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**VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS BY SPEAKERS
ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

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I. Inclusive Education: Approaches, Scope and Content

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: THE WAY OF THE FUTURE: APPROACHES, SCOPE AND CONTENT¹

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. 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.

The Declaration of Salamanca helped to reconceptualize 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.

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

¹ Document prepared by Diane Richler, President, Inclusion International, Canada

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

1. 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 (2000) 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]. 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 (2001),

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 affect income and standard of living. The cost of lost of relationships is harder to define...There is a human and relationship loss which affects people with disabilities throughout their lives, and one which spreads to families, peers, and the entire community.

2. 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 October 15, 2008, 136 countries have signed the Convention and 41 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

3. 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

4. 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 (2001) points out the dilemmas in measuring efficiency and effectiveness when objectives are unclear. 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 teachers 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 than educational models; reach small numbers of participants and provide 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).

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AS INCORPORATION TO CITIZENSHIP²

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.

I. 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 school³. 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. (Operti and Belalcázar, 2008). 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 (Aguerrondo, 2008). 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 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

² Document prepared by Juan Eduardo García-Huidobro, Dean of the Faculty of Education, University Alberto Hurtado, Santiago de Chile, Chile, October 2008.

³ The term “school” is used as a generic concept. Thus, it means education and includes secondary education, as well.

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:

- (i) 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 America⁴ 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 system⁵.
- (ii) 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 massified, 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

⁴ 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 (EPT 2008)

⁵ Braslavsky (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 Aguerrondo (2008)

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’” (Aguerrondo, 2008). We know much in this respect and we are learning even more, by means of the national systems of learning measurement⁶, 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.

- (iii) 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” 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. (Sorj and Martuccelli, 2008).

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 massification⁷. 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. (CEPAL, 2007; Delacqua, 2007). Duncan’s dissimilarity index is being used, at the school level, to measure the levels of geographical or space segregation of cities (Valenzuela, 2008), which would show the number of students who should change to other school in order to achieve a good level of “integration”.

⁶ 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

⁷ 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.

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 19th Century, the idea was to achieve a civilized society; therefore, education systems were created in order to respond to that idea. In the late 19th century and during the first quarter of the 20th 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 20th 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 20th century ended with a series of Educational Reforms, still in process in many countries, stimulated by two “star” concepts: quality and equity. (Braslowsky 1999).

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 All⁸. 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 democracies⁹.

II. 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.

II. 1. 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. (CEPAL, 2007).

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

⁸ I have analyzed the situation in Chile, comparing the present social demands with those of the early 900 (García-Huidobro, 2008).

⁹ 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 (2007).

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 (CEPAL 2007).

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 primary school¹⁰. 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.

¹⁰ 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).

- **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 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%)¹¹. 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 (CEPAL 2007). Pereyra (2008) 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 education¹².

In order to compare the Latin American situation with the rest of the countries, Valenzuela (2008) 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–. 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.

II. 2. Consequences of school segregation.

a) 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.

¹¹It 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)

¹² 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.

b) 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 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.

c) 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.

III. 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.

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II. Inclusive education: public policies

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: POLICY TO RHETORIC BUT WHAT ABOUT PRACTICE¹³

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 (Kaff; Efonayi-Mader; Neubauer; Wanner and Zannol, 2003). Various NGO's have complained to Swiss organizations about F permit holders suffering from institutional prejudices and exclusion from the society (Kaff; Efonayi-Mader; Neubauer; Wanner and Zannol, 2003). 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 what and why (see: Berry, Phinney, Sam and Vedder, 2006; Newnham, 2006). 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' (Engestrom, Y., Virkkunen,

¹³ Document prepared by Denise Shelley Newnham, Research consultant, University of Bath, United Kingdom

J., Helle, M., Pihlaja, J., and Poikela, R. 1996). 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 behavior. 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:

