At the very least, they don't seem to be disadvantaged.

P: That was one of the big worries that we had—would we lose out if we didn't send Mary to a special school. And we are pleased that things seem to be working out well for her.

T: And the other parents seem happy now, although they were a bit worried at the beginning to hear that Mary was going to be in their children's class.

DM: Why do you think their views changed?

T: Basically it was because their children came home with positive stories about having Mary in their class. They really sold the idea of inclusion of children with special needs.

AST: But I think that credit must also be given to the principal for his leadership in accepting such children and in promoting the idea of a School for Everyone.

SP: Just a small correction to that: I see leadership being a shared thing, which includes the politicians and education policy people, the school management and governing body and also the teachers. I am a firm believer in creating a school culture that values diversity, and this includes parents. Selling the idea of inclusion is also important as not everyone in the school or the community readily accepted it to begin with.

DM: So how did you sell the idea?

SP: Our school has a school charter with a mission statement and all that. It gives prominence to inclusion. We also put out regular newsletters which deliberately highlight the uniqueness of all children and their value to the school.

P: The main thing as far as parents are concerned is the obvious respect the principal and teachers show towards our children with special needs, in the way they talk to them and give them opportunities to succeed.

T: And we have also involved the media, for example the local newspaper. When some "good news" story comes along we always contact them. But I really want to emphasize again the important role played by children's acceptance of those with special needs: they are the best "salespeople"!

DM: I guess there is more involved in bringing about an inclusive school—a school for everyone, as you say—than goodwill and leadership. What are some other things that are necessary?

SP: I could list a whole lot of factors, but let me focus on two at the school level: resources and teacher education. Firstly, resources. We are lucky that we are a decile 1 school because that gives us additional funding to purchase supplementary equipment and materials, as well as to employ an additional teacher or teacher assistants. Also, having some children who have been classified as having high needs because of their disabilities brings in some additional resources, such as a teacher assistant.

Secondly, teacher education is so important as teachers are on the front line, so to speak. Inclusive education succeeds or fails in the classroom. Our teachers have all been through a professional development course on inclusive education provided by our local university and funded by the Ministry of Education. I am pleased to say that our newly trained teachers all have an understanding of inclusive education.

DM: So what do teachers learn in professional development courses on inclusive education?
T: Let me start: there is quite a list of topics! First of all, there is the curriculum. In our country, we have a single curriculum for all children, not a separate one for children with special needs. This means that in our classrooms we are usually teaching children who are functioning at different levels of the curriculum. It requires us to use multi-level teaching and to make adaptations to tasks within the curriculum to suit different abilities and learning styles.

DM: That's quite a challenge!
T: It surely is, but we are trained in multi-level teaching. It is a bit like being a juggler, keeping three balls in the air at once!
SP: Of course, inclusive education demands that we don't have a one size-fits-all, lock-step curriculum. In the case of learners with special needs, our teachers have to design activities that are appropriate to their age while at the same time being appropriate to their developmental level. It requires our teachers to be pretty creative! Another thing about the curriculum, especially at the primary school level: it has to be interesting and relevant and not dominated by exams. It goes without saying, too, that assessment should be adapted to suit the curriculum content. Again, not a one-size-fits-all assessment model.

DM: OK, thank you. Could we get back to the rest of your list of topics on teaching strategies. You have mentioned that there should be a single curriculum, with adaptations to take account of individual differences. Could I ask you now whether you think that children with special needs require distinctive teaching strategies?
SNA: Perhaps I can come in here. The answer is both "Yes", but mainly "No". Firstly, yes, some learners with special needs, especially those with very high needs, require very different teaching strategies to those teachers in regular classes usually employ. For example, Braille for the blind, signing for the deaf, physiotherapy for some children with physical disabilities. In our regular schools, specialised professionals usually provide this sort of teaching.
Secondly, no, for the most part learners with special needs simply require sound teaching. When we look further at what teaching strategies have evidence supporting their effectiveness, most, if not all, are appropriate for all learners. What is required is the systematic, explicit and intensive application of a wide range of teaching strategies that have been shown to work.

DM: Let's look at some of these teaching strategies, then.
T: In my classroom I use a whole range of strategies. Let me list some of them: cooperative group teaching, peer tutoring, social skills training, cognitive strategy instruction, self regulation, memory training, phonetic awareness training, review and practice, formative

assessment and feedback. All of these have been found to have a lot of evidence showing that they are effective for all children, including those with special needs.[1]

DM: Can you describe a couple of these strategies in a bit more detail, please?
T: OK, I particularly like cooperative group teaching as it is a bit like creating small classes out of big ones and creating many teachers instead of one.

DM: How does it work?
T: In two ways. First, I use what could be called "mutual assistance groups" where more able children help less able children learn. Second, I use "jigsaw groups" where all children, including those with special needs, have to contribute something to achieve a group goal.
The other strategy I'd like to describe is formative assessment and feedback. We've been told that there is evidence that "dollops" of feedback is one of the most successful teaching strategies we can use. Feedback should be preceded by formative assessment. This involves me regularly probing for knowledge within and at the end of lessons to see what the children have understood, and then giving very clear feedback to let them know how they are doing and how they can improve.

DM: Thank you. Could I now ask about strategies that your school uses to deal with children who present behavioural challenges? This appears to be a growing problem in countries around the world.
SNA: Perhaps I can come in here as I have been helping the school to develop effective plans for these children. We are employing a strategy called school-wide positive behavioural support. Briefly, this aims at preventing and reducing problem behaviours. It has four main components: (a) actively instructing students in adaptive skills, (b) setting up a continuum of consequences for problem behaviours, (c) providing instruction in social skills, and (d) intervening with those who have the most intractable problem behaviours. It emphasizes a team-based systems approach, with a school-wide agenda and common approaches to dealing with problem behaviours. Decisions on how this strategy is implemented are always based on observational data and discussions.

DM: I know that many of the delegates I will meet at the UNESCO conference are worried about the low status of teachers in their countries. What advice would you give them?
SP: I am proud to say that the teachers in my school have a high reputation in the community. Why? Basically, it is because they are respected as professionals.
SNA: Yes, and I think they are earning their professional status because they are increasingly seen as being evidence-driven. More and more, they are using evidence-based teaching strategies such as those we have discussed today. And, what's more they are being expected to obtain evidence on the effectiveness of their teaching methods and to modify them when necessary. I think that these are the requirements of any profession to earn respect.

DM: Finally, could I ask you what you are trying to achieve in your School for Everyone—what outcomes are you seeking?

SP: We want all of our children to learn what is expected of them. We want all of our children to achieve a good balance between dependence and independence. We want all of our children to lead full and satisfying lives.

P: In other words, we want our children to enjoy the best possible quality of life.

DM: Thank you. Any final words?

SP: Yes, I would like your friends at the UNESCO conference to recognise that inclusive education involves more than just placing children with special needs in regular classes and hoping for the best. It really means that schools have to re-examine what they teach, how they teach and how they assess children's performances.

AP: Yes, as they say, inclusive education requires a paradigm shift in education—for the benefit of all children.

Learners and Teachers

Research indicates that a feature of lessons that are effective in encouraging student participation is the way available resources, particularly human resources, are used to support learning. In particular, there is strong evidence of the potential of approaches that encourage co-operation between students for creating teaching and learning conditions that can both maximize participation, while at the same time achieving high standards of learning for all learners. […]

In an effective education system, all learners are assessed on an on-going basis in terms of their progress through the curriculum. The aim is to make it possible for teachers to provide support to all of their students, as needed. This means that teachers and other professionals have to have good information about their students' characteristics and attainments. […]

In an inclusive education system all teachers need to have positive attitudes towards learner diversity and an understanding of inclusive practices, developed through both initial training and on-going processes of professional development. In addition, a few teachers will need to develop a higher level of specialist expertise. […] For all countries, teachers are the most costly—and the most powerful—resource in the education system. (*Reference Document*, 48th session of the ICE, pp. 26-30)

Realizing Inclusive Education through Applying a Rights-based Approach to Education[1]

The right to education

The right to education is a fundamental human right, inhabiting a central place at the core of human rights, and is vital and indispensable for the realization of other human rights. The right to education is enshrined in a number of international documents of varying legal nature.

The right to education is essential to all economic, social and cultural rights. Achieving the right to education for all is thus one of the greatest moral challenges of our times. It is therefore crucial that the right to education in its various dimensions is incorporated in the constitutions and legislation of all Member States so that it is soundly enjoyed by individual rights-holders and by society as a whole.

The United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) defined state obligations linked to the right to education through identifying four key dimensions—availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability:

(a) *Availability—functioning educational institutions and programmes have to be available in sufficient quantity within the jurisdiction of the State party. What they require to function depends upon numerous factors, including the developmental context within which they operate; for example, all institutions and programmes are likely to require buildings or other protection from the elements, sanitation facilities for both sexes, safe drinking water, trained teachers receiving domestically competitive salaries, teaching materials, and so on; while some will also require facilities such as a library, computer facilities and information technology;*

(b) *Accessibility—educational institutions and programmes have to be accessible to everyone, without discrimination, within the jurisdiction of the State party. Accessibility has three overlapping dimensions:*
- *Non-discrimination: education must be accessible to all, especially the most vulnerable groups, in law and fact, without discrimination on any of the prohibited grounds;*
- *Physical accessibility: education has to be within safe physical reach, either by attendance at some reasonably convenient geographic location (e.g., a neighbourhood school) or via modern technology (e.g., access to a "distance learning" programme);*
- *Economic accessibility: education has to be affordable to all. This dimension of accessibility is subject to the differential wording of article 13 (2) in relation to primary, secondary and higher education: whereas primary education shall be available "free to all", States parties are required to progressively introduce free secondary and higher education;*

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[1] Prepared by Sheldon Schaeffer, Director of the UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education.

