

Forging an Inclusive Curriculum: issues and challenges

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2 Main Points

- **UNESCO's evolving definition of inclusive education moving towards (a) the convergence of equity and quality as complementary axes and (b) promoting the mindset and holistic transformation of the education systems (from vision to practices)**
- **Inclusive curricula as a powerful tool for inclusion moving towards understanding and addressing the needs of all learners from a life-long perspective**



First Point



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**UNESCO's evolving definition of
inclusive education as the core of EFA**



Developing Inclusive Education as the core of a refined EFA agenda

Broadening Inclusive Education to address diversity of learners

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

A common, broadened concept of Inclusive Education for achieving EFA

UNESCO and the 48th International Conference on Education (ICE)

Strong endorsement of a broader concept of inclusive education by 153 countries, over 100 Ministers of Education:

*“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 outcomes, November 2008)

...
Encouraged a comprehensive approach to the UN Convention of the Rights on Persons with Disabilities (article 24, 2006)



Key themes linking inclusive education and EFA

1. Emphasis on **equity and quality** as going hand in hand
2. Emphasis on **long-term policy visions and objectives**
3. Support to **international conventions** with a focus on the CRPD -United Nations Convention of the Rights on Persons with Disabilities (Art. 24, 2006)
4. **Curricula** seen as a key tool for inclusion
5. **Greater focus on teachers'** role, profile and competencies
6. **Higher, secondary and TVET education** incorporated, through a lifelong perspective
7. **Global, national and local** needs, responsibilities and roles better considered in a balanced way (**glo-local approach**)
8. Appreciation of **new learning and teaching tools and strategies** for diverse learner profiles and characteristics



Key dimensions of Inclusive Education as the core of a refined EFA agenda

- **Transversal approach** under a common vision to all dimensions and levels of lifelong learning opportunities
- Understanding **diversity as cost-effective** and as a strong sign of **societal cohesion**
- Restructuring **cultures, policies and practices** to respond to the diversity
- Understanding, addressing and responding to the diverse needs of all learners through **personalized learning**
- **Understanding, identifying and removing barriers** of the education system
- Aiming at the **presence** (access and attendance), **participation** (quality learning) and **achievement** (quality outcomes)



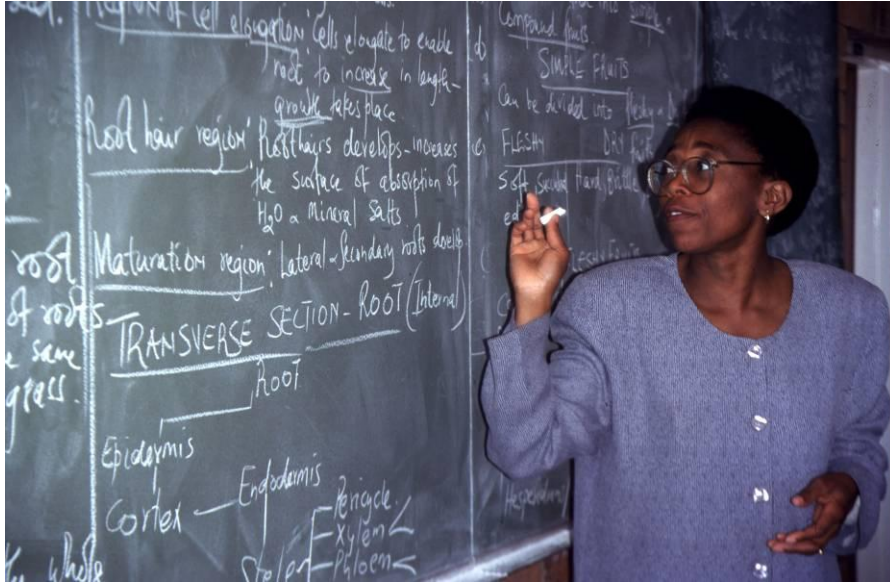
Key interventions for Inclusive Education as the core of a refined EFA agenda

Across the education system:

1. Guides **clear, common and participatory policy planning**, implementation and monitoring
2. Visualizes the **interfaces and synergies between social and educational inclusion**
3. Orientates the **design and implementation of inclusive curricula and schools** to address all learners' needs
4. Re-conceptualizes the role, profile and competencies of an **inclusive teacher i.e.** promotes the **diversification of teaching practices** for engaging the students effectively in the learning process.



Second Point



Inclusive curricula as a powerful tool for inclusion



Defining Inclusive curricula

- Reflect the kind of **society to which we aspire** (political/technical dimensions), solidly grounded on an agreement between institutions / actors from politics, civil society and education
- Guide and ensure the **organisation of pedagogical and administrative action plans** of an education system (the relevance of unified and strong curricular frameworks from early childhood onwards)
- Include and guide the **development and implementation of the syllabus**
- Understanding and addressing the needs of all learners through a **vast repertoire of learning strategies** harbouring **high and shared expectations** across all provisions regarding learning opportunities and outcomes



Core elements of inclusive curricula

Objectives and concepts:

- Underscoring education as a **cultural, economic and social policy**, which sees equity and quality as complementary concepts (going hand in hand)
- Strong **universal public policies** solidly grounded on principles of inclusion and diversity
- Understanding, respecting and building upon **individual, cultural and social diversities**
- Articulating and developing a **comprehensive vision of citizenship education**, primarily through solid and unified curricular concepts and frameworks



Core elements of inclusive curricula

Frameworks, structures and approaches:

- Combining orientation, density and strength of **common, universal concepts and visions** with **choice and flexibility for learning at the local and school levels** (e.g. sound combinations of centralized / decentralized components with formal and non- formal lifelong opportunities)
- Promoting **diversity of frameworks, settings, provisions and processes**. Not institutional, curricular and pedagogical separation or specialization but strengthening what should be common and available to all through **flexible and interconnected pathways**.
- **Competency-based approaches** can provide one core **transversal axis** of educational change, from the aims / objectives to classroom practices



Core elements of inclusive curricula

Content, strategies and assessment:

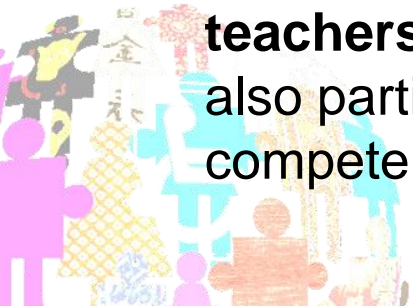
- **Integrating global, regional, national and local realities**, expectations and demands (glo-local) to ensure relevance and variety to contexts and content
- **Reconceptualisation, revision and hierarchisation of inclusive classroom practices** aimed at categories of students with special needs **into practices for all**, strengthening the work in heterogeneous learning environments. For example, peer-to-peer tutoring, cognitive strategies of instruction, self-regulated learning and memory strategies
- Changing the **assessment rational and tools** within an inclusive mindset: from penalization and stigmatization to **guidance and support**



Core elements of inclusive curricula

Management of the curricula:

- **Teamwork, collaboration and support** among supervisors, school principals, teachers, students, parents, communities for inclusive and coherent policies in a common direction: the learning and welfare of the learners
- **Reconceptualising teachers' profile, role and practices** are particularly important, as curriculum co-developers **from an inclusive curricular perspective.**
- Students should be **collaborative and active learners with teachers and other students** (group-work, discussion etc.) and also participating freely in acquiring knowledge and developing competencies (not just being “filled” with information)



Inclusive Curricula: Yes We Can

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