

Inclusive Curricula: An agenda to strengthen the EFA framework (EFA)

**Presented by Robert Parua
UNESCO Kingston Cluster Office for the Caribbean**

IBE-UNESCO

Points to Address

- **Educational change and inclusive education, an evolving relationship**
- **Discussion points and the symbiosis between educational and curricular change**
- **Developing an Inclusive Curriculum: 12 points for discussion and some examples to share**

First Point



Educational change and inclusive education, an evolving relationship

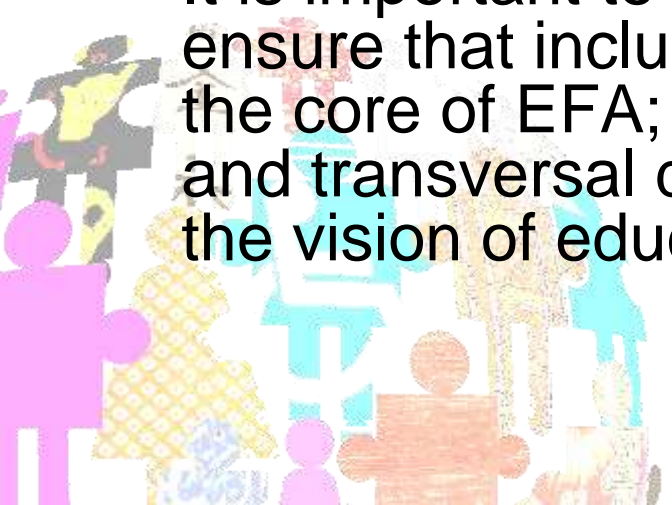
Inclusive Education: An Evolving Concept

- Increasingly and closely related to strengthening the achievement of the Education For All goals.
- It is based on the concept of education as a right – an equitable education of high quality respectful of the diversity of needs and ways of learning.
- It takes into account the diversity of origins, abilities, interests, learning opportunities and socio-political and cultural contexts.
- Both educationally and socially inclusive.



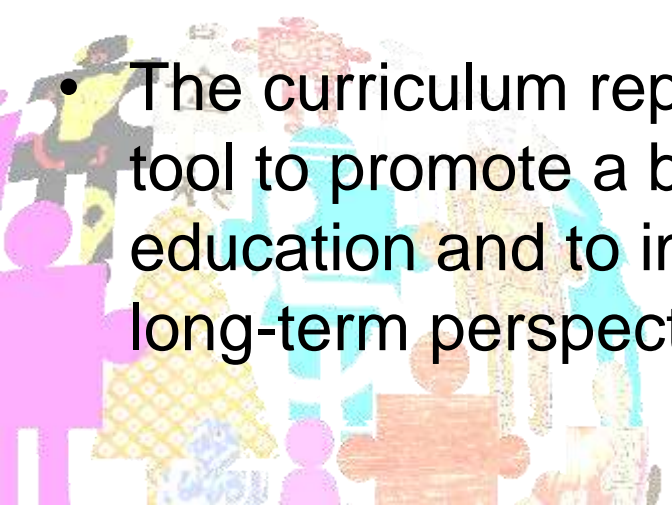
Inclusive Education: An Evolving Concept

- 153 member states declared 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 so as to implement the principles of inclusive education.” (ICE Conclusions and Recommendations, 2008).
- It is important to reposition the EFA commitment to ensure that inclusive education will be perceived as the core of EFA; inclusive education is an integral part and transversal dimension of education reforms and of the vision of education and its practices.



Global Educational Changes to Advance EFA

- The education system must be transformed in an integral and holistic way to make inclusion effective.
- An inclusive education system should integrate organically and involve all the ways, types and styles of learning, as well as different learning objectives from early childhood onwards.
- The curriculum represents a real possibility and a crucial tool to promote a broadened concept of inclusive education and to implement educational policies with a long-term perspective.



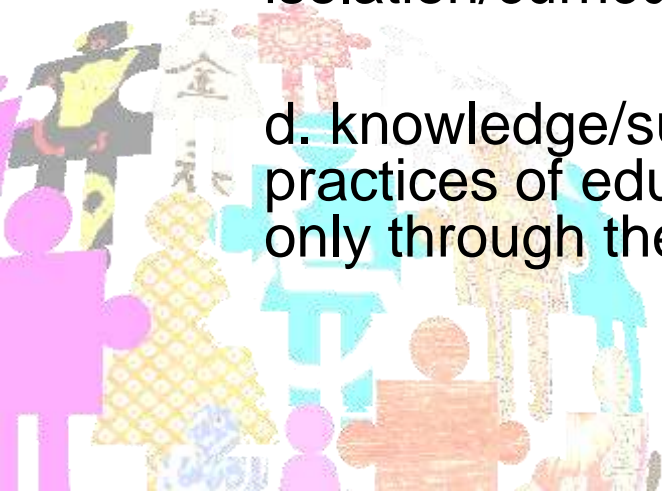
Second Point



Discussion points and the symbiosis between educational and curricular change

Discussion Points

- **Traditional curriculum format** – Priority of analysis/ intervention:
 - a. conditions / inputs (investments) to facilitate/ensure access;
 - b. equity/quality, formal/non formal as axes/separate dimensions;
 - c. educational subsystems as autonomous entities, isolation/curricular segregation?
 - d. knowledge/subject area content structures mindsets and practices of education systems – the curriculum exists only through the study of knowledge/subject areas.