(c) *Acceptability—the form and substance of education, including curricula and teaching methods, have to be acceptable (e.g. relevant, culturally appropriate and of good quality) to students and, in appropriate cases, parents; this is subject to the educational objectives required by article 13 (1) and such minimum educational standards as may be approved by the State (see art. 13 (3) and (4));*

(d) *Adaptability—education has to be flexible so it can adapt to the needs of changing societies and communities and respond to the needs of students within their diverse social and cultural settings.*

Why a right-based approach to education is required in order to realize a truly inclusive education system

All the four dimensions of the right to education are equally important for the creation of an inclusive education system. Linked to each dimension are varying numbers of obligations of the state in order to fulfil, protect and promote the right to quality education for all. Education must be available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable for all in order to be truly inclusive.

A right-based approach to education includes three different but closely interlinked dimensions:

- The right **to** education—Education should be granted to everyone without discrimination.
- Rights **in** education—Rights of learners should be respected within the learning environment and be reflected in curricula, materials and methodologies.
- Rights **through** education—Democratic values and respect for human rights should be promoted.

These three dimensions are equally core aspects of the concept of inclusive education, visualizing a rights-based school where diversity is respected, celebrated and utilized for the benefit of all.

The human rights imperative of a rights-based approach means that particular focus is given to the root causes of discrimination, inequality and exclusion of vulnerable and marginalized groups. These groups vary contextually but can include women and girls, ethnic minorities, learners with disabilities, indigenous peoples and others. Removing the barriers for participation to and in learning for all learners is at the core of the concept of inclusive education; thus, applying a human rights-based approach becomes fundamental for the sustainable realization of an inclusive education system.

Education for All (EFA) goal number 6 clearly states the need to improve all aspects of the quality of education. This includes a strong focus on the well-being of the learner, the relevance of content, and the achievement of individual and social learning goals. It also identifies the quality of learning processes and the learning environment as essential components. In order to realize the right to quality education for all learners, therefore, a comprehensive and holistic approach is required. Thus, inclusive education requires all aspects of the education system—and of individual schools—to be redesigned and reformed if we realistically aim to achieve quality education for all.

Implications for the education system

Applying a right-based approach to education in order to move towards inclusion will require comprehensive school system reform including modification of constitutional guarantees and policies, curricula, teacher training systems, materials, learning environments, methodologies, resource allocation, etc. Above all, it will require a change in attitudes of all people, throughout the system, to welcome diversity and difference and see these as opportunities rather than problems.

Inclusive education can be interpreted as an on-going process, in an ever-evolving education system, focusing on those currently excluded from accessing education as well as those in school but not learning. By applying a right-based approach towards achieving an inclusive education system, the process puts emphasis on those who are most marginalized and vulnerable, thus identifying those who are still excluded. It also leads to the identification of the underlying causes of exclusion and helps redress unequal power relations based on factors such as poverty and social injustice. The state and the education system will have to engage the marginalized groups that are facing barriers to and within education in order to empower the excluded to effect meaningful change in their lives and become change agents in their own lives.

Applying a human rights-based approach to education, focusing on inclusive education practices, requires the development of a comprehensive model addressing all aspects and levels of the educations system. Issues related to availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability don't only apply to primary education but become equally important for early childhood care and education as well as for secondary and tertiary education. Furthermore, it is crucial to apply the approach to the non-traditional and non-formal delivery of education making sure that all forms of education, for all learners, are based on principles of non-discrimination and inclusion.

Policy formulation

Developing education policies that are based on the above principles is fundamental to the realization of every one of the EFA goals. Conducive political, economic and cultural environments are absolutely crucial in order to support the implementation of inclusive and human rights-based practices. Reaching the un-reached will require targeted policies that address discrimination and inequality in all aspects of the education system. Furthermore, these policies must promote inclusive learning practices in all learning environments through support of inclusive curricula, teacher training, management, etc.

Curriculum development

The curriculum is one of the most powerful tools to direct the content and scope of education available to the state authority. The curriculum should therefore be relevant to the lives of targeted learners and inclusive in its nature in order to guarantee a higher level of quality education. Principles of learner-centred methodologies and lifelong learning are required for successful implementation of inclusive practices in the learning environment. Human rights through education should be guaranteed through the curriculum. Human rights education, preferably taught as a subject as well as being mainstreamed in all other

subjects, should be seen as a mean of realizing other human rights and fundamental for the empowerment of learners to learn, live, and promote inclusive practices based on principles of non-discrimination and equality.

Teacher training

Teachers, school managers and mentors are the single most important components in the process of making an education system more inclusive. They have the sometimes overwhelming task of translating framework, policies and directives into practice while safeguarding the best interests of the child. The initial and continuous training and support of teachers are key strategies for the realization of an inclusive and right-based education system. Teachers are both duty bearers and rights holders within the framework for the right to education, and their empowerment to be able to assist the process of promotion and protection of the right to quality education for all is therefore very important. An inclusive education system is not only child-friendly in its nature but must also be teacher-friendly.

Materials development

Even if education is available and accessible, it doesn't mean that the education is relevant or of an acceptable quality. Based on the principles of equality and participation, all learning materials need to be accessible to all learners and the content made relevant to their situation. Education materials must be free of barriers to learning for all children which means that materials must be adapted to the individual needs of each learner. Some learners might need material in Braille while others need mother-tongue materials in order for them to be able to participate. In order to avoid exclusion from learning within the education system and remove discriminatory barriers, applying a rights-based approach to material development and design is fundamental in the process of creating an inclusive education system.

Attitudes, teaching methodologies and pedagogies

Above all the realization of an inclusive education system requires a paradigm shift towards more learner-centred and inclusive methodologies and pedagogies based on human rights principles of non-discrimination, equality and the best interests of the child. Teachers as the key change agents in the process towards inclusion and non-discrimination must be empowered to be able to actively remove barriers to and within learning.

Development of rights-based, child-friendly schools

A rights-based school, which reflects and helps children realize their rights, is essentially a child-friendly school—one which is not only academically effective but also inclusive of all children, healthy and protective of children, gender-responsive, and encouraging of the participation of the learners themselves, their families, and their communities. This requires, of course, solid support from the teachers and principals, but also the communities which surround the school. All must be able and willing to ensure the inclusion in the classroom and in learning not only their own children—not only the "average" child—but

also other children with very diverse characteristics arising from sex and social economic status, ability/disability, language and ethnicity, etc.

Key issues and concerns

Can education systems that are not inclusive ever be free from discrimination and inequality?

Can applying a human rights-based approach help transform an education system and individual schools to become more inclusive through the redress of underlying reasons for exclusion?

Can it transform as well relationships between teachers and learners in the classroom and school?

Can the right to, rights in, and rights through education ever be universally realized without removing barriers to and within the learning environment?

Are compensating actions and mechanisms enough or is addressing the root causes for exclusion the only sustainable solution?

Conclusion

A holistic approach to educational reform is the only sustainable solution in order to achieve a right-based school system where all have access to quality education—that is, a school system, and individual schools, based on the principles of non-discrimination and inclusion.

What Made it Possible? A Dialogue between a Learner and his Teacher[1]

Introduction

This short essay has been written for the ICE 2008 to provide information concerning the practice of Inclusive Education in Japan. As a blind learner educated in IE, I am full of gratitude and honored to share my experience and the efforts of my teachers. Despite my special and personal needs, I could learn in regular schools from kindergarten to high school, thanks to efforts of parents, teachers, volunteers, and prefectural government.

In this essay, I try to focus on teachers' motivation. On July 21st, I had a dialogue with my teachers in high school in order to discuss what made them perfectly meet my needs in learning. The findings are interesting, some of which I never knew about as a student. I will briefly touch upon my own experience first, followed by the details of the findings, and then several interesting comments by my teachers will be also included. The conclusion will include a summary of what motivated my teachers and my perspectives on IE.

Background

It was at the age of two when I lost my sight through cancer. Although, by law, blind students should have enrolled in blind schools at that time, my parents fought for me to learn in the community based on a belief that children learn better in a diverse environment. In the end, I was accepted in an elementary school in my mother's hometown Osaka.

From the elementary school to high school, my learning environment was gradually and continuously improved by teachers, parents, volunteers, local government, and friends. Every teacher who taught my class learned Braille because it is the most proper media for me. Braille textbooks were produced by the local volunteers funded by local government (city government in junior high and, prefectural government in high school). In some classes where I needed further assistance, I was assigned assistant teachers. In maths class, my assistant teacher wrote figures and charts on "Raise Writer", special papers and a board that raises handwriting lines, so that I could follow the instructions of the main teacher. In science classes, assistant teachers and personal equipment for experiments were provided in order for me to grasp the whole procedure of the experiment. In PE classes, accommodations were made; when running, one of my friends stood on the goal line so that I could run toward him. In table tennis class, blind table tennis was also introduced to the entire class.

I was lucky to have wonderful friends, not only in the academic environment. In elementary school, I was also included in building a tree-house or play tag by limiting the area where we run around. Lastly, I should mention a "role model" of mine, who is also blind and was educated in inclusive settings. He and I shared lots of concerns that my seeing friends couldn't understand. For example, it was quite difficult for me to confess that I could hardly memorize the voices and names of my friends. As a homeroom teacher,

he taught me mathematics and science for which special Braille transcription is used. These experiences developed my academic skills as well as self-confidence to participate in society. Thanks to the immense efforts of my high school teachers, I was able to realize my dream to attend and to study at the University of Tsukuba.

In the next section, I will look back and analyze my learning environment in regular schools based on a dialogue with my teachers.

What motivates teachers

On July 21 2008, I had a meeting with my high school teachers to discuss our experience in regular school. The specific focus of the discussion was teachers' motivation but I also found lots of interesting comments and facts relating to IE. The following are common elements that they raised.

Network and Articulation

The majority of the teachers mentioned that because of various networks and strong cooperation with the junior high school teachers, they were motivated to accept me in the school; it meant that they were able to initiate something that they had never done before.

First of all, the strong relationship and communication with my junior high school teachers inspired my high school teachers. The former principal said, "We started visiting your junior high school as we were informed that you were coming to our high school, this convinced us to accept you." In fact, the experience and skills developed in the junior high school were handed down to high school teachers and improved upon.

