ICE 2008:
"Inclusive Education:
The Way of the Future"

A challenge to share

Capacity building training workshop
Inclusive Education
Ministry of Education and Science of Montenegro
UNESCO

21-23 November 2007
Tivat, Montenegro

Objectives of the Session

- to identify common challenges related the development of Inclusive Education, principally in terms of visions, strategies and practices;

- to provide structured technical inputs from a regional perspective to the 48th session of the International Conference of Education (ICE, November 2008, Geneva) whose theme is "Inclusive Education: the way of the future".

Agenda

- Inclusive Education as a core strategy to attain EFA goals.
- The Right to Education for All.
- Country presentations on issues around Inclusive Education.
- Inter-regional perspectives on Inclusive Education
- Shaping a Regional Roadmap.

Expected Outcomes Participants

- be aware of the 48th. ICE and its scope and modalities and become agents for dissemination of this knowledge within their sphere of action;

- hold an open and constructive sharing of national perspectives on Inclusive Education within a regional context;

- elaborate a regional roadmap on Inclusive Education that can provide significant inputs for implementing a regional agenda towards the 48th. ICE.

Institutional framework

- General theme proposed by The International Bureau of Education (IBE-UNESCO) Council: "Inclusive Education: The Way of the Future"

- Four sub-themes proposed: "Approaches, Scope and Content"; "Public Policies"; "Systems, Links and Transitions" and "Learners and Teachers".

Issues under discussion

- 1. The roles of Education as a right.

- 2. Normative framework. EFA goals as a core strategy.

- 3. Significant sources of exclusion.

- 4. Concept and key dimensions of Inclusive Education.

1. The Roles of Education as a Right

Education as:

- providing the conceptual and the empirical foundations of a **democratic citizenship**;

- a key **economic and social policy**;

- a main factor to **reduce poverty and marginality** under a long-term vision;

- a crucial factor in facilitating an **intelligent and productive integration** of national societies in a globalized world;

- a way of contributing to establish a solid basis of **cultural and social integration**.

Core elements of a Holistic Approach towards Education as a Right

- Guaranteed funding. **Investing more and better**. Improve the impacts.

- **Free and compulsory education**. Scope and content.

- The struggle against **all forms of exclusion and discrimination**.

- The **strengthening of the quality of learning**. Conditions, inputs, processes and outcomes.

2. Normative framework.
EFA goals as a core strategy.

Five main international instruments:

- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
- