EFA and Inclusive Education

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**EFA : an Unfinished Agenda**

- Less than half went to pre-school in 2010; less than 1 in 6 in low-income countries (EFA Goal 1).
- Number out of school stagnated at 61 million in 2010, half live in sub-Saharan Africa (EFA Goal 2).
- In poorer countries, only one half of young people enrol in lower secondary school (EFA Goal 3).
- 71 million adolescents are out of school, remaining unchanged since 2007 (EFA Goal 3).
- 775 million adults could not read or write in 2010, two-thirds of whom are still women (EFA Goal 4).
- Even in rich countries, 160 million adults have poor literacy skills (EFA Goal 4).
EFA as an Unfinished Agenda
(Cont.)

- In 17 countries, there are fewer than 9 girls in primary school for every 10 boys (EFA Goal 5).
- At primary school, 68 countries have still not achieved gender parity, and girls are disadvantaged in 60 of them, and at secondary 97 countries have not achieved parity (EFA Goal 5).
- Of 650 million children of primary-school age, at least 250 million could be failing to read or count (Goal 6).
- Progress towards Education for All is stagnating and EFA goals will not be met.
EFA as an Unfinished Agenda

(Cont.)

Exclusion & marginalization are key factors in slowing down EFA progress

- EFA Mid-Decade Assessment, Asia-Pacific Region
Who are likely to be excluded or marginalized?

- Girls and women
- Ethnic and linguistic minorities, members of low castes
- Child labourers/domestic workers
- Children in difficult circumstances (affected by conflict or disaster)
- Rural populations
- Children with disabilities/special needs
- Poverty-stricken children
- Nomadic children/indigenous groups
- Street children
- Orphans and abandoned children
- Children affected or infected by HIV and AIDS
- Children of migrant workers, immigrants, refugees, stateless children

We need to know who they are, where they are, and why they are excluded.
What is Inclusive Education

“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.”

This process shifts attention from attributing problems to the child - the “personal tragedy of the individual” - towards the way in which social environments act to exclude individuals from full participation in society.

The process assumes that every child is educable – and except in very unique circumstances, in ordinary schools.
Why is inclusive education important?

- A means to realise the right to high quality education without discrimination
- A means to advance towards a more democratic, equitable and harmonious society
- A means for social development
- A strategy to improve the quality of education and the professional development of teachers
- A means to learn to live together and build one’s identity
- A means to improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the education systems
- A pathway to attain social inclusion and a means to create cohesive society
Legal Frameworks in Support of Inclusion (Cont.)

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
- Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960)
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)
Legal Frameworks in Support of Inclusion

- International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Their Families (1990)
- Salamanca Declaration (1994)
- Convention Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor (1999)
- UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (2007)
“... schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions.

This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalised areas or groups.”

- The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, para 3
“... Education systems must be inclusive, actively seeking out children who are not enrolled, and responding flexibly to the circumstances and needs of all learners...”

Expanded commentary on the Dakar Framework for Action, para. 19
Key Elements of Inclusion

- Inclusion as a process
- Inclusion is concerned with the identification and removal of barriers
- Inclusion is about the **presence**, **participation** and **achievement** of all children
- Inclusion involves a particular emphasis on those groups of learners who may be at risk of marginalisation, exclusion or under-achievement
What is IE Concerned with? (1)

- Acknowledging and respecting differences in learners and that *all* children can learn and that *all* children need support
- Accepting & respecting that all learners are different in some ways & have different learning needs which are equally valued & are an ordinary part of our human experience
- Providing enabling educational structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners
What is IE Concerned with? (2)

- Enabling teachers & students to feel comfortable with diversity & see diversity as a challenge & enrichment in the learning environment – rather than a problem
Does IE Focus on Particular Groups?

Focus is on all disadvantaged groups:

- Those who are not enrolled in schools but who could participate if schools were more flexible in their responses and welcoming in their approach
- Those who are enrolled in education but are excluded from learning
- The relatively smaller group of children with more severe impairments who may have a need for some form of additional support
Why is IE Growing in Importance?

