



ETHIOPIA

**Regional Seminar “Poverty Alleviation, HIV and AIDS
Education and Inclusive Education:**

**Priority Issues for Inclusive Quality Education in Eastern
and Western Sub-Saharan Africa”**

Nairobi, Kenya, 23 – 27 July 2007

**UNESCO
International Bureau of Education**





Inclusive Education: The Way of the Future

By Inclusive education we mean:



- An education system that is open to all learners, regardless of economic status, gender, ethnic backgrounds, language, learning difficulties and impairments.
- It is about:
 - identifying barriers that hinder learning,
 - reducing or removing these barriers in schools, vocational training, higher education, teacher education, education management, and work places
 - adjusting learning environments to meet the needs of all learners.

As Education is the key to sustaining economic growth and reducing poverty:

- The Ethiopian Government is committed to achieve the Millennium Development (MDG s) and Education for All (EFA) goals.
- The main focus is on providing primary education of good quality for all citizens by 2015.

The Ethiopian Constitution:

- accepts the international declarations and convention, and states education as human right.
- In line with the international declarations, conventions and policies, it establishes the universal right to education,
- emphasizes the need to allocate resources and provide assistance to disadvantaged groups.



The Education and Training Policy (1994):

- In line with the constitution directs implementation and development towards inclusive education, education for all.
- States that “expansion of quality primary education to all citizens.
- Education is not only a right but also a guarantee for development
- Requires universalising primary education, and expansion of secondary and higher education.
- Assures that disadvantaged groups will receive special support in education.



The Ministry of Education is committed to:



- provide universal primary education by 2015,
- assure access to quality education,
- expand vocational training, secondary and higher education.

*The overall goal is to facilitate active participation of all citizens, including those with special needs, in the community and society.

With this commitment Ethiopia has come a long way in the Education for All process.

- However, there is still a gap in providing access to all children and actualizing inclusive education.

The main barriers here are:



- lack of knowledge about diversity,
- inflexibility of the curriculum,
- insufficient preparation of teachers and education leaders,
- rigid and poor teaching methods, inconvenient learning environment,
- lack of need identification processes, and inadequate assessment procedures

*As a result, schools and teachers find it difficult to accommodate students with special needs, and compel them to adapt to the school, instead of adapting schools to the needs of the students.

To reduce these gaps, promote inclusive education and actualize Education for all, the Ministry of Education:

- has recently developed a strategy for special needs education with the final goal to:
 - ensure access and quality education for all
 - Promote UPEC and EFA Goals



The strategy is:

- drawn on the principles directed by the Education and Training Policy (1994), and the current situation of special needs education in the country.
- based on the view that all children and students can learn and many of them need some form of support in learning and active participation.
- has been prepared in cooperation with key stakeholders and partners,



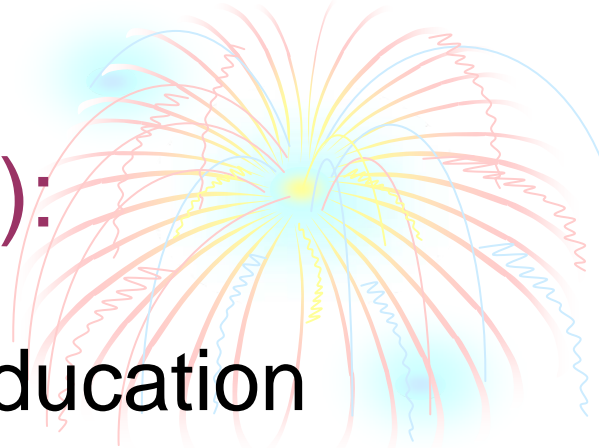
The strategy (continued)

- directs the Ministry to continue working in cooperation with all in implementing the strategy and achieving the UPEC and EFA goals,
- Recognizes that achievement of the UPEC and EFA Goals require systematically integrated inclusive education initiatives in the overall education sector development including curriculum reform.
- Is incorporated in the ongoing education sector development program (ESDP 3) as one of the sector main activities, and is extended to regional and local action plans to minimize the budget barriers in the implementation of the strategy, processes towards inclusive education.



The Strategy (continued):

- Recognizes that inclusive education requires:
 - identifying barriers that hinder learning and/or participation,
 - reducing or removing these barriers in early education in particular and schools, technical and vocational training, higher education, teacher education, and education management in general.



Towards this end, the strategy:

is directed to organize schools and prepare teachers along inclusive lines. That means; the strategy is directed to:

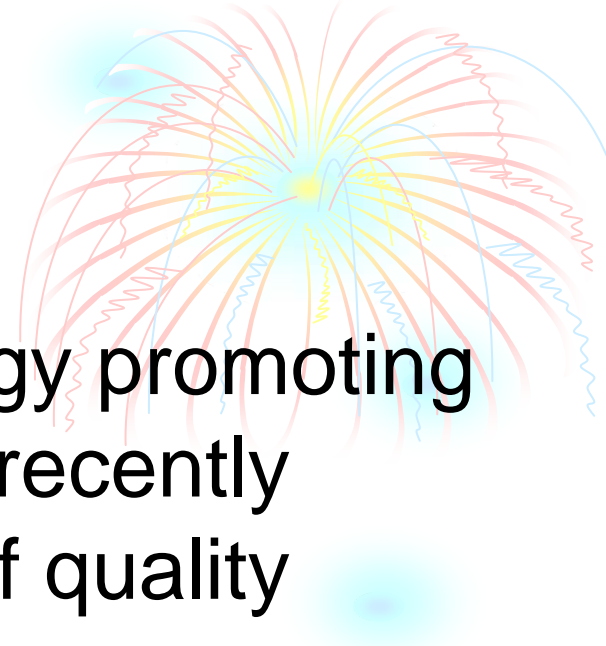
- create awareness among school managers and teachers about the need to provide supports to all groups of learners
- create identification procedures,
- develop support systems,
- avail appropriate materials and equipments, including Braille and related instruments for children with visual impairments, in schools and in the community;
- Develop basic skills prior to primary education, specially for children with visual and hearing impairments;

For successful inclusion of all citizens in schools and society.

In general;

The main activities of the strategy promoting inclusion are considered in the recently developing main components of quality education package,

- Curriculum Framework,
- Teacher Development, and
- School Improvement programs for effective implementation of the strategy and promotion of inclusive education.



Consequently

- The new ongoing curriculum framework development is considering learners diversity,
- Text books are transcribed to Braille to ensure access to learning for blind children
- signed language is taken as medium of instruction to ensure access to learning for deaf children
- All issues of inclusive education is included in both pre-service and in-service teachers and educational leaders training and education programs at all levels; undergraduate, graduate and post graduate levels.
- Nowadays, Inclusion is one of the serving teachers big issues of discussion in their continuous professional development program at cluster centers.
- Issues of inclusion is becoming one of the main factors in teachers professional competencies.