The other important connection was made with another high school where a blind student was already learning. "By looking at and observing teachers in the high school where the other blind student was learning, we got confidence that we could also succeed." According to the teacher who made this comment, the version of the Braille software in the high school was older than theirs.

The last notable network was the one between the people who were supporting me; my family, the volunteers as well as my role model. My mother's strong passion and beliefs in IE inspired teachers over a period of time. In addition, efforts of local volunteers who produced Braille textbooks boosted my teachers' confidence. "It was really encouraging to meet and discuss matters with your role model," one of my teachers said. She also pointed out the fact that I had a successful role model was also an enabler since I could have special support that seeing supporters could never provide. As I mentioned above, the success story of my role model really helped my confidence grow in a natural way by demonstrating positive images of the future of a blind person.

Teamwork

The second important point was the teamwork amongst the teachers. "Thanks to the Principal, the members of the team stuck together for three years," my former class teacher pointed out.

In the Japanese school system, one teacher is given his/her own home room class per academic year. For example, there were 7 home classes for each academic year in my high school. It means there were 7 main home room teachers and 7 sub-home room teachers. We also had a teacher for the school library and the nurses' office. The home room teachers and sub-home room teachers are often changed in normal cases. However, home room teachers and sub-home room teachers in my academic year classes were fixed as a team, which reinforced cooperation among teachers.

For example, the teacher who taught the same subject in the team played the role of assistant teachers to others. According to the mathematics teacher, it was a good opportunity to exchange teaching skills between the head teacher and my assistant teacher. "Before I was hesitant to show my class to someone else. But after having an assistant teacher in the class, I found there was nothing to be afraid of," he stated. I also remember that my assistant teacher supported other friends in the classroom as well.

The awareness of being pioneers

The third major element was the sense of pioneer or commitment. The majority of the teachers agreed that it was sort of exciting to discover something new such as learning Braille, new teaching methods, and even the rules of Braille. "What was nice for our teamwork was that all of us were new to this knowledge and we all were pioneers," my homeroom class teacher in third year commented. Since he is teaching a blind student right now, he found that his colleagues tended to depend on his experience in comparison with his former teammates. "Although I know better what to do today; the sense of cooperation is stronger before." He said. This reminds me of a practice in Spain which was reported by Maria Angeles Parrilla. She reported over dependence on outside support and education inspectors, who develop individual curricula, which ends up with the labeling children and even discouraging voluntary commitment from teachers[2].

ICT Facilities

ICT technology was one of the physical elements that motivated my teachers. There was software that could convert electric text data into Braille data and the embosser was settled in the school. Without these pieces of equipment, we couldn't have managed to prepare adequate materials; a world history teacher mentioned. The majority of my textbooks were provided by local volunteers, funded by prefectural government and printed in the school. The above description might give you the idea that ICT equipment perfectly removes the barriers. To produce Braille textbooks is an elaborate procedure and it is almost impossible to prepare all the materials over a period of time. Therefore, my teachers were flexible in utilizing several methods including oral explanation or producing Braille materials by themselves, etc.

This demonstrates that adequate accommodating equipments and flexibility in its use are essential in IE.

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2   M. A. Parrilla, "Spain: responses to inclusion in autonomous regions", In *Inclusive Education World Yearbook of Education 1999,* H. Daniels and P. Garner (Eds.), Kogan Page, 1999.

Institutional Support

Institutional support for teachers was indispensable. The prefectural government of Osaka held training workshops for my teachers concerning Braille. Financially they provided funding for the volunteers and ICT equipment. As raised in almost all preparatory workshops for ICE 2008, teacher training is a strong enabler of IE.

Conclusion

The findings above are interesting for me in a sense that it broadened my perception of my experience. In fact, I never noticed some of those points when I was a student. At the same time, I'm grateful to my teachers and parents and friends since they never made me very aware of these "special accommodations".

I believe that this has naturally formed my self-confidence that I can learn, join my friends and join the society. Although Braille production is something particular for blind students; I believe the following motivators apply for all teachers. Networks, teamwork, a sense of commitment, the utilization of ICT and institutional support are essential. We all are responsible to enhance elements that encourage teachers to lead inclusive education in his/her classroom.

As for myself, I hope to learn more about IE from an academic and practical perspective and to have a dialogue with children and teachers with various backgrounds to share our experience and perspectives. With a blind Sudanese friend, I established an organization that promotes full participation and equality in education in his country Sudan. When he visited a local school in a village, he interviewed the principal. "There are no children with disabilities in my school because we protect them in their home", he said.

It was so sad to hear this story and imagine what would have happened if I had been kept in my home all day. During the dialogue, my teachers mentioned that the most important point was my family and I's positive attitude toward learning and participating in classes. As I mentioned above, the inclusive environment developed my self-confidence. Therefore I believe it is the interaction or positive cycle; namely, the inclusive environment that developed my self-confidence, which motivated teachers. And then, it resulted in creating a more inclusive environment. In a sense, we can start approaching inclusive education at any stage. Above all, motivating teachers is a crucial element of IE as a stepping-stone to further development in this field. As I wish to promote inclusive education in any way possible, I'm delighted to share my findings about my teachers.

I express my fullest appreciation to my family, teachers, friend, volunteers, and authorities that all made it possible to learn in an inclusive environment. In conclusion, I wish to express my deepest thanks to IBE and UNESCO for this privilege to make a contribution.

Face to Face with Each Child: A Dialogue with a Learner and his Teachers[1]

Introduction

This paper is contributed to ICE 48 in Geneva, Switzerland, in November 2008 "A Way of the Future". As a blind person who was educated in regular schools in Japan, it is a great honor to share my experience and tremendous efforts of my teachers. The focus of this paper is on a core value of inclusive education, which was vividly illustrated throughout a dialogue among my teachers in high school and me. This dialogue was aimed to prepare for another short voluntary contribution *What Made It Possible?* However, I have realized that many of the comments made by my teachers demonstrate their fundamental belief on IE or education itself. Stubbs (2002) explains the importance of core values of IE to underpin the practice of IE within a strong framework of values and beliefs.[2]

For this reason, I attempt here to describe the core values and beliefs of IE from a Japanese context, and a perspective from teachers and a blind learner, which could apply to other parts of the world or even universally.

Learning Environment

Since I'm totally blind, I have had some different needs in learning such as Braille textbooks, oral explanation on blackboards, assistant teachers etc. During my school life, from elementary school to high school, enormous efforts had been made and the environment has kept being improved. Here I shortly describe my learning environment in high school.

Braille Textbooks

As Braille is the best instructional media for me, local volunteers funded by prefectural government produced Braille textbooks. The government of Osaka coordinated volunteers to produce Braille textbooks in digital data. The data of the textbooks were printed out at my school with two Braille embossers. Production of Braille textbooks takes a large amount of time because each letter and the format of Braille must be checked, even if special software automatically transforms the plain text data into Braille data. For this reason, my teachers planned the curriculum carefully and ordered Braille translation in advance, so that I could have textbooks in time.

Teachers' Braille Skills

Another important fact was that all teachers who directly taught me in the class mastered Braille transcription. This ensured my effective learning in two major ways. First of all, it allowed me take notes and exams in Braille, which enabled me to participate in classes in the most understandable ways. I could organize and express my ideas in my own words. "The first time when I read your notebook and exams, it was just like decoding messages,"

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a teacher stated. The other point was that the Braille literacy skill helped my teachers to produce teaching materials by themselves. As I mentioned above, it was impossible for volunteers to prepare all the materials. Under these circumstances, teachers were flexible enough to utilize all resources in the most proper way.

Assistant Teachers

One of the most important supports in learning was provided by assistant teachers. Even though teaching materials were provided in Braille and teachers could read Braille, it was almost impossible for me to fully participate in certain classes such as mathematics, science, geography, and PE, where we handle figures or graphics, or where irregular activities (not just sitting and taking notes) are required.

In mathematics classes, assistant teachers explained the figures on the blackboard using "Raise-Writer", which is a set of special paper and board that raises lines written with a pen. They also helped me grasp how the syntaxes are manipulated in procedures. In science classes, a set of equipment was allocated for me so that I could experience and understand the whole procedure of the experiment. Assistant teachers also explained changes in colour.

A Variety of Devices

Lastly, I ought to mention that each small device or attempt of my teachers made the learning environment inclusive. For example, every teacher tried to read out what they wrote on the blackboard and sometimes followed up for me. Also, in writing on the board, teachers tried to avoid using pronouns such as "it" or "this" because these words don't make any sense when I cannot see what the words indicate or the part which the teacher is talking about. In classes, miscellaneous devices were utilized. In science classes, for instance, a touchable model was used to show the structure of generics or molecules.

Each of the above elements created an environment where I could participate equally in every stage. In addition, I was a member of other learning communities in other aspects as well; after school activities, and class activities such as sports day, school festival etc.

Teachers Comments

The dialogue I had with my teachers in July 2008 was an opportunity to discuss our experiences about why it was possible and how we recognized their practices. Within the dialogue I picked up several comments that demonstrate my teachers' beliefs. In this section, I will summarize these comments to illustrate the core value of IE.

No One Fixed Standard

Within the dialogue, a teacher of biology mentioned that she realized that it had been wrong to have one fixed standard either for blind students or sighted students. In biology classes, pictures are essential to show the structures of the bodies of the creatures. For sighted students, pictures are indispensable materials to help them learn. As the saying goes, "Seeing is believing." As for me, on the other hand, pictures are something hard to understand. I might say "Not to see is to be left out." To overcome this dilemma, the

teacher used several other ways, e.g. she offered her spare time to explain tactile pictures for me.

The teacher also tried to make exams without pictures as much as possible. However, this was a barrier for other students since understanding the certain parts of body of the creature only with a description was a complicated task. From this experience, she came to the conclusion that "There is no perfect method for every student." "Rather, it was more important to prepare materials in accordance with each student." She stated. Therefore, for exams, she changed the type of questions so that both sighted students and I could understand in our respective way.

