



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

SIDE-EVENT 7 REPORT

Date	Thursday, 27 th November 2008
Side-Event Title	SIDE-EVENT 7 Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education: A Resource to design more effective policies for reaching the EFA goals
Organisers	UNESCO ED/BAS Section for Inclusion and Quality Learning enhancement
Speakers	The Side-Event was moderated by Kenneth Eklindh , Senior Programme Specialist for Inclusive Education at UNESCO.

The panel had three speakers:

- **Seamus Hegarty**, Chair of the EFA Working Group within the UNESCO UK National Commission. Chair of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) and visiting professor at four universities. Former Director of the National Foundation for Educational Research. Founder editor of the European Journal of Special Needs Education. Has written or co-authored more than 20 books and numerous papers. He has been an adviser to UNESCO and other international bodies for 30 years ...
- **Mari Koistinen**, has worked in education for 20 years, first as a counsellor and became early interested in education for marginalized groups of learners. Her PhD focused on improving vocational training access for persons with learning disabilities in developing countries. Her current research interests include inclusive education, user participation and inclusive research methods in cross-cultural research.

- **Victor Pineda** has despite his youth accomplished a number of impressive things. He has created his own Foundation advancing the human rights of young people with disabilities. He has emerged as one of the young global leaders of the international disability rights movement and was one of the youngest delegates negotiating the new Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. Victor has received a number of awards in recognition of his hard and dedicated work and he is currently completing his PhD at the University of California Los Angeles.

Documentation

The Side-event was supported by the following documentation:

The Draft Working Document: Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education: A Resource to design more effective policies for reaching the EFA goals and Information Doc. No. 3 “Outcomes and Trends in Inclusive Education at Regional and Interregional Levels: Issues and Challenges” (English and French)

Objectives

The objectives of this side-event were:

- to provide information and raise awareness about the implications for inclusive education as an effective tool to facilitate work towards the EFA goals;
- to raise questions and provide perspectives identified by members of the pre-preparatory regional meetings for the ICE as crucial issues for the creation of school systems and education programmes that can lead to attainment of the EFA goals;
- to provide substantive inputs for the finalization of the policy guidelines

Outcomes

The moderator explained that the Policy Guidelines have been based on the old guidelines from 2004 and that experience from the use of them. The new Guidelines has also incorporated the findings from the nine work shops and the four regional meetings that have been organized in preparation of the CIE. They have provided a rich overview over obstacles to inclusion that were identified at these meetings.

The moderator also reminded about the outcomes of the workshop discussions at the ICE meeting stating that:

- It is not sufficient to look at how inclusion should work for a particular group of children
- The overall principle must be to develop strategies that leads to the creation of schools and school systems that are ready, prepared and willing to remove all barriers to learning

- promoting;
- participation, equality and community for everybody

The Policy Guidelines actually follows these recommendations from the ICE meeting.

The three participating experts provided examples from the guidelines that they wanted to highlight as specifically important.

Seamus Hegarty emphasized that there has been a slow process of implementing the EFA compared to achievements in other domains. Teacher education in most countries is still not providing the required knowledge on how to educate all children. We actually know how to reach inclusiveness and the Policy Guidelines draws on a lot of this knowledge. He suggested that countries should use the guidelines as a tool for necessary change and that UNESCO could assist in this process. He also emphasized that there was no need to further delay the publication of them and that they should be an important tool for development in inclusive education.

Mari Koistinen focused on some of the challenges mentioned in the Guidelines and explored the main barriers to inclusion. In particular she focused on the need to develop national policies. She made references to the matrix and suggested that we should all share experiences, discuss good practices and participate in the implementation of inclusive school systems.

Victor Pineda also showed and exemplified practical ways of using the guidelines. In particular he mentioned the need to elaborate and develop ways to improve the access both to the school building and its classroom as well as to the curriculum.

The discussions were very favourable of the content but it was also clear that there is a need to further work on the list of references. That list is presently considered too limited.

It was also mentioned that the positive references to the involvement of the private sector ought to be modified as voices at the ICE already have expressed worries of this kind.

On the part of evaluation and assessment we also received some valuable recommendations that will be taken into consideration.

It was agreed that any further recommendations and/or suggestions sent to UNESCO before the end of December will be taken into consideration. However in view of the urgent need of the guidelines UNESCO also committed to finalize them so that they can be disseminated early in 2009.

**Links and
implications for
the 48th Session
of the ICE**

The content of the Policy Guidelines is very much in line with the recommendations from the series of workshops organized at the ICE. The final recommendations adopted at ICE places expectations on UNESCO to provide “advice to countries on how they can develop and implement policies on inclusive education”.