



48TH SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION Inclusive Education: The way of the Future

SIDE-EVENT 1 REPORT

Date	Tuesday, 25 th November 2008
Side-Event Title	SIDE-EVENT 1 Discussion on the UNESCO Initiative: Basic Education in Africa Programme (BEAP)
Organisers	International Bureau of Education (IBE-UNESCO), UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Africa (BREDA)
Speakers	Moderated by Ann Therese Ndong-Jatta , Director of UNESCO/BREDA, this side-event began with a presentation and overview of the African context on the BEAP by Teeluck Bhuwanee , Programme Specialist, UNESCO/ BREDA. The BEAP pilot experiences in The Gambia, Ethiopia and Cote d'Ivoire were addressed. Dharam Gokhool , Mauritian Minister of Education, presented the comprehensive approaches of the experience of Mauritius on early childhood education. Rita Bissounauth Purbhoo , Senior Policy Officer of African Union Commission spoke on the AU's perspective of supporting the BEAP process.
Documentation	This Side-event was supported by an information leaflet on the Basic Education in Africa Programme, distributed by the assistance to the event, before and after the session.

Objectives

The objectives of this side-event were to deepen the understanding of the BEAP to the participants, in particular:

- Providing information on BEAP and concrete examples of BEAP pilot experiences;
- advocating for an uninterrupted 9 to 10-year basic education in Africa (including early childhood education);
- Showcasing integrated and comprehensive approaches and practices in the African region;
- Finding challenges common to different regions in addressing and implementing a broader vision of inclusive education.

Objectives of the BEAP include:

- Supporting the improvement of existing curriculum for Basic Education in partner countries;
- Incorporating within the curriculum design the latest curriculum related initiatives and research, for example, on entrepreneurship education, enhancing learning, life skills, maths, science and technology education, as well as career guidance;
- Supplementing and coordinating existing in-country resources and initiatives so that the improvements and priorities identified by pilot countries can be addressed;
- Building in-country capacity in curriculum design, development and implementation, teacher training, assessment and certification systems;
- Supporting country teams in assessing the funding implications of implementing improvements to Basic Education provision;
- Encouraging South-South cooperation and sharing of available expertise; and
- Ensuring a proper ownership at national level of BEAP.

Outcomes

The Side-Event allowed for the sharing of information and discussion among a larger audience, especially more African countries and more potential partners acting in the African region. The importance of early childhood education was successfully stressed, as it should be case within the Programme, through the Mauritian example. Likewise, Mauritius was brought on board as one of the upcoming pilot countries.

The Side-Event served as a key representative in bringing to focus at the ICE an example of Inclusive Education in practice in the Africa region. As an example of UNESCO leadership on in reaction to problems of quality and of relevance in African education, this Side-Event effectively allowed for the BEAP to engage with participants at the ICE to reflect, review, present and receive feedback about the progress and strategy of the Programme, based on its recent developments.

Links and implications for the 48th Session of the ICE

The BEAP vision was integrated in the ICE discussions and clearly reflected in the ICE Conclusions and Recommendations, e.g. Part II - Public Policy, point 9, in which one can read the following recommendation: "encourage educational stakeholders to design effective curricular frameworks from childhood onwards, while adopting a flexible approach in order to accommodate local needs and situations, as well as to diversify pedagogical practices".

Sharing the same concerns and reliant on the same stakeholders addressed by the ICE, BEAP can be seen as an endeavour to move towards inclusive education in Africa.