• Growing acceptance that education is a basic human right: all learners have a right to education regardless of their individual characteristics or difficulties

• IE provides the foundation for a more just society
**EFA and Inclusive Education**

- The fundamental principle of EFA is that all children should have the **opportunity to learn**. The fundamental principle of inclusive education is that all children should have the **opportunity to learn together**.
- Inclusion involves adopting a broad vision of EFA by addressing the spectrum of needs of all learners.
- Education for All will not be achieved without inclusion.
- Inclusion will not be achieved without EFA.
- Both EFA and IE recognise education as a fundamental human right.
EFA and Inclusive Education (Cont.)

- Narrow and piece-meal conceptualization of inclusive education (e.g. IE as special needs education) does not support the attainment of EFA goals.
- Inclusive education refers to a process towards strengthening educational systems, across all levels, provisions and settings to provide education for all learners, which is the crux of EFA.
Levels of Exclusion

- Totally excluded – those who do not attend school or left the system
- Those who do not learn at school – ‘marginalisation due to inclusion,’ ‘education process resulting in different education for all’ rather than ‘education for all’
Principles of Inclusive Education

- **Availability**: education must be available
  - guaranteeing the right to free and compulsory education to all school-age children with effective strategies to reach the unreached

- **Accessibility**: education must be accessible
  - eliminating barriers to exclusion from education

- **Acceptability**: education must be acceptable
  - establishing minimum standards for quality, learning materials, methods of instruction, school health and safety, professional requirements for teachers
Principles of Inclusive Education (Cont.)

- **Adaptability**: education must be adaptable
  - Where necessary, designing alternative education opportunities for children excluded from formal schooling
  - Adapting the education system to the child, *not* the child to the education system
Approaches to Viewing Education:
Child as Problem

- Needs special teachers
- Needs special equipment
- Is not like other normal children
- Cannot learn
- Ruins learning of others
- Has special needs
- Cannot get to school
- Needs special environment
- Speaks the wrong language

Leads to child’s exclusion from school or placed in a segregated school – Fix or fail the Child
Approaches to Viewing Education: Education System as Problem

- Poor quality of teaching
- Inadequate teaching learning aids
- Inaccessible environment
- Negative stereotypes
- Teachers’ attitudes
- Emphasis on test scores
- Rigid and homogeneous methods
- Irrelevant curriculum
- Formal and informal fees
- Local languages not allowed

Problems are rooted in the education system, therefore, education system needs to be fixed
Misconceptions surrounding inclusion

- Inclusion is costly and requires a lot of resources
- Implementing inclusion needs societal change in attitudes first
- Inclusion is a theoretical concept, but not practical
- Inclusion is the responsibility of the Social Ministry and not of the Ministry of Education
- Inclusion is about disability
- Inclusion requires special skills and capacities that are difficult to develop
- Inclusion disrupts teaching learning in ordinary schools and can lead to ‘no learning’ at all for children with no disabilities
Acting on Major Causes of Exclusion

- Poverty
- Child labour
- Gender
- Disability
- Ethnic, linguistic minority
- Status (migration/immigration)
- Living in isolated, remote areas
- Conflict and post-conflict situations
- Natural disasters
Inclusion: Improving Access

- Abolition of fees
- Flexible modes of learning for working children
- Relaxation of registration requirements
- Enforce child labour legislation
- Inclusive education for the disabled
- Bilingual education for linguistic/indigenous communities
- Mother tongue education in first years of school
- School feeding programmes
- Better sanitation and safety
Developing the Inclusive Education System

- Education policy and guidelines
- Early identification and remediation of children at risk of failure
- Flexible curriculum
- Administration and leadership
- Physical structures
- Reorienting teacher education
- Working methods and school culture
- General and special support
- Learning materials
- Learning environment
- Flexible teaching learning methods
- Assessment
- Responsive, child friendly environment
- Parental and community development
Inclusion: Starting in the Early Years

Holistic programmes combining education, health, care and nutrition:

- Compensate for disadvantage
- Improve children’s well-being
- Prepare them for primary school and enhance performance in school
- Provide strong foundations for subsequent learning
- Have high cost/benefit ratio
Inclusive Education is a long-term process of school improvement to ensure that Education for All really is for all
Thank you

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