Every Student Has Some Problems

Another interesting comment was that the accommodation for me gradually became a minor concern. "In the beginning, you had been the biggest concern for us, however, as we got used to teaching you, it was not a big issue any more." a teacher said. All teachers agreed about this.

According to them, there were some more students who have own concerns and needs to participate in learning and schooling. "It doesn't have to do with disability," they addressed. "The disability can be a concern or you might have irregular needs in learning due to your disability, however, every student has their own concern and problems in different ways and to a different extent," one teacher stated. Along these lines, learning Braille or assigning an assistant teacher were some prominent examples; it seems for me that it was a natural response on the basis of my teacher's belief of getting "face to face" with each and every student.

Conclusion

Through the dialogue, I think I could sense the core value of IE or education of my teachers. It was a very simple and clear belief of getting "face to face with each student." This means that IE is not a type of education for particular students, but for all. As many of the teachers agreed above, students have their own concerns in learning or schooling. Stubbs states, "All children can learn, and any child can experience difficulties in learning"; this is a key concept relating to IE. This is confirmed in the Salamanca Statement: "every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs."

I believe that in order to fully meet the learning needs of each child, or to enable teachers to face to face with each student, society as a whole should commit to the right to proper education, which is repeatedly confirmed in several human rights conventions from the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights[3] to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006.[4] According to EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008, however, 72 million children are out of school through out the world and about 196,000 out of 10,748,000 in elementary and secondary school students are reported to be absent for more than one month a year in Japan in 2006.[5]

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[3] Art. 26.
[4] Art. 24.
[5] Ministry of Education Japan, http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/toukei/001/07073002/index.htm.

Through my dialogue with the teachers, they raised factors that motivated and enabled them to meet my learning needs.[6] Government, parents, and volunteers all play significant roles in ensuring inclusive learning environments. UNESCO defines IE as "Inclusion (or inclusive education) is seen as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners…it involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies."[7]

I realized that it was the all the stakeholders that encouraged my teachers to get face to face with every student, including me, and to create an inclusive environment. I deeply thank my teachers and every person who committed to my education, developing my potential and self-confidence to participate in the society. I was able to do an internship at UNESCO Bangkok, start an NGO, and work at the Japanese Red Cross Society. I'm also grateful to them for developing my belief in the power of education, namely, the power to empower people to design their own lives and participate in society, making it better for them and for society as well.

I sincerely hope that this story of my teachers and the practice of IE may make a contribution to the worldwide effort to realize the rights to a proper education for every student and child. I express my sincere appreciation to IBE and UNESCO for the honor of contributing to the worldwide effort in realizing Inclusive Education for all.

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[6] The comments are summarized in my other contribution paper to ICE 2008 "What Made It Possible?"

[7] UNESCO, *Overcoming Exclusion through Inclusive Approaches in Education. A Challenge and a Vision*, Paris, UNESCO, 2003.

Learners and Teachers—A Contribution by Education International[1]

Introduction

Education is a basic human right secured by the Universal Declaration for Human Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Education for All commitments made by the international community eight years ago in Dakar seek to translate this fundamental right into reality. Inclusive education is the very essence of Education for **All. All** should mean **all, not some** or most, but every child, young person and adult, regardless of socio-economic back ground, race, ethnicity, gender, religion or other factors.

Education International is the global voice of teachers, representing over 30 million teachers, from pre-school to university, round the world. Its member organizations constitute the 401 teacher unions from 172 countries. EI and its members believe in public or publicly funded education for all of good quality.

The definition of inclusive education provided by UNESCO contributes greatly to the understanding of the topic as well as a widening of our scope of work. Inclusive education does not just address differently-abled children, but equally points to migrant children, children in fragile states or conflict areas, indigenous children, children with HIV/AIDS, et cetera. EI therefore agrees with UNESCO that we can define inclusive education

as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children.[2]

To summarize the definition in a few words, inclusive education addresses every single child, not leaving any child behind.

Teachers play a key role in the provision of education that is inclusive for all. Without the efforts of those who stand in front of the classroom, inclusive education remains rhetoric, rather than reality for those who desperately need it. EI and its member organizations are therefore committed to creating a more inclusive classroom, contributing to the general goals of "Education For All". It is clear for EI that this general policy goal cannot be discussed without teachers and their representatives. Making education inclusive is not an easy task and can easily lead to failure if feedback from professionals who implement these policies in the classroom is not taken seriously. Teacher and their unions must therefore be a vital partner for the development and success of inclusive education.

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[1] Prepared by Monique Fouilhoux, Executive Secretary, Education International.
[2] UNESCO, *Guidelines for Inclusion: Ensuring Access to Education for All,* Paris, UNESCO, 2005.

Teachers are however concerned that the issue of inclusive education has not been given adequate attention and argue that inclusive education should not be taken as an isolated policy that stands alone from other education policy goals. Making inclusive education work in the classroom requires major efforts from all actors involved and specific threats such as more outcome-driven education management systems need to be combated. The main weakness mentioned by teacher unions is that regular schools in some countries are not well-prepared to deal with integration effectively. Furthermore, more than 72 million children are still out of school and do not even have the chance for any education. But teachers share more specific concerns as well, in relation to teachers' professional support and working conditions and students' learning opportunities. This becomes a crucial issue, considering the increase in recruitment of unqualified teachers in many countries. In cases where mainstream education cannot be inclusive enough, teachers are concerned that special needs education remains a necessity. EI is finally worried about the existence of specific threats to inclusive education, the main one being the rise of outcome driven education management systems, which is directly at odds with the idea of inclusive education.

Efforts to promote inclusive education

Inclusive education is not a completely new issue on our agendas. Schools have since their very creation questioned and debated how to best deliver the education for the individual child. Special schools have therefore been set up to be able to give differently-abled children extra attention and care. During the nineteen eighties and nineties however, the concept of special schools for special children increasingly became questioned. Problems existed in terms of social integration, unemployment, maintaining stereotypes between groups and regarding fundamental human rights: indeed, if all children have the universal right to education, why should some experience this right separately from others? A complex debate about integration versus segregation followed, to which the concept of inclusive education is raised as an answer.

The concept of inclusive education gained particular momentum after the signing of the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education in 1994. It states forcefully that "*regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all*"[3]. The Salamanca statement has been reaffirmed by the World Declaration on Education For All in 2000, accompanied by the Dakar Framework for Action, keeping issue prominent on the agenda of leaders around the world. Important in this regard are also the Convention on the Rights of the Child from 1989 and the more recent Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities from 2006. In particular, the latter states that "*Persons with disabilities can access an inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live.*"[4]

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[3] UNESCO, *The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education*. Adopted by the "World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality', Salamanca (Spain), Paris, UNESCO, 7–10 June 1994, p. ix.

[4] Art. 24, 2b.

Teachers' unions are concerned with the topic of inclusive education, which shows from a survey carried out in preparation of its world congress in 2007. Unions from around the world actively promote inclusive education through a variety of activities such as policy formulation and curriculum development, advocacy work and campaigns, capacity building programmes and establishing or participating in networks for disabled teachers and school staff. EI itself facilitates this work by organizing seminars and sessions on the topic, sharing good practices, participating in international discussions, addressing concerns of teachers, disseminating international experiences and promoting the development of teacher education. Essential in this work is the cooperation with parents and learners, who are key partners for inclusive education.

On the international level, work has not been confined to conventions and other statements by politicians. A global community has slowly emerged that promotes and discusses inclusive education on a regular basis. This internationalization of education policies and discussions facilitates learning from experiences around the globe, not making the same mistakes twice. Around the world, we have seen evidence that important work has been done in schools themselves as well as in terms of regional, national and international policy. Technological developments such as computers, the internet and corresponding didactic material facilitate the development of inclusive education. Moreover, an impressive body of research has been developed over the past twenty years: simple search on "Google Scholar" yields 150.000 results since 1990! Why then are there so many problems with the implementation of such policies?

Further action needed to promote inclusive education

A common problem in the internationalization of political commitments is their link with implementation. It has already been argued that if no proper attention is paid to what happens in the classroom, inclusive education remains rhetoric, rather than a reality. In order to make inclusive education a reality, major efforts are therefore still needed.

Inclusive education is not an isolated problem for education

Inclusive education needs to be seen in context of general problems that education systems face around the world. As the UNESCO Global Monitoring Report 2008 states the world needs to recruit 18 million new teachers by 2015 if it is to fill the teacher gap.[5] If these teachers are not hired, education systems cannot be made more inclusive as they face more urgent demands. Teachers should be given access to the qualifications and experience to meet the challenges of inclusive education. A danger is that states are increasingly responding to this challenge by recruiting less experienced teachers on a contract base, rather than with a civil servant status, posing a major threat to quality of education, as well as its inclusiveness. As the UNESCO Global Monitoring Report 2008 states "*Policies to upgrade and professionalize untrained contract teachers are urgently needed if the provision of quality teachers is to be assured for all.*"[6]

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[5] UNESCO, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008—Education For All by 2015, Will We Make It?,* UNESCO and Oxford University Press, Paris and Oxford, 2007, p. 8.

[6] UNESCO, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008—Education For All by 2015, Will We Make It?,* UNESCO and Oxford University Press, Paris and Oxford, 2007, p. 79.

Enormous amounts of children do not even go to school, which casts serious doubts on the inclusiveness of current education systems. As the Global Monitoring Report states, more than 72 million children are still left out of education entirely[7] and over 774 million illiterate adults of which 64% are women.[8] The International Labour Organization furthermore states that 218 million children are involved in child labour.[9] In particular, these are disadvantaged groups who continue to be excluded. While the concept of education in schools might become more inclusive, this will not automatically mean that education becomes more accessible. While education is made more inclusive, it must at the same time reach out to more people and support those who are still left out.

