



Executive summary

International Workshop on Inclusive Education (Latin America, Southern and Andean Region, Buenos Aires, Argentina, 12-14 September 2007)

Governmental representatives, including Vice-ministers of Education (Argentina, Peru, Bolivia and Paraguay), policy-makers, consultants, scholars, researchers and educators from eleven Latin American countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela) as well as representatives from ED/BAS, OREALC and IIEP-Buenos Aires, the Special Rapporteur on the right to education and COP Focal Points from Africa (Nigeria), Europe (Belarus, Finland and Romania) and Gulf Arab States (Bahrain) attended the International Workshop (48 participants). It was co-organized by ED/BAS, OREALC, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of Argentina, University of San Andres (Argentina), the Southern and Andean Communities of Practice in Curriculum Development and IBE.

The discussion was mainly focused on the relationships between social inclusion and inclusive education, in at least two core dimensions: (i) the extent to which education, understood in a society of information and knowledge, within a new globalized capitalism and under the wave of neo-liberalism, generates exclusion and inequality, in a more powerful way than those generated by an industrial society and (ii) how schools are now moulded and defined according to a demand for schooling instead of responding to social and knowledge needs. The educational systems democratize the access by including social groups previously excluded but the gap outcomes are wider and feed exclusion from acceding to pertinent knowledge and core competencies.

The main challenges appear to be related to: (i) the development of policies aimed at reducing social inequality and poverty around a renovated concept of social justice and which society to pursue; (ii) avoiding the categorization of those who are excluded as this may have undesired effects of stigmatizing such groups within condescending educational patterns. (e.g. "...as they are poor we cannot educate them in the same way as the rich".); (iii) positioning the broad conceptualization of Inclusive Education within the governmental agendas taking into account the fact that it is a relatively new term and a challenge that may already be addressing similar challenges of equity and quality education (mainly the agenda of the nineties); (iv) to make educational institutions more heterogeneous including all socio-economic strata since, as of now, schools are not offering space for the others, and by stimulating socialization processes that involve living together within diversity as a way to recover the sense of public education (participants expressed their concern about the privatization process in Education and its consequences); (v) to strengthen promising inclusive initiatives such as the strengthening of intercultural bilingual education in the curricula of Basic and Youth

Education, the expansion of Childhood Education through diverse formal and non-formal models and the pivotal role of the school in the articulation of social policies. A consensus was reached regarding the importance of addressing inclusion education not only within national frameworks but also within a global perspective of shared responsibility of the international community.

Within the Latin American and Caribbean Educational Project (PRELAC II) and under the coordination of OREALC, the workshop outcomes will be shared with Ministers aimed at discussing and agreeing upon a regional agenda on Inclusive Education that can be presented at the ICE 2008.