Discussion Points

- **Alternative curriculum formats** – the priority is the creation of inclusive education systems at all levels, from visions to practices:
 - a. the democratization of learning opportunities (integration and synergies amongst policies on access policies, processes and outcomes;
 - b. conjunction and development of a quality, equitable education;
 - c. essential triad – **inclusive curricula, schools and teachers**;
 - d. inclusion implies **personalised education** in order to respect, understand and address cultural, social and individual diversities.



Symbiosis between educational and curricular change

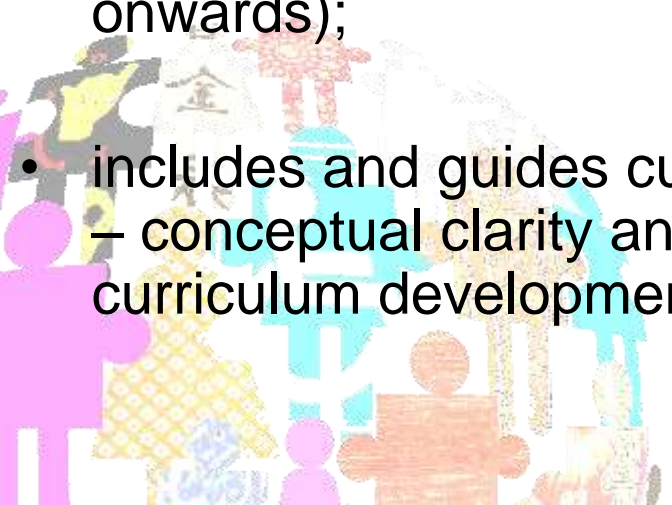
- **Alternative formats** – increasingly strong links between processes of educational change, curriculum proposals and competency-based approaches – **emergence and development of a paradigm shift** – **to renew the basis and foundation of curricular design to strongly support the democratization of learning opportunities.**
- **The re-creation of the concept of curriculum** – curriculum is to the education system what constitutions are to democracies.



Symbiosis between educational and curricular change

Curriculum

- reflects 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;
- guides and ensures the **organisation of pedagogical and administrative action plans** of an education system (the relevance of unified and strong curricular frameworks from early childhood onwards);
- includes and guides curricula – **hierarchical inclusion relationship** – conceptual clarity and institutional will from which to manage curriculum development processes.



Third Point



**Developing an Inclusive Curriculum:
12 points for discussion and some
examples to share**

Developing an inclusive curriculum

- (1) Operationalise the concept of **education as cultural, economic and social policy, which sees equity and quality as complementary concepts** in search of conditions and opportunities for a well-being that is equitably distributed. The value of political/policy dialogue on education and curricular issues.
- (2) **Understand, respect and build upon individual, cultural and social diversities** → Facilitates its complementarity and integration: a **diverse and inclusive universalism** (public policies) that seeks alternatives to a homogenized secularism and a libertarian multiculturalism.



Developing an inclusive curriculum

- (3) Combine **orientation, density and strength of universal concepts with options and some leeway** so that the curriculum can be developed as quality educational processes in schools and classrooms. Both centralized and decentralized at the same time.
- (4) Facilitate and promote the **diversity of frameworks, curricular settings, provisions and processes, as well as educational institutions**, under the common vision of enhancing lifelong learning opportunities. It seeks to overcome the logic of compartmentalized subsystems and provisions.



Developing an inclusive curriculum

- (5) Understand, facilitate and integrate global, regional, national and local realities, expectations and demands, forging a **curriculum that is both common and different from others** (glo-local, Cecilia Bravslasky) - the search for an optimal combination of contexts and contents (Cristián Cox)
- (6) Articulate and develop a **comprehensive vision of citizenship education**, primarily through **solid curricular frameworks that unify and bind** between the different subsystems and levels of education.



Developing an inclusive curriculum

- (7) **Personalise education based on diverse curricular frameworks and options**, and as an alternative to separation, segmentation and institutional, curricular and pedagogical specialization.

Personalisation implies among other things:

- ensuring that children engage in learning through a **variety of learning opportunities and modes of instruction**;
- appropriate decisions related to learning are made with the support of tutors (guidance);
- the involvement of parents in creating **family-friendly learning environments**; and
- teachers have **high expectations for all children** regardless of their backgrounds and needs (UK, 2004).