Improving teacher education

Secondly, reforms in teacher education policies can provide a long term perspective for the promotion of inclusive education in the classroom. The promotion of a teaching attitude that focuses on the development and strengths of the individual child, rather than the child's "deficiencies" should become an explicit goal of teacher education. But rather than simply adding new demands to teacher education, it should be reformed comprehensively. As teacher education is highly regulated in most countries, there is a tendency towards long lists of demands to maintain "quality standards". This however leads to a bureaucratization of degrees which limits mobility and motivation. Recently, curricula are broken open through initiatives such as the Bologna Process with an aim to create more mobility of students and teachers across a European Higher Education Area, while improving quality. Important in this process is making learning more student-centred, while constructing a degree structure based on three cycles—bachelor, master and PhD. The reforms should lead to more flexibility for students in the curriculum, for example through modularization of their curricula. This increase in flexibility should go hand in hand with learning how to make the classroom more inclusive. Will a modularised teacher education programme provide room for inclusive education in terms special internships, mobility programmes, inclusive education courses as well as integration of a focus on inclusive education in normal courses on didactics and pedagogy?

Providing learning opportunities for teachers in a lifelong learning perspective

One of the main concerns that teacher unions report is that teachers themselves do not receive special or adequate training and support to deal effectively with the needs of challenged learners. Teachers who are already in the workforce therefore need to be given access to lifelong learning or equivalent learning schemes in order to provide them with the knowledge and skills to make inclusive education work. Important in this regard are the inclusion of learning opportunities in working conditions, non formal and informal learning schemes and recognition of prior learning. Teachers unions themselves can play an important role to provide learning opportunities for their members. In EI's world conference, a teachers' union from Thailand (PSTAT) reported to have good experience in organising informal learning schemes for their members. "*Teachers were trained to teach street children and to begin a learning process that they were capable of following. Some*

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[7]   *Ibid.*, p. 2.

[8]   *Ibid.*, p. 33.

[9]   International Labour Organization. *Global Child Labour Trends 2000 to 2004,* Geneva, ILO, 2006, p. 1.

teachers even went into the slums themselves to learn and educate.''[10] However, more training should be offered in higher education institutions as well, as inclusive education requires a peak into the frontiers of education research. Currently, only a fragment of the teaching workforce has access to any learning opportunity, creating a necessity for policy in this field.

Improving necessary working conditions

The status of the teaching profession needs to be improved in order to make it more attractive for experienced teachers and improve the motivation of the current teaching body—Teachers' motivation and their professional status are directly correlated to teaching and working conditions that allow them to fulfill their professional expectations. Primarily, this requires improvements in terms of working conditions, such as a reduction of the teaching load, a friendly and collegial atmosphere, better physical school conditions, as well as higher salaries. Attention for working conditions is however also of practical importance, as teachers report that inclusive education requires more attention to the individual child. The Spanish teachers union FETE/UGT gives an example at EI's world congress: *"a reduction of classroom size by between 5 and 10 pupils and interdisciplinary teams are needed when there are children in the same group with different capacities."[11]* It must be clear that inclusive education cannot be achieved if teachers have to educate too many children in too little time with too little resources.

Increasing team work and collaboration with parents and students

Finally, the necessary support staff around the teacher is needed to facilitate integration in the classroom. This type of support can range from social workers, paramedics, to specialist teachers, who are able to use sign-language. In order to make this work, a collegial atmosphere of teaching should be promoted in the school. Amongst other things, this requires school leadership which is committed to working together, indeed to democratic school governance. As the Association of Teachers of Technical Education (OLTEK) in Cyprus has reported to EI: "*Special needs education requires well-organised schools with experts, properly trained teachers, correct infrastructure and equipment that can provide a more effective and adequate education…"[12]* Collaboration should not be limited to teachers and support staff, but extended to parents, students and youth organizations as well. Only with the voice of those who experience education can inclusive education policies be made effective.

Threats and challenges

Outcome driven education management at odds with inclusive education

All over the world, there is a tendency to develop outcome driven education management systems. This type of school governance poses a number of problems for the development of inclusive education. Firstly, they provide incentives that lead away from inclusive education, as outcomes mostly do not include indicators that are linked with diversity in the

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[10] Education International, *Special Needs Education Survey Results,* Brussels, EI, 2007.
[11] Education International, 2007, *cit.*
[12] *Ibid.*

classroom. As outcomes are highly exam-driven, these indicators are highly manipulated by family background or physical abilities. Secondly, outcomes have the effect of "teaching for the test", which is in direct contradiction with the philosophy of inclusive education. The paradigm shift that inclusive education entails is towards bringing out the strengths of the individual learner, rather than focusing on standardized outcomes and deficiencies. Finally, outcomes driven management systems heavily promote competition between learners as well as between teachers, which is in direct contradiction with the need to build an environment of helping each other in the classroom and within schools. Outcome driven education management systems therefore need to be removed from the international policy agenda.

Also school management practices that increase the competition between teachers via merit pay for example, make the building of pedagogical teams in school impossible. The building of pedagogical teams involving the teachers concerned as well as non teaching personnel is essential to turn inclusive education into a success.

Violence and intolerance in schools

Violence and intolerance in schools are also serious threats for inclusive education. It is of outmost importance that all actors involved learn to live and work together in school, learn to accept their respective difference.

Special education remains necessary

It is attractive for policy makers to consider special education as obsolete when developing an inclusive education system. This becomes even more attractive when considering the costs of upholding two separate systems. The fact that cutting costs can be found amongst the arguments for inclusive education is confirmed by the survey held amongst teacher unions, who report this argument several times. Inclusive education however cannot always replace special needs education. Especially where learners have severe physical, mental or other challenges, mainstream schools might not always be in a position to provide the best education possible. In situations where schools do not have the necessary resources, experience or support staff, special needs schools remain necessary.

Changing more than just a few parameters

Inclusive education requires a paradigm shift in thinking about schools and their pedagogies. Therefore, just changing a few parameters in the education system will not achieve the desired result. This holds true for the classroom as well as education budgets, which consist for nearly 80% out of staff compensations, according to the latest OECD figures.[13] Changes in the budget will often need a general increase, rather than a budget-modification. Dubious modifications to generate extra cash for new projects such as an increase of teacher/student ratios, increasing the number of staff hours, reducing the basic salary or introducing merit-pay systems do not generate sustainable solutions and are mostly at direct odds with the concept of inclusive education. This new education paradigm should finally be reflected in the pedagogy and teaching material.

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[13] OECD, *Education At A Glance 2008,* Paris, OECD, 2008, p. 302.

Conclusion

Inclusive education is an important challenge for all—policymakers, teachers, support staff, parents and learners alike. Strategies towards its broad aims are adapted on the international level as well as in the classrooms themselves. Teachers around the world support the ideas of inclusive education, but raise a number of practical problems that prevent reaching our common goals. It is clear that international commitments such as the Salamanca declaration and the Dakar Framework for Action do not fail because of their ambition (which indeed still needs to be higher!), but because of problems in their implementation. EI argues that inclusive education cannot be a success without strengthening the dialogue between the policy-makers and the professional in the classroom. The voices of teachers as well as parents and learners need to be heard and magnified, in order to address the problems they experience while implementing our common commitments. With their support, inclusive education can start to benefit all members of future generations.

Inclusive Education: Challenges of Implementing it Inside the Classroom[1]

In the last two decades the world has invested heavily in education access for the poorest populations. As a result, millions of children have enrolled, even in areas where schools were mainly for the middle class and the "meritorious poor." The real test of inclusion, however, is whether the children who enroll learn what a country deems necessary.

Many problems compromise the likelihood that the excluded populations will acquire the expected knowledge. These include malnutrition, poor mother tongue vocabulary, little knowledge of the official language (where applicable), poorly developed math sense, parents who are illiterate or lack time to monitor homework. Children with such problems may fall behind on the first day of grade 1.

Crowded classes in low-income areas may teach very little to children from excluded groups. Materials may be scarce, and teachers may be overwhelmed with the high enrollments.[2] In some countries, high failure rates may even be considered a hallmark of quality. To deal with these problems, teachers in low-income schools may do "triage": that is, identify those few who can keep up with the curriculum and focus on them. Weak students may be isolated in favour of those likely to pass high-stakes examinations.[3]

Often these better students sit in the front of the class. Thus, an observer may see the teacher interacting mainly with the front rows, while the rest of the class is uninvolved and silent. Such students also rarely ask questions, though they may fail to understand.

Interacting with a student in the front row…	…but the back rows are neglected

Some countries expect non-performing students to repeat grades, but others have instituted social promotion policies in order to reduce dropout and repetition. However, there is often no provision for remedial classes, so those falling behind are unlikely to catch up. Teachers of later primary or secondary grades find it impossible to implement the curriculum with such students. The class goes on, but with just the 3-4 students who

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[1] Prepared by Helen Abadzi, Senior Evaluation Officer, Independent Evaluation Group, World Bank.
[2] H. Abadzi, "Education for all or just for the smartest poor?" *Prospects.* n° 131, September 2004, pp. 271–289.
[3] M. Lockheed and A. Harris. "Beneath Education Production Functions: The Case of Primary Education in Jamaica." *Peabody Journal of Education,* vol. 80(1), 2005, pp. 6–28.

can handle the material. The rest may come to school off and on and gradually drop out. Or in some countries they may receive a barely passing grade.[4]

As a result, enrollment statistics in some low-income countries may be misleading. *The classes may have 20 or 100 students enrolled, but in fact the class size may be only 4.* And of the rest, only half the students may come on a given day. Government and donor staff studying computerized enrollment reports (with data usually obtained once a year) may get the impression that certain classes are overcrowded. Repeated and close observations are needed to ascertain the extent of the problem.

Do students need interaction in order to learn, can't they just listen? To recall information, people must first be able to hook it to prior knowledge. To get the knowledge, the human mind must pay attention in order but without a specific stimulus, attention tends to wander. The most consistent means of keeping students attentive is reinforcement on a variable ratio: For example, a student would be asked to respond on average once every 20 times that a teacher asks a question. Students who are rarely if ever addressed are less likely to pay attention. Thus, they may miss important items repeatedly, to the point that they have no prior knowledge on which to hook new information.[5] However, if a teacher often directs questions to the weaker students and gives corrective feedback, the children expect this to happen and may try to learn and respond.