- a) Are the socio-cultural historical concepts of education, ownership being perpetuated here?
- b) 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 (www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Botswana). 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 (UNESCO, 2005). The government aims to achieve 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 (www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Botswana-EDUCATION). 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' (p.30, Vision 2016). '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 (Government of Botswana, 2003, p.272) indicates, “a 100% transition rate from primary education to junior secondary education has been achieved.” (unesco.org/education/fr/). However the reader needs to be aware that ‘there is no legal right to education in Botswana. Although 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. Furthermore that the Education Act provides that a child may start school at 7 years, but school attendance is not compulsory.’ (Dow and Mogwe – The Rights of the Child in Botswana, UNICEF, Gaborone, June 1992) (Tomasevski. K, 2001). 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” (Government of Botswana, 1997, p.28)’ (UNESCO, 2005). Within ‘A long term vision for Botswana-Vision 2016’ the global aspirations of most Botswana 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. Visually impaired do not have brailled text books and lack specialized teachers. Many teachers are not in the classrooms in the afternoons so much so that a school devised a system where inspectors would check teacher presence. 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., Unesco, 2005). Arua et al.(2005) 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. Tabularwa (2003), 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:

- a) If protagonists of these countries believe that western pedagogy infuses western nations’ cultural practices into developing countries, then how does this reflect inclusive education?

Definition of terms utilized:

Subject: the individual/sub-group chosen as the point of view in the analysis.

Tools: physical or psychological.

Community: individuals/sub-groups 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

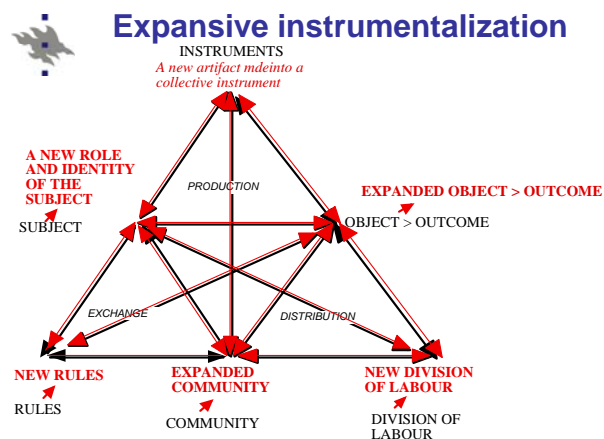
Object: “the ‘raw material’ or ‘problem space’ at which the activity is directed and which is molded or transformed into **outcomes**” ‘The object is depicted with the help of an oval indicating that object-oriented actions are always, explicitly or implicitly, characterized by ambiguity, surprise, interpretation, sense making, and potential for change’ (Engestrom, 1999a)

- b) Is the resistance to finding ways to make it work a cultural manifestation of national identity
- c) 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.

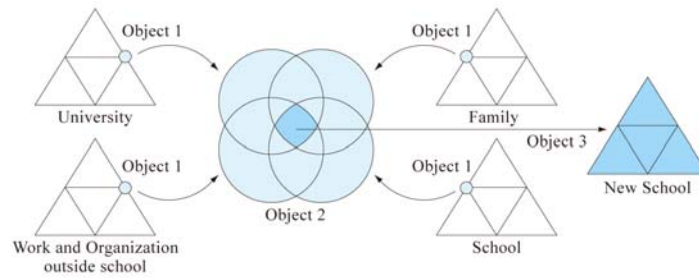
Our intervention in ICT implementation in Botswana makes use of Developmental work research in order ‘facilitate both intensive, deep transformations and continuous incremental improvement’ (Engestrom, Y., Virkkunen, J., Helle, M., Pihlaja,J., and Poikela, R. 1996). Two models of the DWR shall be displayed below.

- 1) 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.



Reconceptualizing the object and outcome of the joint activity.
Creating a new form of the activity.

- 2) Yamazumi (in press) 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.



The object needs to be understood as the driving force behind change. Each triangle represents an activity system and 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.

