

Inclusive education, inclusive curriculum and inclusive teachers: Moving the EFA agenda forward

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Teacher Education for Inclusion
Project Kick Off Meeting

Dublin, Ireland, 1-3 October 2009

An evolving vision of inclusive education

- It is closely associated with the international vision and efforts towards renovating the engagement around Education for All
- It is based on the right of all learners to a high quality equitable education that meets their basic learning needs, and understands the diversity of backgrounds, contexts and abilities as learning opportunities
- It contributes to fostering an inclusive society – feedback relationship



An evolving vision of inclusive education

- From a rather narrow debate, based on the education-integration axis, to a broader concept of an on-going dynamic process for addressing the diverse expectations and needs of all learners
- 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”. (UNESCO, 2005)



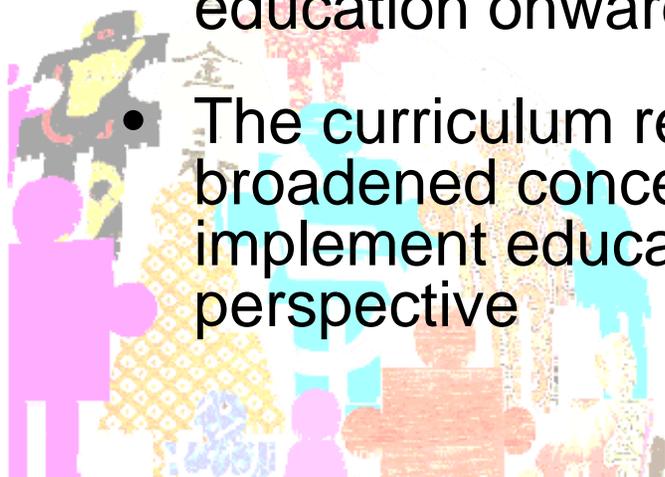
An evolving vision of inclusive education

- 153 Member States affirmed that “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” (*ICE Conclusions and Recommendations, UNESCO-IBE, 2008*)
- There is a need to re-position the EFA engagement to ensure that inclusive education is perceived as the core of EFA and must be an integral part and a cross-cutting dimension of education reforms, from vision to practices



A comprehensive educational reform for achieving the EFA goals

- The education system must be transformed to fully include all students and provide them with quality education relevant to their individual needs
- Significant institutional and curricular changes in terms of school culture and teaching practices are needed
- An inclusive education system must organically integrate and link all forms, types and styles of learning as well as different learning objectives, from early childhood education onwards
- The curriculum represents a crucial tool for fostering a broadened concept of inclusive education and to implement educational policy from a long-term perspective



Key features of an inclusive curriculum

- The International Bureau of Education (IBE-UNESCO) defines the curriculum as both a political and a technical issue, which is well embedded within the complex interfaces of society, politics and education
- Engagement of multiple stakeholders coming from outside and inside the education system, a societal issue
- Teachers must be recognized as co-developers of the curricula



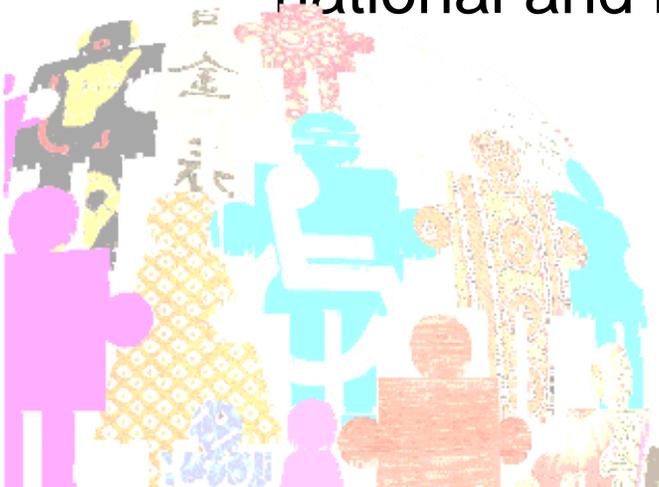
Key features of an inclusive curriculum

- It reflects the kind of society to which we aspire
 - It should be solidly grounded on a wide and plural interpretation of the demands and expectations of society, as well as the key definitions of the role of education in society (core economic and social policy)
 - Inclusive curriculum development should therefore be seen as a continuous process and closely intertwined with social inclusion