Training and Supervision for Inclusive Classroom Teaching

The challenge of helping the weaker students participate and learn from instruction has received little attention. Teachers often tend to imitate their own teachers, and they may be unaware of some long-standing habits. Also, they may feel more rewarded when they interact with those who understand them. Videotapes can demonstrate what happens when teachers interact only with those in the front rows who know the material. Pre-service and in-service education could focus on training teachers to interact with students in the entire room.

The hallmark of inclusive education is inclusive teaching. *When only the best students are served, the Education for All initiative becomes education for the smartest poor.* Ministries of Education could collect more evidence of student involvement and remedy it. Suitable evaluation instruments include the international version of the Stallings Classroom Snapshot, which estimates the percentage of students who seem uninvolved.[6,7.]

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[4] R. Sultana, *Facing the hidden dropout challenge in Albania*, Tirana, UNICEF, 2006.

[5] H. Abadzi, *Efficient Learning for the Poor*, Washington DC, World Bank, 2006.

[6] Education International, *Special Needs Education Survey Results,* Brussels, EI, 2007.

[7] See also: K. Tietjen, A. Rahman, & S. Spaulding. *Time to Learn: Teachers' and Students' Use of Time in Government Primary Schools in Bangladesh,* Basic Education and Policy Support (BEPS), Activity Creative Associates International Inc., USAID, 2004.

Inclusive Education: Policy Statements

An Exploration of the Messages sent by Ministers of Education for the 48th session of the International Conference on Education (ICE)[1]

Background and methodology

Since the 2001 session of the International Conference on Education (ICE), Ministers of Education worldwide have been invited to contribute to the preparatory phase by sending a personal, concise message related the themes to be discussed during the Conference. In the case of the forty-eighth session of the ICE (Geneva, November 2008), the IBE received ministerial messages from a total of 144 countries[2].

The messages were limited to a maximum of two standard pages, and the national authorities in charge of the education system were left completely free to choose the content of their statements on the theme of the Conference—"inclusive education". These messages can be seen as policy statements focusing on the most important issues, challenges and priorities for inclusive education in the different countries and regions, and to some extent they reflect the current, condensed vision of inclusive education from the perspective of Ministers of Education.

We decided to analyse the content of 129 messages[3] in order to determine: (i) what kinds of issues and/or topics related to inclusive education are considered as the most relevant by the Ministers; (ii) what priority groups affected by exclusion are mentioned in their messages; and (iii) what key measures and action areas are evoked in conjunction with inclusive education. To this end, after an initial reading of the messages, we coded the materials on the basis of a set of categories under each of the three dimensions above. In the case of issues and topics, we considered references to the following categories: problems in terms of access to education; equal educational opportunities; the social dimension of inclusion; democracy; education as a human right; lifelong learning; and quality education. As regards the target groups, we took into account the following: children with special education needs; migrants; cultural and linguistic minorities; the poor; girls/women; out-of-school children; and drop-outs. Concerning key measures and action areas, the categories taken into consideration were: the national legislative framework; international normative frameworks; specific educational plans and strategies; inter-sectoral policies; incentive and other concrete aids; pedagogical aspects (curriculum, educational programmes); second chance opportunities; teacher training; technical and vocational education; and the need for additional financial resources.

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[1] Prepared by Massimo Amadio (Senior Programme Specialist), Renato Opertti (Programme Specialist), Elsa Benzaquen (Research Assistant) and Jayne Brady (Research Assistant), UNESCO-IBE.

[2] The messages can be consulted on the website of the 48th ICE (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/ice/48th-session-2008.html). In some cases, two separate messages were received from the Ministers in charge of different levels of the education system.

[3] Some messages were received after the completion of the coding process and therefore were not included in the sample.

Given time limitations and the type of materials (short texts), the results of the analysis presented below and summarized in the tables at the end of this paper should be viewed as an initial exploration of official statements on inclusive education issues and challenges worldwide.

Findings

Overall, the concepts and issues most frequently referred to in the ministerial messages are the quality of education, the provision of equal educational opportunities, the social dimension of inclusion, and education as a human right (see Table 1). Indeed, a great number of statements convey the idea that education should contribute to fostering social cohesion and integration. References to the social dimension of inclusion are more frequent in the case of developed countries, lower and upper middle income countries, and countries with a medium and high Human Development Index (HDI) (see Tables 2 and 3). In terms of Education for All (EFA) regions, this concept is mainly stressed in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), North America and Western Europe (NAWE), and Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) (see Table 4). At the global level, problems in terms of access to education are also emphasised, but especially—and not surprisingly—in the case of developing and low-income countries, least developed countries (LDC), as well as countries with a low and medium HDI (see Tables 2 and 3). As showed in Table 4, concerns about the access to education are particularly evident in the EFA regions of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), East Asia and the Pacific (EAPA), South and West Asia (SWA), and LAC. Conversely, this issue is less relevant in the CEE and NAWE regions, where universal access to primary/basic education has been largely achieved.

As a whole, "inclusion" is viewed as an essential aspect of educational development, is frequently associated with "equity", "quality" and "human rights", and most of the messages underline the need to act strongly in favour of inclusive education, in particular for achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the EFA goals. Regarding the less advanced contexts, inclusive education is mainly conceived as a mean to accelerate the attainment of the EFA goals in several statements, and it is strongly associated with "access to education", whereto improvements of enrolment rates are presented as an indicator of progress towards inclusion.

Yet there is also an awareness that the physical access to school does not automatically translate into access to meaningful and successful learning for all, and therefore that the dimensions of "quality education" and "equal educational opportunities" should not be overlooked. In fact, Ministers from developed and high-income countries tend to convey a more comprehensive view of inclusive education. Unlike most of the messages from developing countries, they tend to focus more on the definition and conceptualization of inclusive education. The social aspect of inclusion, for example, and the influence of education on society are frequently mentioned, along with many references to social cohesion and the need to include the entire population in both education and society.

Two other recurrent topics throughout the statements are the need to face the challenges of the twenty-first century—such as the globalization of the economy, the development of the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), and international migration—and

the importance of educating responsible citizens that have the necessary competencies for entering the labour market, participating in society and contributing to its development.

In terms of specific social groups affected by exclusion, a high degree of consensus exists across regions and country groupings around students with special educational needs (SEN) as "the" priority group for any inclusive education policy. SEN students are the type of excluded population most referred to in almost all the messages (see Table 1). Additionally, even if they are sometimes mentioned together with other marginalized groups, a good number of statements *only* refer to SEN students[4]. In many contexts, therefore, inclusive education continue to be mainly understood as providing disabled children access to education either through special education services or through their integration into mainstream schools.

At the global level, other frequently mentioned excluded social groups are cultural and linguistic minorities, poor and rural populations, and women (see Table 1). Depending on the level of development and the EFA region, a clear differentiation can be noted as far as priority target groups are concerned. Developed, high-income and high HDI countries tend to place more emphasis on migrant populations as one of the main challenges to be faced in terms of inclusion. On the other hand, developing countries, LDC and low HDI countries tend to stress more the poor, women, minorities, and children that have no access to education. In the case of lower and upper middle income countries an accentuated emphasis on cultural and linguistic minorities and the poor can also be observed (see Tables 2 and 3). Concerning EFA regions, SSA countries strongly emphasise the poor, out-of-school children, and women; countries in Asia and in the CEE and LAC regions tend to focus more on cultural and linguistic minorities as well as poor populations; women are a priority group in the Arab States, while NAWE countries mainly emphasise migrants and, to a lesser extent, minorities (see Table 4).

From the perspective of developing, low-income countries and LDC—and especially in the SSA region—it is clear that access to education is one of the major concerns of Ministers of Education. Indeed, the statements express a strong will to reach out to all kinds of excluded populations, and particularly those who live in remote and rural areas, as well as the poor and the marginalized.

As regards key measures and action areas to promote inclusive education, globally the emphasis tend to be placed on specific educational plans and strategies, normative frameworks, incentives and other concrete aids, as well as teachers and teacher training (see Table 1). The great majority of developing and low-income countries prioritize areas such as financial aids and incentives to vulnerable groups, free access to education, the provision of free additional services, as well as better equipment and appropriate facilities. A great number of messages also refer to the measures undertaken to expand access to and the use of ICT in schools and universities. Indeed, information and communication technologies are commonly viewed as an indispensable new learning tool and a means to support the democratization of learning opportunities.

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[4] Obviously, such an emphasis is not misplaced as all available statistics indicate that persons with disabilities are disproportionately represented among the excluded from education, the poor and the unemployed in both developed and developing contexts.

The fact that many messages refer to legal and normative frameworks suggests that inclusion is not a new concern, although there is still much to be done to translate principles and intentions into concrete practices. Indeed, the emphasis on constitutional principles and legal frameworks clearly indicates that the very first step towards achieving inclusion consists in recognizing the crucial importance of everyone's right to education.

Not surprisingly, the need for additional financial resources is particularly stressed in the case of low-income and low HDI countries, LDC (see Tables 2 and 3), as well as the SSA region and Asia (see Table 4). A significant part of developing and low-income countries emphasise the need to expand access to early childhood education and make reference to the improvement of the provision of basic education. They also refer to incentive measures for overcoming financial and/or social obstacles. Several statements also allude to specific measures and pilot projects targeting priority groups, often with the support of NGOs and the international community.