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RESPONDING TO DIVERSITY AND STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE: AN ANALYSIS OF INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS OF LEARNING OUTCOMES WITH A PARTICULAR FOCUS ON FINLAND¹⁴

1. Introduction

Discussion on inclusive education had developed through several phases and involved many different discourses (Dyson 1999). 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. (UN 2008) 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 PISA¹⁵ 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.

2. 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.

¹⁴ Document prepared by Hannu Savolainen, Professor, Department of special education, University of Joensuu, Finland

¹⁵ OECD Programme for International Student Assessment.

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 (Dyson et al. 2004) 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. Somewhat similar outcomes were presented in a review (Kalambouka et al. 2005) of other studies on the effects of inclusivity on the academic and social outcomes of education. 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 (2001) who published a meta-study based on several previous meta-studies. 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 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)*” (Forness 2001, 192).

3. 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) (see OECD 2001, 2004, 2006). 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 (sources here) of between students from different socio-economic background (Kivirauma & Ruoho 2007) is very small. 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 (Itkonen & Jahnukainen 2007). 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 (Kupari et al. 2004).

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 poorer achievement levels described in figure 1 by percentile groups.

Reading comprehension performance of Finnish 9th graders by percentiles compared to that of the average of students in the OECD countries.

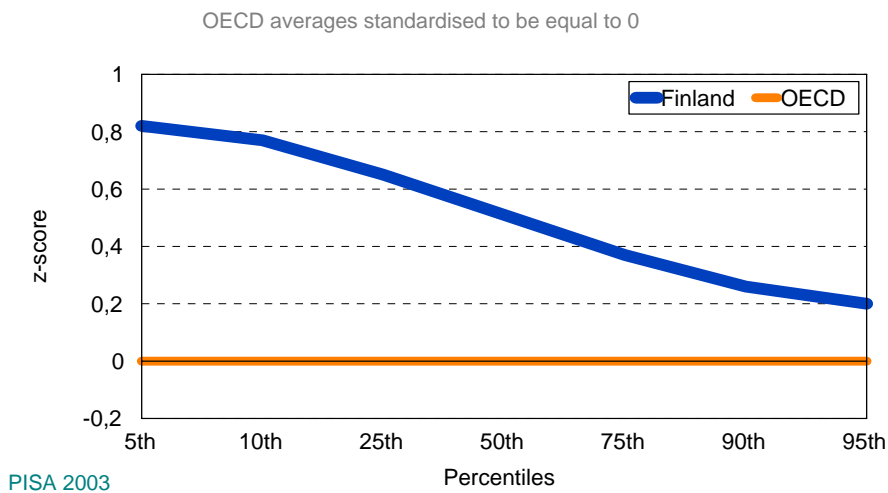


Figure 1: Reading comprehension performance of Finnish 9th grades by percentiles compared to that of the average of students in the OECD countries (Moberg & Savolainen 2006)

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.

3.1 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. (Antikainen 2006).

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” (Kivirauma et al. 2006). 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.

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. (Rossi 2007). Nevertheless comprehensive school reform was gradually introduced throughout the country in the 1970s.¹⁶

The foreseeable challenges created by the increasing diversity were met by encouraging teachers to adopt principles of differentiated teaching (Kangasniemi 1997) and by creating a system of part-time special education that will be dealt in detail below.

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 (2007) there have been three major education policy reform strategies that have been globally introduced to improve the quality of education. These are (i) standardisation 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 or outcomes based management, where school funding is connected to their performance measured often with standardised testing 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

¹⁶ Comprehensive school system was adopted gradually starting from the northern part of the country and moving gradually to the southern regions.

approach where schools are accountable for learning outcomes and education authorities are held accountable to schools for making expected outcomes possible. (Sahlberg 2007). Some authors have argued (see Itkonen & Jahnukainen 2007) 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.