Key features of an inclusive curriculum

- It is 'glo-local', flexible, balanced and relevant to each context and individual
 - It addresses and incorporates national, local and learners' diversities
 - Strong focus on fostering a comprehensive citizenship education
 - It needs to achieve a balance between the global, national and local expectations, realities and needs.



Key features of an inclusive curriculum

- There is no “one size fits all” model
 - However, the same curriculum can be taught to mixed-ability learners
 - The diversification of modes of instruction and learning materials should be promoted within a common and shared national education policy and curricular vision



Key features of an inclusive curriculum

- A competency-based approach may be understood as a powerful tool to achieve an inclusive curriculum
 - It provides an innovative way of conceiving and organizing the curricular structure and objectives as well as the syllabus, in order to develop autonomous, critical and assertive citizens.
- An evidence-based approach can greatly impact misguided perceptions of what works at the classroom level



Challenges to fostering an inclusive curriculum

1. Move away from rigid disciplinary and decontextualised content and towards multiplicity of contextualized, inter-disciplinary and significant resources for the student
 - Traditional forms and contents of knowledge organization and modes of instruction, as well as disciplinary identities and boundaries, must be revised in line with the EFA goals and with universal cross-cutting issues



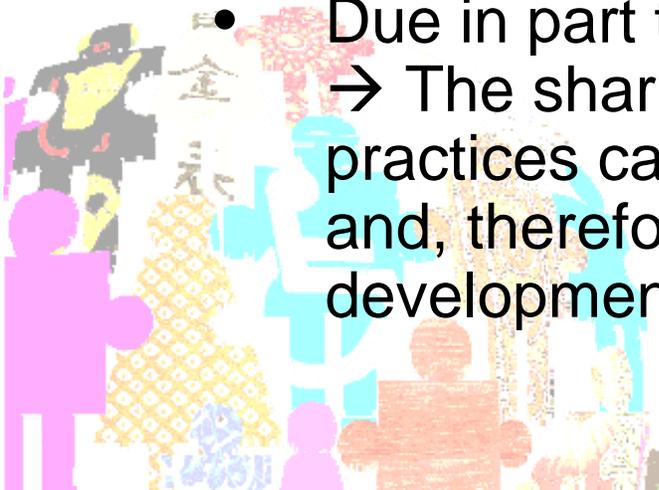
Challenges to fostering an inclusive curriculum

2. There is no universal model for fostering and implementing an inclusive curriculum.
 - Multiple stakeholders = multiple visions and approaches (e.g. the competency-based approach; evidence-based approach; problem-based approach etc.)
 - It implies the construction of a curricular vision to synthesize and integrate this diversity of views and interests



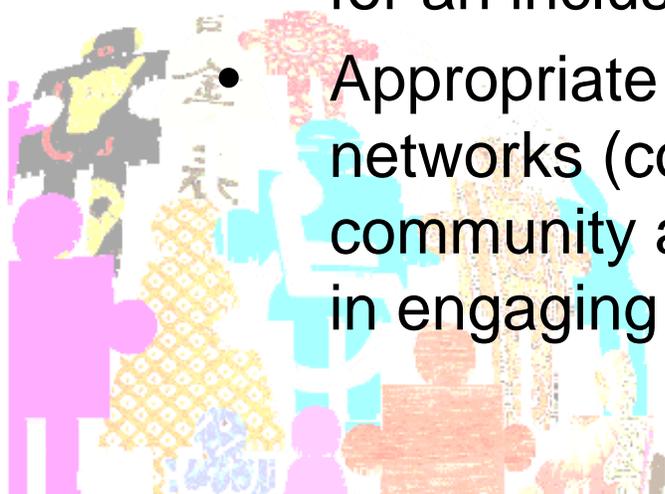
Challenges to fostering an inclusive curriculum