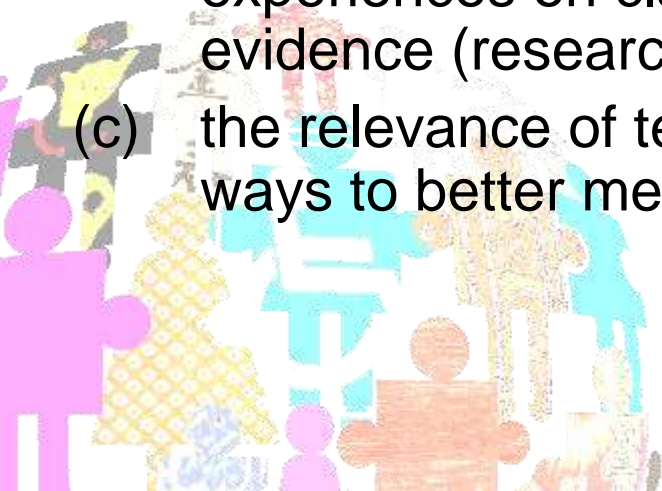


Developing an inclusive curriculum

- (8) Facilitate and create opportunities for **collaboration and support among supervisors, school principals, teachers, students, parents, communities.**

Examples:

- (a) Students help each other, and both assume roles as tutors and mentors at different stages of learning;
- (b) teachers' communities of practice to produce and exchange experiences on classroom practices - the production of evidence (research) from the logic teaching; and
- (c) the relevance of teaching in small groups to jointly explore ways to better meet the specific needs of each student.



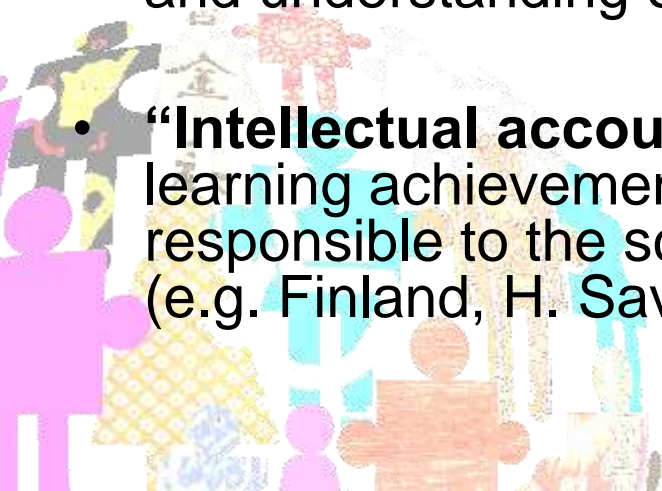
Developing an inclusive curriculum

- (9) The **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.
- (10) The **diversification of forms and contents of evaluation** supports the diversity of frameworks, provisions and processes to **meet the diverse needs**. Central theme: processes and outcomes are part of a comprehensive curricular vision.



Developing an inclusive curriculum

- (11) Profile, role and teaching practices are the key to inclusion in policy, organizational and school frameworks that promote inclusion.
- Acknowledge and convince others that all students can learn and that each one of them matters equally.
 - Empower teachers to co-develop the curriculum, providing them with core competencies and relevant knowledge relating to **learning about differences**, forging positive attitudes, tolerance and understanding of diversity.
 - **“Intellectual accountability”** – schools are responsible for learning achievements while the educational authorities are responsible to the schools to make these achievements possible (e.g. Finland, H. Savolainen 2009).



Developing an inclusive curriculum

(12) Competency-based approaches can be:

- a. the **transversal axis** of change of education systems, from the aims / objectives to classroom practices - helping to establish the training objectives and exit profile;
- b. possible ways to develop and integrate **three logics**: i. life situations (people's actions), ii. curriculum (resources required in order to be competent in dealing with situations) and iii. learning (ways of learning of students and modes of instruction)

- **Situations are the basis and criterion for competencies**
(Philippe Jonnaert)



Developing an inclusive curriculum - examples

Policy dialogue

- International conferences on inclusive education and the implications for inclusive curricula (Spain and Germany)
- BEAP meeting on the development of inclusive education policy and curriculum framework (Seychelles)
- Planning for improved policy frameworks to support inclusive curricula in South East Asia and the Pacific through the adoption of a Regional Education Policy (in collaboration with UNESCO offices in Indonesia, Beijing, Bangkok, etc.)
- 3-week global e-forum discussion on inclusive curricula hosted by the IBE (Oct-Nov 2009)

Developing an inclusive curriculum - examples

Capacity Development

- Capacity development for curriculum change in Africa through BEAP
 - Continuous assistance to The Gambia in developing the national curriculum framework
 - Training of trainers in curriculum processes and trends for all BEAP countries (The Gambia, Ethiopia, Cote d'Ivoire, Tanzania, Seychelles, among others)
- Reforming education systems in the Arab States – workshop on “A Broadened Concept of Inclusive Education, Inclusive Classroom-Based Practices, and Implications for Policy Making, Implementation and Follow-Up” (Lebanon)
- Training workshops for UNESCO animators (Ecuador and Venezuela)

Developing an inclusive curriculum - examples

Learning Tools

- Developing the capacities of curriculum leaders and teacher trainers through the IBE Training Tools for Curriculum Development – A Resource Pack (Bhutan, Tanzania and Uruguay)
- Guidelines developed and used for incorporating ESD into teacher education curriculum (UNESCO Bangkok)
- 48th ICE videos and notes used as learning tools at capacity development workshops (Ecuador, Tanzania and Venezuela)



An inclusive society based on diversity

Renato Opertti - r.opertti@unesco.org