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 school¹⁷. Furthermore giving numerical grades for students is prohibited by law for the first five grades. Instead more descriptive verbal evaluation is 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 (2007) calls a “culture of trust”. 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 of working culture is also the overall status of teaching profession, which in Finland is relatively high. This fact is established in many studies (e.g. Nummenmaa & Välijärvi 2006) and 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 give names of their five favourite occupations. For female respondents teacher’s occupation was on third position right after doctor and veterinarian and for males teacher ranked first before nurse, doctor and architect. (HS 2008) All teacher education in Finland takes place in universities in different Masters Degree programmes. Elementary schools 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.

Importance of good teachers for quality education is emphasised also in a recent comparison of 25 school systems world-wide (McKinsey & company 2007) 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. Two of the major explanations were related to the quality of teachers. The top ten countries seem to get the ‘right’ people to

¹⁷ In fact the only real nationally standardised test is the matriculation examination taken at the end of upper secondary education (the 12th grade of the academic track of secondary education).

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.

3.2 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. (Kivirauma & Ruoho 2007). 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 below)

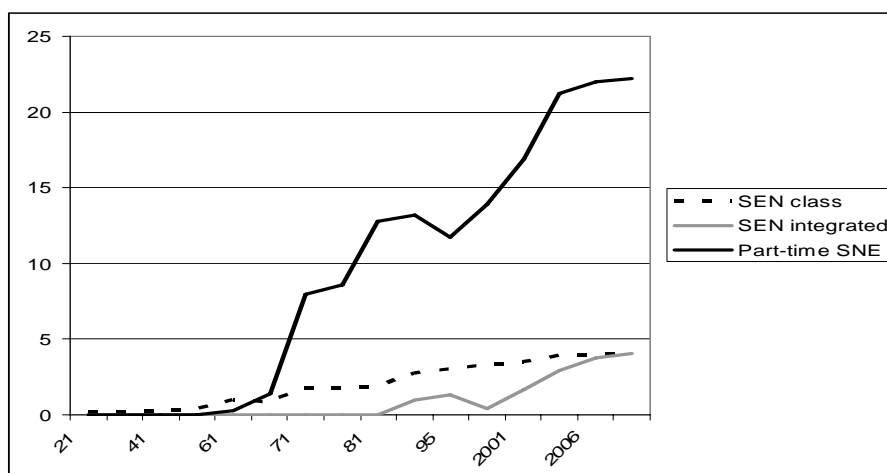


Figure 2. Development of special needs education services in Finland

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 a 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. Secondly, the proportion of students being taught in special schools has clearly been decreasing. Thirdly, 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. (Jahnukainen 2003)

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. (Kivirauma & Ruoho 2007) 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 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 it is reasonable to see the increase as 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 claim. First, the performance of Finnish students has not always been so excellent. For example a look at earlier comparative studies show 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 (see Sahlberg 2007, 160). Second, a Finnish study (Moberg & Savolainen 2008) compared equally representative and comparable samples of 9th graders that were tested with exactly the same reading comprehension instrument in 1965 and 2005. 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. Secondly and more importantly the difference between the performance of students across the spectrum of 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).

Reading comprehension performance of Finnish 9th graders by percentiles in 2005 compared to that in 1965.

