



Executive summary

Session on Inclusive Education – Regional Workshop on “What Basic Education for Africa”? (Kigali, Rwanda, 27 September 2007)

Policy makers, directors of education, curriculum specialists and teachers trainers from 16 countries (Benin, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, and Uganda) as well as representatives from ED/BAS, BRED, Addis and Nairobi Cluster Offices, UNEVOC, the Association for the Development of Africa (ADEA), the African Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank attended the workshop (115 participants). It was co-organized by ED/BAS, BRED, Ministry of Education of Rwanda and IBE.

The reviewed concept of inclusive education was again introduced as a main strategy to attain EFA Goals. The main outcomes of the Nairobi workshop were presented by the Directors of Education of Kenya and Tanzania as part of the process of setting up an African Community of Practice in Curriculum Development focused on Inclusive Education. A document regarding the way forward to approaching inclusive education, summarizing the outcomes of the previous regional workshops as well as other relevant literature, was distributed to participants who were asked to discuss it by providing comments and suggesting missing points that should be considered as priorities.

The discussion was mainly focused on how to move forward on inclusive education. Participants considered that it might take a long time to achieve but that it is necessary to embrace it if EFA goals are to be attained. Special attention should be given, among others, to girls (including those forced into prostitution), children with disabilities or special needs, street children and out-of-school children, child workers, socially stigmatized children (orphans, HIV and AIDS affected children, etc.), children belonging to nomadic and minority groups, post-conflict children. To meet the needs of these various groups, the adoption of alternatives were suggested. One can state: accelerated learning, mobile schools, rehabilitation, non-formal education models and community learning centres. In schools, teachers need to be re-trained so that they will acquire intellectual freedom as well as the necessary knowledge and skills to adapt their teaching approaches to children's needs.

The main challenges appear to be related to: (i) positioning a broadened concept of Inclusive Education, an inclusive curriculum and a renovated school model as the critical dimensions to expand and democratize Basic Education in Africa; (ii) development of a holistic, integrated and inclusive competency based curriculum framework relevant to the needs of children and youths in Africa for a minimum of 9 years Basic Education and (iii)

raising awareness and convincing stakeholders that quality education cannot be achieved if teachers' motivation remains lacking. Participants strongly called upon governments and communities to create incentives regenerating teachers' social status. As in the other regions, advocacy campaigns about inclusive education were considered to be needed in order to sensitize all stakeholders, including policy makers, educators, communities and families.

Participants provided suggestions on actions to be taken towards an Inclusive Education in the region. Jointly with ED/BAS, BREDA, Cluster and National Offices in Africa, the World Bank, the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) and the African Development Bank (ADB), we plan to develop a framework proposal for an inclusive curriculum framework for an expanded Basic Education in Africa. It will mainly imply the capacity development of curriculum developers to design and implement a curriculum framework for Basic Education as well as to continue the policy dialogue, exchange information, documentation, experiences and good practices through the African Community of Practice in Curriculum Development.