Teachers and their training are also frequently mentioned, with more emphasis in the cases of developing countries, low and upper middle income countries, low HDI countries and LDC (see Tables 2 and 3). On a regional basis, the emphasis on teachers and teacher training is evident across the SSA region, Asia and the Arab States (see Table 4). Pedagogical aspects are often stressed in the statements, and particularly by countries in transition, upper middle and high-income countries, as well as high HDI countries. Adopting a student-centred approach and focusing on the different needs and abilities of each student is a recurrent idea throughout the statements. In addition, many messages (especially in the case of the NAWE region) insist upon the specific needs of each student and the importance of taking into consideration the diversity of those needs through differentiated teaching approaches, which often mentioned as one of the most appropriate solutions. This underlines the fact that placing students with special educational needs or with different cultural or socioeconomic backgrounds in the same class is considered insufficient, if the curriculum and the teachers are not responsive to the diversity of their learning needs.

As regards children and young people who drop out and/or are out-of-school, as well as adults who have never attended school, a measure frequently mentioned is the provision of "second-chance" educational opportunities as a way to foster social integration and facilitate access to the labour market. References to the need for increased flexibility in the education system, establishing links between formal and informal structures and provisions within the framework of lifelong learning are also frequent. In addition, many Ministers from developing countries mention the need to design adequate systems that can help vulnerable and marginalized groups access the labour market, such as improving vocational and technical education.

References to out-of-school and marginalized children are often associated with poverty issues, which remain a crucial challenge at the heart of all concerns. Although developing and low-income countries tend to strongly emphasise the need to fight against poverty, a good number of developed and upper middle income countries also mention the issue of marginalization and *ghettoization* of poor people in certain regions and areas within each country.

Finally, a good number of statements make reference to the need for strengthened cooperation in order to share ideas, knowledge and good practices in the field of inclusive education. With regard to international cooperation, developing countries tend to refer more to the need to comply with international normative frameworks. The call for cooperation also echoes requests for North-South support and assistance, which represents a *leitmotiv* throughout all messages from the SSA region. Many Ministers tend to emphasise the importance of a closer collaboration between educational institutions, families and communities, who must be enabled to contribute and get involved in building an inclusive education system at the local level. Despite their importance, inter-sectoral policies do not appear as a high priority in the statements, with the exception of the most advanced contexts, where emphasis is often placed on strengthened cooperation among different Ministries as a means to promote educational and social inclusion.

Final remarks

This initial exploration of the messages from Ministers of Education of 129 countries shows a diversity of conceptualizations, approaches, emphases and priority issues regarding inclusive education, clearly reflecting the different situations, problems and concerns at the national and regional levels.

Beyond these differences, a certain degree of consensus seems to exist on some core ideas related to inclusive education; in particular: (i) the importance of inclusive education, together with the provision of quality education for all and equal educational opportunities, in the efforts aimed at promoting social integration and facilitating access to the labour market for those who are excluded; (ii) inclusive education as a guiding principle and framework which can serve to orientate educational policies and programmes targeting exclusion from and within education; and (iii) inclusive education as a way of addressing the diversity of learners' expectations and needs through a vast repertoire of teaching and learning strategies.

The further discussion and elaboration of these core ideas could lead to a broader conceptualization of inclusive education as a means to inform the international policy agenda and further advance towards the attainment of the EFA goals.

Table 1. Percentage of ministerial messages emphasizing each category of concepts/topics: all cases and by world classification

Category of concepts/topics	Percentage			
	All cases	Developed	Developing	Transition
Issues/topics:				
Problems in terms of access to education	40	11	53	29
Equal educational opportunities	50	53	49	57
Social dimension of inclusion	45	56	41	43
Democracy	10	14	8	14
Education as a human right	42	44	40	57
Lifelong learning	24	33	21	14
Quality of education	52	61	49	43
Target groups:				
Children with special educational needs	64	64	64	57
Migrants	16	42	6	14
Minorities (cultural & linguistic)	27	36	23	29
The poor	26	19	29	14
Girls/women	19	6	27	–
Out-of-school children	14	3	20	–
Drop-outs	16	19	15	–
Type of action evoked:				
National legislative framework	33	28	34	43
International normative frameworks	38	33	41	29
Specific educational plans & strategies	47	25	56	57
Inter-sectoral policies	12	17	10	14
Incentives & other concrete aids	33	19	40	14
Pedagogy (curriculum, programs)	31	25	33	43
Second chance, reinsertion	11	8	12	14
Teacher training	40	22	48	29
Technical & vocational education	12	8	13	29
Need for additional financial resources	11	6	13	14
Number of cases	*129*	*36*	*86*	*7*

Table 2. Percentage of ministerial messages emphasizing each category of concepts/topics: all cases and by income level (World Bank, 2006)

Category of concepts/topics	Percentage				
	All cases	Low	Lower middle	Upper middle	High
Issues/topics:					
Problems in terms of access to education	40	68	38	38	18
Equal educational opportunities	50	32	54	67	52
Social dimension of inclusion	45	15	65	58	45
Democracy	10	3	8	8	21
Education as a human right	42	35	51	29	48
Lifelong learning	24	12	27	25	30
Quality of education	52	38	49	67	61
Target groups:					
Children with special educational needs	64	65	65	58	67
Migrants	16	–	8	21	39
Minorities (cultural & linguistic)	27	24	30	38	21
The poor	26	29	30	33	12
Girls/women	19	38	19	13	6
Out-of-school children	14	35	8	8	3
Drop-outs	16	21	11	17	15
Type of action evoked:					
National legislative framework	33	38	38	25	27
International normative frameworks	38	62	38	21	27
Specific educational plans & strategies	47	65	57	38	24
Inter-sectoral policies	12	9	11	17	15
Incentives & other concrete aids	33	53	30	25	21
Pedagogy (curriculum, programs)	31	24	24	54	30
Second chance, reinsertion	11	9	16	13	6
Teacher training	40	53	30	50	30
Technical & vocational education	12	6	19	13	12
Need for additional financial resources	11	26	11	4	–
Number of cases	*129*	*34*	*37*	*24*	*33*

Table 3. Percentage of ministerial messages emphasizing each category of concepts/topics: all cases, least developed countries (LDC) and by Human Development Index (UNDP, 2006)

Category of concepts/topics	Percentage				
	All	LDC	Low HDI	Medium HDI	High HDI
Issues/topics:					
Problems in terms of access to education	40	71	68	50	22
Equal educational opportunities	50	32	36	52	52
Social dimension of inclusion	45	11	18	48	52
Democracy	10	–	–	10	14
Education as a human right	42	25	32	44	44
Lifelong learning	24	7	9	20	34
Quality of education	52	36	41	48	64
Target groups:					
Children with special educational needs	64	68	68	68	62
Migrants	16	–	–	8	28
Minorities (cultural & linguistic)	27	21	14	32	28
The poor	26	29	27	32	20
Girls/women	19	39	45	22	8
Out-of-school children	14	32	32	16	4
Drop-outs	16	18	18	14	16
Type of action evoked:					
National legislative framework	33	36	36	38	22
International normative frameworks	38	64	55	42	26
Specific educational plans & strategies	47	64	59	62	30
Inter-sectoral policies	12	7	14	10	16
Incentives & other concrete aids	33	46	64	30	22
Pedagogy (curriculum, programs)	31	25	32	26	40
Second chance, reinsertion	11	11	18	12	8
Teacher training	40	57	64	32	38
Technical & vocational education	12	4	5	18	10
Need for additional financial resources	11	32	27	10	4
Number of cases	*129*	*28*	*22*	*50*	*50*

Category of concepts/topics	All	EFA regions								
		AS	CEE	LAC	NAWE	SSA	Asia	CA	EAPA	SWA
Issues/topics:										
Access to education	40	33	13	43	10	70	50	25	60	40
Equal education opportunities	50	33	50	65	48	40	63	75	60	60
Social dimension of inclusion	45	40	50	65	57	20	46	50	40	60
Democracy	10	7	–	13	29	7	4	25	–	–
Education as a human right	42	33	31	48	52	37	46	75	47	20
Lifelong learning	24	13	25	26	24	13	42	25	60	–
Quality of education	52	60	44	52	67	50	42	50	40	40
Target groups:										
Children with special needs	64	60	56	57	57	70	75	50	87	60
Migrants	16	7	19	4	52	–	21	25	20	20
Minorities	27	7	50	35	19	13	42	25	47	40
Poor	26	13	25	30	10	33	33	–	40	40
Girls/women	19	27	6	17	5	33	21	–	20	40
Out-of-school children	14	13	6	4	–	33	17	–	27	–
Drop-outs	16	13	19	13	14	20	13	–	20	–
Type of action evoked:										
National legal framework	33	20	31	39	19	37	42	50	40	40
International normative framework	38	40	25	30	38	43	46	50	40	60
Specific plans and strategies	47	27	44	61	10	57	71	75	73	60
Inter-sectoral policies	12	13	19	9	14	10	13	–	13	20
Incentives and concrete aids	33	20	19	43	10	50	38	25	47	20
Pedagogy	31	27	31	30	19	37	38	50	47	–
Second chance, reinsertion	11	20	13	4	10	20	–	–	–	–
Teacher training	40	40	31	35	14	63	42	25	53	20
Vocational and technical education	12	13	6	22	14	10	8	25	7	0
Need for financial resources	11	13	13	–	–	20	17	25	20	–
Number of cases	129	15	16	23	21	30	24	4	15	5

Note: AS = Arab States; CA = Central Asia; CEE = Central and Eastern Europe; EAPA = East Asia and the Pacific; LAC = Latin America and the Caribbean; NAWE = North America and Western Europe; SSA = Africa South of Sahara; SWA = South and West Asia

Conclusion

Inclusive Education for Moving the Education for All (EFA) Goals Forward[1]

In this publication, a broad range of issues, challenges and questions related to inclusive education were gathered. As was noted at the outset, these differing perspectives and approaches stimulated debate at the 48th session of the ICE and provided valuable insights on moving the inclusive education agenda forward. Building upon the Conclusions and Recommendations of the ICE, these contributions remain extremely pertinent, shedding light on the concept's key features and underlining the pertinent role of an inclusive education approach.