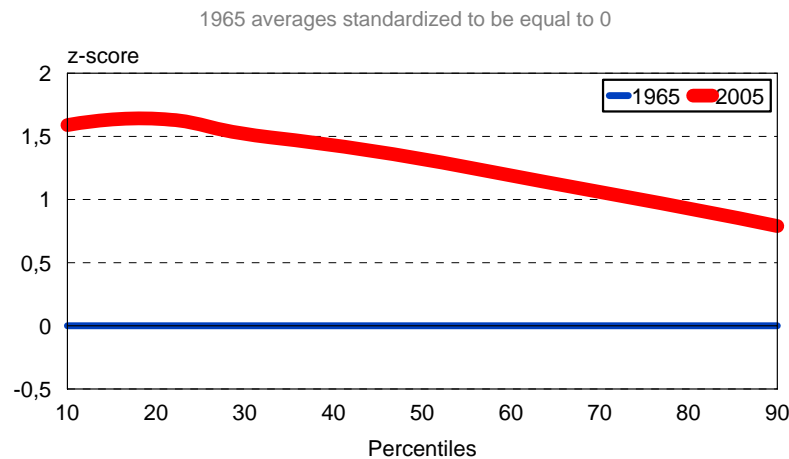


Figure 3: Reading comprehension performance of Finnish 9th graders by percentiles in 2005 compared to that in 1965

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 the time during which a prominent feature has been the increase of special education support, in particular that of the part time special education support.

4. Conclusions

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

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

I will give some support for these claims in reversed order.

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”. (McKinsey & company 2007) 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 (see McKinsey & company

2007). This finding probably at least partially explains the fact that special class placement as such has not shown to be an effective intervention across multiple studies (Forness 2001). 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 (Dyson et al. 2004) clearly supports this hypothesis: increased classroom inclusivity did not have any meaningful negative effect on the learning outcomes of students. 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. (McKinsey & company 2007) 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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INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: PUBLIC POLICIES¹⁸

This paper answers 4 questions developed for this sub-theme by the conference organizers.

1. 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 (Tomasevski, 2003: 126).”

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 (Parrish, 2002: 21). Artiles (2003) 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).

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.

Tomasevski’s Exclusion from education from A to W (2003: 126)

Abandoned children	Institutionalized children
Abused children	Married children
Arrested children	Mentally ill children
Asylum-seeking children	Migrant children
Beggars	Nomadic children
Child Labourers	Orphans
Child mothers	Poor children, children of poor parents
Child prostitutes	Pregnant girls
Children born out of wedlock	Refugee children
Conscripted children	Rural children
Delinquent children	Sans-papiers, children without identity papers
Detained children	Sexually exploited children
Disabled children	Sold and purchased children
Domestic servants	Stateless children
Drug-using children	Street children
Girls	Trafficked children
HIV-infected children,	

¹⁸ Document prepared by Susan J. Peters, Associate Professor, Michigan State University, United States October 6, 2008 draft.

children affected by HIV/Aids
Homeless children
Illegal alien children
Illegally adopted children
Illiterate children
Imprisoned children
Indigenous children

Traveller children
Unaccompanied refugee, displaced or
migrant children
War-affected children
Working children

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 percent 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 researchers estimating that as many as 80 percent 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 in relation to #1

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.

2. 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/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 reflect 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:

- a. Schools exist to prepare productive citizens in the global market place.
- b. Productive citizens perform well in core subjects of reading, writing, math and science.
- c. Performance is best measured by standardized tests that are aligned with grade level expectations set by the nation/state government in the core subjects.
- d. 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 (2004), 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. 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 behaviors 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 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:

- a. Schools are not equally resourced to provide equal educational opportunities.

- b. Many children and youth come to school with significant disadvantages—poverty and poor health among the most influential.
- c. School improvement is best accomplished through systems of reward and incentives, not negative sanctions.
- d. 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.
- e. 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 (1995) 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. 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.

Key question/issue to consider in relation to #2

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?)

3. 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 percent 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.

