

SYNTHESIS REPORT OF WORKSHOPS 1

Sub-theme: Inclusive Education: Approaches, Scope and Content

Rapporteur: Mr Sheldon Shaeffer, Director, UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, and of the UNESCO Bangkok Office

Assistant: Ms Leana Duncombe, IBE

Reporting team for Workshops 1:

Ms. Gordana Miljevic, Senior Program Manager, Education Support Program, Open Society Institute;

Mr. Manuel Bello, Dean of Faculty of Education, Peruvian University Cayetano Heredia and Community of Practice (COP) Focal Point for the Andean Region, Peru;

Ms. Silvina Gvirtz, Director of the Master in Education, School of Education, University of San Andres, Buenos Aires and COP Focal Point for the Southern Cone of the Latin America Region, Argentina;

Mr. Iouri Zagoumenov, Director of the Institute of Comparative Education, Ministry of Education and COP Focal Point Coordinator for the CIS Region, Belarus;

Ms. Helen Abadzi, Senior Evaluation Officer, Independent Evaluation Group, World Bank, Washington DC, USA;

Mr. Paul Mushi, Director of the Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE), Tanzania;

Mr. Kenneth Eklindh, Senior Programme Specialist, Section for Inclusion and Quality Enhancement, Division for Promotion of Basic Education, UNESCO;

Mr. Hegazi Idris, Programme Specialist, UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States, Beirut, Lebanon.

Goal of the Workshops

To broaden the understanding of the theory and the practice of inclusive education

Commonly heard expressions

- Equity
- The right to education
- Democratisation and participation
- Removing barriers
- Individualisation/personalisation
- Transformation and reform
- Comprehensive, diverse and flexible
- Social inclusion makes possible inclusive education; inclusive education makes possible social inclusion
- Inclusive education as both means and goal
- Quality requires inclusion; inclusion requires quality

Definitions

“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...” UNESCO Guidelines

“Inclusive education is as a holistic process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through creating conditions for successful learning and social inclusion, eliminating any forms of children’s segregation”. (Workshop B)

“Social inclusion contextualises, sustains and legitimates inclusive education; at the same time, inclusive education is seen as laying the foundation for social inclusion.”

“Inclusive education is the opposite of exclusion but also to segregation and social selection; it is a condition for social harmony and cohesion.” (Workshop A)

Integration vs. Inclusion: who adapts to whom?

The integration of “different” learners into the mainstream – the child adapting to the school – can too often lead to assimilation, uniformity, and the loss of “difference”.

Inclusion – the school adapting to the child – celebrates diversity and meets the demands of the “different”.

The importance of data

Neither governments nor schools know enough about **who** is not in school (the net **non**-enrolment rate), **where** they live, and **why** they are not enrolled:

- Learners genuinely needing “special” education
- Learners out of school and never to be enrolled (3 million) – but might have been with a more welcoming and flexible school system
- Learners in school but not learning and likely to drop out (18 million in 2006)

Education systems and individual schools need to develop mechanisms for finding children not in school, getting them into school, and keeping them there.

Diversity and difference

These must be:

- tolerated – to start with, but then moving to:
- respected
- valued
- welcomed
- celebrated
- seen as an opportunity rather than as a problem
- part of the culture of the school

And systems and schools must know how to respond to, and meet the needs of, “different” learners.

The government’s responsibility

Governments have obligations to fulfil the right to education through:

- Adherence to relevant conventions – e.g., Convention on the Rights of the Child, Convention Against Discrimination in Education, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People
- National constitutions, laws, and regulations
- The provision of education, which is available, accessible, acceptable, and adaptable (the 4 A’s)
- Adequate – and equitably distributed – resource to find and educate that last, expensive percentage of excluded learners
- Multi-sectoral, multi-ministerial approaches (but one Ministry, one school)
- Broad consultation with all stakeholders
- New attitudes and priorities and consistent policies

The needed response

- The factors causing exclusion are complex.
- There is wide variety of excluded learners, many with multiple disadvantages.
- The needed response is also complex, depending on the context, both at the top of the system and the bottom, through:
 - Strong political will
 - A comprehensive programme, strategy, and approach throughout the Education sector and beyond
 - Appropriate teacher training, including attitudes and values
 - Flexible and non-traditional pedagogical approaches
 - Adaptation and localisation of curricula and content
 - Management structures (e.g., head teachers, supervisors) supportive of inclusive education and the active participation of the family, the community, and the excluded themselves
 - Infrastructure and materials adequate to achieve inclusion
 - An appropriate learner/learning assessment system, both national and school-based
 - Awareness-raising at all levels
 - More work on effectiveness, feasibility – and cost!

And things can be done...

Rural people (4 out of 5 of the excluded) and other excluded groups (nomads, fishermen, migrants):

- Mobile/boarding schools
- Flexible timetables

- Incentive programmes for teacher deployment

Girls (60% of the excluded):

- More female teachers as role models
- Removal of gender bias from textbooks
- Safe, separate sanitary facilities

Learners with disabilities (1/3 of out-of-school children):

- Early diagnosis of disabilities
- Teacher assistants with special skills
- An adapted school building and materials

Language: an important issue

Many children do not enrol in school or drop out because their language is not the language of official education. The lack of support for minority-ethnic-indigenous/migrant languages threatens their survival.

- Initial literacy in mother tongue can increase school enrolment and achievement and serve as a bridge to mastery of national and international languages.
- It can also help preserve, develop, and revitalise these languages.
- But great care must be taken to respect cultural differences and uniqueness; traditional knowledge and teaching methods must be valued; and inclusion of such minorities should not be an excuse for assimilation.

Two neglected issues

1) Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

- The importance of Inclusive ECCE programmes to promote inclusion → leading to higher enrolment, lower drop out rates, and higher achievement
- Early interventions related to health, nutrition, and cognitive stimulation → to make the child ready for school and the school ready for the child

2) The use of ICT in promoting inclusion

- Greater access (e.g., to remote areas)
- Better learning (e.g., in areas of disability)