Essentially, the concept of inclusive education has evolved from a narrow perception, based on special education or mainstreaming children with special educational needs towards a broader understanding of an education system that addresses the needs of *all* learners, founded upon the right-based approach of the EFA agenda and international conventions. Therefore inclusive education can be understood as "a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all children".[2]

In particular, this definition of inclusive education involves the understanding, the identification and the removal of barriers to participation and learning and allows a better visualization of the interfaces and synergies between social inclusion and education. It implies a profound change from blaming and penalising students' profiles for low achievements, to considering learning barriers from a multi-dimensional perspective of cultural, social and educational factors, such as learning content, or societal contexts and prejudices. Along these lines, inclusive education provides a comprehensive vision about learning barriers and a cost-effective and sustainable way to achieve inclusive societies in the future.

In accordance with this, inclusive education implies a revised educational policy agenda, at the international, national and local levels. This means paying more attention and closely link equity and quality issues and comprehensively addressing the underlying causes of exclusion. An inclusive education approach can guide clear and unified policy planning processes, as well as the allocation of resources and the adoption of legislative measures. A revised approach to educational policy also requires a close consideration of the impacts pursued and attained, for example by targeting socially disadvantaged groups; such prioritization must be solidly grounded on universal frameworks and embedded in a moral mandate, common to all educational provisions and aimed at attaining high-

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[1] Adapted from: R. Opertti, J. Brady and L. Duncombe, "Moving forward: Inclusive education as the core of EFA", *Prospects*. n° 146, June 2008.

[2] UNESCO, *Guidelines for inclusion: Ensuring Access to Education for All,* Paris, UNESCO, 2005.

quality equitable education for all. This avoids "second-class" education systems with homogeneous educational environments and expectations, which reinforce fragmentation and segregation.

Inclusive education as a guiding principle also carries implications for the design and development of education systems that effectively address all learners' needs. An inclusive approach requires smooth and cohesive transitions of lifelong learning across different learning levels, environments and methodologies. In practice, this means flexible, diverse and relevant curricula and education systems, such as common curricular frameworks for childhood, basic and secondary schools, curricula structured around core life competencies and knowledge, the establishment of school networks, and the maintenance of close coordination between social institutions, the community and parents (through inter-sectoral policies).

At the classroom and school levels, inclusive education implies that teachers are equipped to effectively respond to learners' diversity by providing personalized education and support. It also requires that their diverse cultural and social profiles are promoted as contexts and opportunities for learning enhancement. Inclusive education therefore requires the diversification of modes of instruction and teaching practices to effectively engage the students in the learning process and promote diversity, e.g. interdisciplinary team work; collaborative teaching; peer tutoring; and specialised support from teacher resource centres. In this framework, teachers can be seen as the "cornerstones of inclusive education". Teacher training, teachers' status in society and their working conditions should reflect this, in order to motivate teachers and develop their skills. For learners, the diversification of methods, materials and assessment schemes are also highly relevant to ensure the presence, participation and achievement of all.

Certainly, suggested key indicators for measuring inclusive education consider the "presence (access to education and school attendance), participation (quality of the learning experience from the students' perspective) and achievement (learning processes and outcomes across the curriculum)" of all learners. Overall, inclusive education essentially implies the design and implementation of policies and strategies which recognise and intertwine different learning dimensions (access, processes and learning outcomes), levels (lifelong learning comprising formal and non-formal settings and provisions) and units (the macro unit of national frameworks, the medium unit of school-based curricula, the micro unit of classrooms, groups and teachers and the nano unit of the learner and their personalized curriculum).

Based upon these key features, inclusive education can be seen as touching upon all dimensions and levels of the education system, with a view to attaining a high-quality equitable education. The successful combination and synergies of policies and programmes are grounded on an integrated and harmonious vision of education where all components are mutually implicated. More specifically, it can be seen as a way of contributing to the fulfilment and enjoyment of the right to education, and of providing access to lifelong learning opportunities within the holistic framework of EFA.

In fact, the partial progress made with respect to the EFA goals so far has revealed that a holistic vision and approach to the right to lifelong learning opportunities is essential for achieving inclusive and equitable societies. It has been frequently noted, for example, that inclusive education may serve to provide this universal and holistic approach, allowing for a broader understanding of how the concepts of equality, equity and quality may interact, as well as a greater appreciation of difference.

In short, an inclusive approach to education certainly complements and reinforces the EFA agenda from a holistic perspective, and may even be essential for achieving the EFA goals on time. From this perspective, inclusive education is the way of the future.

Annex

Conclusions and Recommendations of the 48th session of the International Conference on Education (ICE)

Meeting at the forty-eighth session of the UNESCO International Conference on Education (Geneva, 25-28 November 2008), we, the Ministers of Education, heads of delegation and delegates from 153 Member States have, alongside representatives of 20 intergovernmental organizations, 25 NGOs, foundations and other institutions of civil society, taken part in constructive and challenging debates on the theme of "Inclusive Education: The Way of the Future."

At the conclusion of our work, participants recalled Article 26 of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights that states that everyone has a right to education. We also affirm that inclusive quality education is fundamental to achieving human, social and economic development.

We agreed that governments as well as all the other social actors have an important role in providing a quality education for all and, in doing so, should recognize the importance of a broadened concept of inclusive education that addresses the diverse needs of all learners and that is relevant, equitable and effective.

All forecasts suggest that the global financial crisis will have a disproportionate impact on the poor—those who carry the least responsibility for these events. In this context, we reaffirm the importance of inclusive education for reducing poverty, and improving health, incomes and livelihoods. Therefore, despite the current global financial crisis, we emphasize that funding for education should be a top priority and that the financial crisis should not serve as a justification for a reduction in the allocation of resources to education at both the national and international levels.

Building on the outcomes of the nine preparatory meetings and four regional conferences on inclusive education organized by UNESCO's International Bureau of Education, and based on the results of plenary sessions and workshop debates which took place during this Conference, we call upon Member States to adopt an inclusive education approach in the design, implementation, monitoring and assessment of educational policies as a way to further accelerate the attainment of Education for All (EFA) goals as well as to contribute to building more inclusive societies. To this end, a broadened concept of inclusive education can be viewed as a general guiding principle to strengthen education for sustainable development, lifelong learning for *all* and equal access of all levels of society to learning opportunities so as to implement the principles of inclusive education.

Therefore, we **recommend** to Member States to:

I.   Approaches, Scope and Content

1.   Acknowledge that inclusive education is an ongoing process aimed at offering quality education for all while respecting diversity and the different needs and abilities, characteristics and learning expectations of the students and communities, eliminating all forms of discrimination.

2.   Address social inequity and poverty levels as priorities, as these are major obstacles to the implementation of inclusive education policies and strategies, and deal with these problems within a framework of intersectoral policies.

3.   Promote school cultures and environments that are child-friendly, conducive to effective learning and inclusive of all children, healthy and protective, gender-responsive, and encourage the active role and the participation of the learners themselves, their families and their communities.

II.   Public Policies

4.   Collect and use relevant data on all categories of the excluded to better develop education policies and reforms for their inclusion, as well as to develop national monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.

5.   Consider as appropriate the ratification of all international conventions related to inclusion and, in particular, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities adopted in December 2006.

6.   Pursue education in the public interest and strengthen the government's capacity to orientate, promote and follow up on the development of equitable education of high quality in close partnership with civil society and the private sector.

7.   Develop policies that provide educational support for different categories of learners in order to facilitate their development in regular schools.

8.   View linguistic and cultural diversity in the classroom as a valuable resource and promote the use of the mother tongue in the early years of instruction.

9.   Encourage educational stakeholders to design effective curricular frameworks from childhood onwards, while adopting a flexible approach in order to accommodate local needs and situations, as well as to diversify pedagogical practices.

III. Systems, Links and Transitions

10. Provide for the participation and consultation of all stakeholders in decision-making processes, as the overall responsibility of fostering inclusion implies the active engagement of all social actors, with the government playing a leading and regulatory role in accordance with national legislation when applicable.

11. Strengthen the links between schools and society to enable families and the communities to participate in and contribute to the educational process.

12. Develop early childhood care and education (ECCE) programmes that promote inclusion as well as early detection and interventions related to whole child development.

13. Strengthen the use of ICTs in order to ensure greater access to learning opportunities, in particular in rural, remote and disadvantaged areas.

14. Provide high-quality, non-formal educational opportunities that offer the possibilities for formal recognition of competencies acquired in non-formal settings.

15. Enhance efforts to reduce illiteracy as a mechanism of inclusion, bearing in mind the importance of literate parents on the education of their children.

IV. Learners and Teachers

16. Reinforce the role of teachers by working to improve their status and their working conditions, and develop mechanisms for recruiting suitable candidates, and retain qualified teachers who are sensitive to different learning requirements.

17. Train teachers by equipping them with the appropriate skills and materials to teach diverse student populations and meet the diverse learning needs of different categories of learners through methods such as professional development at the school level, pre-service training about inclusion, and instruction attentive to the development and strengths of the individual learner.

18. Support the strategic role of tertiary education in the pre-service and professional training of teachers on inclusive education practices through, *inter alia*, the provision of adequate resources.

19. Encourage innovative research in teaching and learning processes related to inclusive education.

20. Equip school administrators with the skills to respond effectively to the diverse needs of all learners and promote inclusive education in their schools.

21. Take into consideration the protection of learners, teachers and schools in times of conflict.

International Cooperation

22. Recognize UNESCO's leading role with regard to inclusive education through:
    - Promoting the exchange and dissemination of best practices.
    - Providing, upon request, advice to countries on how they can develop and implement policies on inclusive education.
    - Encouraging South-South and North-South-South cooperation for the promotion of inclusive education.

- Encouraging efforts to increase resources for education both at national and international levels.
- Making special efforts to assist the Least Developed Countries and countries affected by conflict in the implementation of the recommendations.

23. Request other international organizations also to support Member States in the implementation of those recommendations as appropriate.

24. Disseminate the Conclusions and Recommendations, unanimously adopted at the closing of the forty-eighth session of the ICE among the actors and partners of the international educational community so as to inspire, guide, support and develop renewed and resolutely inclusive educational policies.