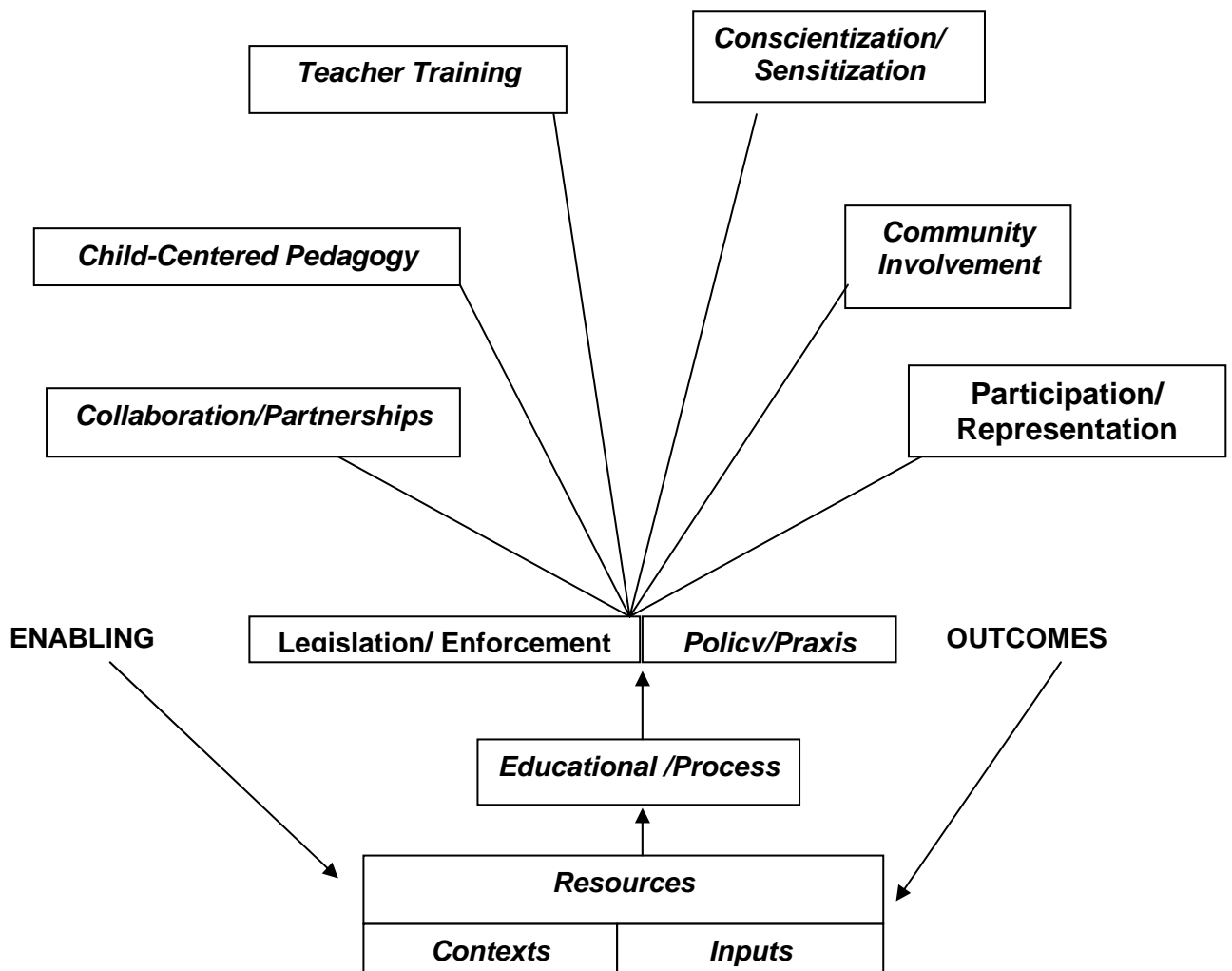
Key question/issue to consider in relation to #3

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?

4. 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.

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

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

1. ***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.
2. ***Accessibility***: concerned with identification and removal of barriers, not only physical, but attitudinal, organizational, and distributive.
3. ***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.
4. ***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.
5. ***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.
6. ***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 in relation to #4

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?

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III. Inclusive Education: System, Links and Transitions

WHAT MAKES AN INCLUSIVE SCHOOL - AN INTERVIEW¹⁹

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

¹⁹ Document prepared by David Mitchell, Inclusive Education Consultant, New Zealand

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.