3. The lack of clear objectives and definitions gives rise to dilemmas in trying to understand and measure the efficiency and effectiveness of inclusion in schools.
 - Successful progress depends greatly on how countries understand and define quality and success in education, as well as how they implement their vision through the curriculum
 - Due in part to lack of conclusive research evidence
→ The sharing of experiences and effective practices can strengthen the understanding of IE and, therefore, benefit inclusive curricular development (evidence-based approach)



Challenges to fostering an inclusive curriculum

4. An inclusive curriculum is only as good as its development in the classroom, and thus the teacher.
 - Teachers are key partners in curricular development and must be involved in all aspects and at all levels
 - Teacher education curricula (pre-service and in-service), and more generally teachers' professional development, must be reviewed to prepare teachers for an inclusive education system
 - Appropriate resources and materials, strong networks (communities of practices), as well as community and institutional support are all essential in engaging and supporting teachers



Teacher education for inclusion

- Quality teacher training for inclusive education is central to fostering a broadened concept of IE
- Teacher education has become a focus for UNESCO and other agencies in recent years
 - Member States should “train teachers by equipping them with the appropriate skills and materials to teach diverse student populations and meet the diverse learning needs of all different categories of learners through methods such as professional development at the school level, pre-service training about inclusion, and instruction attentive to the development and strengths of the individual learner.” (*ICE Conclusions and Recommendations, UNESCO-IBE 2008*)



Teacher education for inclusion - implications

- Equip teachers with relevant knowledge relating to learning differences to enable a positive teaching attitude and approach
- Facilitate the collection and sharing of evidence about inclusive education developments to motivate teachers
- Provide advice on various forms of teacher support procedures (e.g.: peer teaching, ICTs...)
- Supply teachers with the knowledge and competencies for developing inclusive classroom activities (e.g.: competency-based learning, peer teaching and learning...).



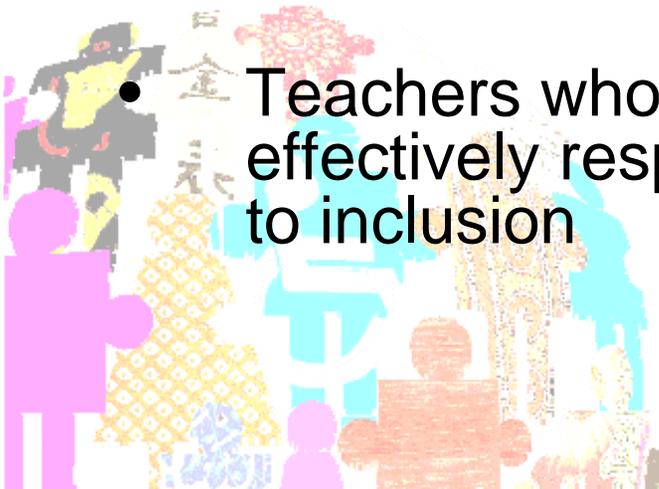
Teacher education for inclusion - challenges

- Teachers may have differing interests and perspectives from other stakeholders and amongst themselves. Understanding their identities is a key issue.
- No universal model for involving teachers in inclusive developments → requires sensitivity to national demands, values and realities (a 'glo-local' teacher education).
- Developing a common sense of purpose amongst teachers is a process which may require a paradigm shift in teachers' mindsets about schools and their pedagogies, re-examining their practices to make them more tolerable, flexible and responsive



Inclusive teachers: the way forward

- Broadening the concept of inclusive education, setting up inclusive organizational frameworks and developing an inclusive curriculum don't work without inclusive teachers working in inclusive schools
- The complex task of changing teachers profile and role, teachers education and professional development and classroom practices
- Teachers who deeply understand, genuinely love and effectively respond to diversities of learners are key to inclusion



An inclusive society based on diversity

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