Education For All (EFA) & Inclusive Education
A Renewed Discussion

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Reasons for redefining the EFA engagement

6 key reasons for redefining the EFA goals, as expressed by Nicholas Burnett, Assistant Director-General for Education:

1. **Insufficient attention to equity and quality issues**
   - Traditional concept of equity too narrow (mainly access-oriented; equal opportunities = homogenous education)
   - Downplay of the role of quality inputs and processes - may explain the vast numbers of out-of-school children

2. **Not enough attention to educational content and teachers**
   - Tendency to add new concepts (ESD, peace education…) to already overloaded and excessively subject-oriented curricula
   - Little emphasis on common curricular frameworks for lifelong learning
   - The role of teachers as co-developers of the curricula underestimated
Reasons for redefining the EFA engagement

3. No incorporation of higher education and research
   - Key role in creating critical leaders and experts
   - Way to strengthen societal “competitiveness”, i.e. quality human resources and ability to address diverse challenges

4. Inability of society to respond to the renewed EFA agenda
   - Linked to bad governance and management of the educational systems
   - Caution about relying on ‘blue prints’, i.e. privatisation

5. Lack of recognition of political realities
   - e.g. national demand for secondary/TVET education

6. Lack of consideration/social acceptance about learning competencies, processes, and the changing characteristics of learners
   - Cognitive-based education, ICT, “new millennium learner”
Repositioning of EFA goals to address those issues: a refined EFA agenda

1. Broader (more process and outcome-oriented) concepts of equity and quality are crucial
   - Evidence shows that high levels of equity and quality are interdependent (OECD PISA)
   - Allows education systems to respond more effectively to learners’ diversity and, consequently, better sustain EFA in the long term

2. Educational content must be grounded upon educational policy visions and objectives, taking into account teacher’s role and profile
   - Consider the expected student exit profile, the engagement of students in the learning process and the achievement of core life competencies
Repositioning of EFA goals to address those issues: a refined EFA agenda

3. Consider the challenging **implications of incorporating higher education** through a lifelong learning perspective into the EFA agenda
   - Tertiary institutions to support access and continuity for poorer students
   - Quality teacher education at the university level strengthens the education system as a whole

4. Focus on how to generate and sustain an adequate **balance between national and local levels in terms of responsibilities and roles**
   - The government must have a leading role in good governance, with close partnerships with civil society and a sound combination of centralized, decentralised and private activities
   - Promoting a common social understanding and acceptance of education as life-long learning opportunities for all
Repositioning of EFA goals to address those issues: a refined EFA agenda

5. Examining strong national demands, such as secondary education and TVET challenges
   - Providing diverse and connected higher secondary provisions entails major institutional, curricular and pedagogical changes

6. Take into consideration new learning tools and learner’s changing characteristics
   - Heterogeneous learning environments provide better learning opportunities to socially disadvantaged groups – diversity is not a hindrance to learning (PISA)
   - Relevance and importance of providing lifelong learning opportunities in different settings (formal, non-formal, informal) starting with early childhood education and care
   - Diversifying modes of instruction (ex: ICTs, cooperative learning)
Developing Inclusive Education as the core of a refined EFA agenda

The build-up of more inclusive societies

Broadening the concept of inclusive education is key to address issues and challenges the repositioning of EFA would entail:

- An holistic way to globally address the transformation of the education system from visions to practices

- A key factor in democratising learning opportunities
Developing Inclusive Education as the core of a refined EFA agenda

Step 1: Laying the foundations of Inclusive Education

Jomtien (1990); Salamanca (1994); Dakar (2000)

1. Inclusive education began as a response to special education and integration/mainstreaming
   - Regular schools with an inclusive orientation, achieving education for all in a cost-effective way and encouraging inclusion of learners with special needs
   - Placement Paradigm: inclusive education is more than just a changing places for learners, it is also a service (Peters, 2004)

2. Related to the prioritisation of targeted excluded groups, linked to ethnic, gender, cultural, socio-economic and migrant factors
   - Access-based approach
Developing Inclusive Education as the core of a refined EFA agenda

Step 2: Broadening Inclusive Education

UNESCO's definition from 2005 onwards

“Inclusion is 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.”
Developing Inclusive Education as the core of a refined EFA agenda

Step 3: A Common and Integrated Vision of Inclusive Education

UNESCO and the 48th ICE:

- **Strong endorsement** of a broader concept of inclusive education by 128 countries and over 900 participants in the ICE preparatory activities and by 101 Ministers / Vice Ministers of Education at the ICE

  - “a broadened concept of inclusive education can be viewed as a **general guiding principle** to strengthen education for sustainable development, lifelong learning for all and equal access of all levels of society to learning opportunities” (Conclusions and Recommendations, November 2008)

- Build upon the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (article 24, 2006)
Key features of Inclusive Education as the core of a refined EFA agenda

- **Transversal approach to all dimensions and levels** providing access to lifelong learning opportunities from a rights-based perspective

- **Understanding, addressing and responding to the diverse needs of all learners** through the provision of quality, friendly and diverse learning opportunities

- **Personalised education and support** (i.e. a variety of learning opportunities and modes of instruction to engage learners; tutorial guidance; engaging families; ensuring high teacher expectations for all learners)

- Inclusive education aims to ensure the presence (access and attendance), participation (quality learning) and achievement (quality outcomes) of all students at all levels of education
Key features of Inclusive Education as the core of a refined EFA agenda

- **Understanding, identifying and removing barriers** to participation and factors of exclusion (from “blaming” and “penalizing” students’ profiles for low achievements…to looking at learning difficulties from the multi-dimensional perspective of the education system e.g. factors relating to cultures, communities, curricula)

- Inclusive education entails the restructuring the **cultures, policies and practices to respond to the diversity** of students (e.g. prioritization towards learners at risk of exclusion), while **providing equivalent learning opportunities** in all schools to targeted and non-targeted learners

- Understanding diversity in the classroom as **cost-effective** and a strong sign of **societal integration and cohesion**
Key features of Inclusive Education as the core of a refined EFA agenda

- **Various levels of intervention** across the education system:

  1. Inclusive education guides a clear and unified **policy planning process**, the **allocation of resources** and the **impacts** pursued and attained

  2. Inclusive education helps to better visualize the **interfaces and synergies** between social and educational inclusion

  3. Inclusive education orientates the **design and implementation of inclusive schools and curricula** to address all learners’ needs

  4. Inclusive education promotes the **diversification of teaching practices** for engaging the students effectively in the learning process
An inclusive society based on diversity

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