IV. Inclusive education: learners and teachers

WHAT MADE IT POSSIBLE? A DIALOGUE BETWEEN A LEARNER AND HIS TEACHER²⁰

I. Introduction

This short essay has been written for 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 so interesting since I never knew some of the facts when I was 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 then my perspectives on IE will be expressed.

II. Background

It was at the age of 2 when I lost my sight by cancer. Although it was regulated for blind students to enroll in blind schools at that time, my parents fought for me to learn in the community on a belief that children learn better in 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 mathematic class, my assistant teacher wrote figures and charts on Raise Writer, special papers and a board that raised 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 more accommodations were made. When running, one of my friends stood on the goal line so that I could dash toward him. In table tennis class, blind table tennis was also introduced to the entire class.

Not only in the academic environment, was I lucky to have wonderful friends. In elementary school, I was also included to build a woodhouse or play tag by limiting the area where we run around.

Lastly, I should mention my role model, 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.

²⁰ Document prepared by Kentaro Fukuchi, Japanese Red Cross Society, Japan.

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.

III. What motivates teachers

On July 21 2008, I had a reunion 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.

Followings are common elements that they raised.

(1) 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 principle said, "We started visiting your junior high school since we were informed that you were coming to our high school, through which we were resolved 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 other 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 teacher's 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.

(2) Teamwork

The second important point was the teamwork amongst the teachers. "Thanks to the Principal, the members of the team were kept 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 for 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, as my teacher

addressed, 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 same subject in the team played the role of assistant teachers. According to mathematic teacher, it was a good opportunity to exchange teaching skills between the head teacher and my assistant teacher. “Before I was hesitant 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.

(3) 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 tend to depend on his experience in comparison with his former teammates. “Although I know what to do more today; the sense of cooperation was 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 curriculums, ended up in labeling children and could discourage voluntary commitment from teachers²¹.

(4) 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; however, it is almost impossible to prepare all the materials over a period of time. Therefore, my teachers were so 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.

(5) 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 it was raised in almost all preparatory workshops for ICE 2008, teacher training is a strong enabler of IE.

²¹ Maria Angeles Parrilla *Spain: responses to inclusion in autonomous regions*, Harry Daniels and Philip Garner Inclusive Education World Yearbook of Education 1999 Chapter. 10, Kogan Page Ltd (1999/2/1).

IV. Conclusion

The findings above are interesting 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 think of this "special accommodations" too often.

I believe that it had naturally formed my self-confidence: "I can learn. I can join my friends. I can 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 therefore essential for all teachers. Thus, we all are responsible to enhance each element that encourages 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 there 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 the positive attitude of mine and my family 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. Since I wished to commit to promote inclusive education in any way possible, I'm full of gratitude to share some findings with 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 TEACHERS II²²



I. Introduction

This paper is contributed to ICE 48 in Geneva Switzerland 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. The dialogue was to prepare for another short voluntary contribution *What Made It Possible?*, however, I realized that many of the comments made by my teachers demonstrate their fundamental belief on IE or education itself. Stubbs (2002) explains about the importance of core values of IE as the skeleton of IE to underpin the practice of IE with the strong framework of values and beliefs.²³

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

II. 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 kept being improved. Here I shortly describe my learning environment in high school.

-Braille Textbooks

As Braille is the most proper instructional media, 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 it is needed to check

²² Document prepared by Kentaro Fukuchi, Japanese Red Cross Society, Japan

²³ Sue Stubbs, *Inclusive Education Where there are few resources*, 2002

each letter and the format of Braille even if special software automatically transforms the plain text data in to Braille data. For this reason, my teachers planned curriculum carefully and ordered Braille translation so that I could have textbooks in time.

-Teachers' Braille Skill

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 with most understandable ways. I could organize and express my ideas in my own letter. "The first time when I read your notebook and exams, it was just like decoding messages," 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 to prepare all the materials only by the volunteers. Under the circumstance, teachers were flexible enough to utilize all resource 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 mathematic classes, assistant teachers explained the figures on the blackboard using "Raise-Writer", which is a set of special paper and board that raise 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 explained changes in color of reagent.

- A Variety of Devices

Lastly, I need to mention that each small device or trial 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 to me since 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 fully participate equally in every stage. In addition, I was a member of another learning community in other aspects as well; after school activities, and class activities such as sports day, school festival etc.

III. Teachers Comments

The dialogue I had with my teachers in July 2008 was an opportunity to discuss our experiences and why it was possible and how we recognized the practice. 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 "To see is to believe." 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 tried several ways. She offered her spare time to explain tactile pictures for me.

The teacher 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 transcription was a complicated task. From this experience, she came to a 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 there agreed to this opinion.

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 for your disability, however, every student has their own concern and problems in different ways and to a different extent." A teacher stated.

In this sense, to learn Braille or to assign an assistant teacher were some prominent examples though; it seems for me that it was a natural response on the basis of my teacher's belief "To face to face with each student."

IV. Conclusion

Through the dialogue, I think I could touch upon the core value of IE or education of my teachers. It was very simple and clear belief "To 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", as a key concept relating to IE. This is confirmed in the Salamanca Statement as "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, we, the whole society, should commit to ourselves because the rights to proper education is repeatedly confirmed in several human rights

conventions from the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Art.26) to UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006 (Art.24). 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 more than one month a year in Japan in 2006.²⁴ Through the dialogue, the teachers raised factors that motivated and enabled them to meet my learning needs.²⁵

Government, parents, and volunteers all played significant roles in ensuring inclusive learning environment. 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 strategies²⁶.”

I realized that it was the all the stakeholders that encouraged my teachers to face to face with every student, including me, and created an inclusive environment. I deeply thank my teachers and every person who committed to my education that developed my potential and self-confidence to participate in the society. I could experience an internship at UNESCO Bangkok, establishing an NGO, and I’m working 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 the society and make it better for them and for society itself.

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

²⁴ Ministry of Education Japan, (http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/toukei/001/07073002/index.htm).

²⁵ The comments are summarized in my other contribution paper to ICE 2008 “What Made It Possible?”.

²⁶ *Overcoming Exclusion through Inclusive Approaches in Education. A Challenge and a Vision*, UNESCO, 2003.

LEARNERS AND TEACHERS – A CONTRIBUTION BY EDUCATION INTERNATIONAL²⁷

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 organisations 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 (UNESCO 2005).’* To summa rise 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 organisations 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.

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

²⁷ Document prepared by Monique Fouilhoux, Executive Secretary, Education International, Belgium.

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 (Salamanca Statement, rt. 2)'*. 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 (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 organising 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 internationalisation 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 internationalisation 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 (UNESCO 2008, p. 8). 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 (UNESCO 2008, 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 (UNESCO 2008, p. 2) and over 774 million illiterate adults of which 64% are women (UNESCO 2008, p. 33). The International Labour Organisation furthermore states that 218 million children are involved in child labour (ILO 2006, p. 1). 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 bureaucratisation 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 modularisation 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 teachers even went into the slums themselves to learn and educate.'* 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.'* 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,

Cyprus) reports 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...'*. Collaboration should not be limited to teachers and support staff, but extended to parents, students and youth organisations 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 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 standardised 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 utmost 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 eighty percent out of staff compensations, according to the latest OECD figures (OECD 2008, p. 302). 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

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.

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INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: THE CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING IT INSIDE THE CLASSROOM²⁸

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 (Abadzi 2004). 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 favor of those likely to pass high-stakes examinations (Lockheed and Harris 2005).

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 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 (Sultana 2007).

²⁸ Document prepared by Helen Abadzi, PhD, Senior Evaluation Officer, Independent Evaluation Group, World Bank

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. (See Abadzi 2006 for a review.) 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. Preservice and inservice 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.

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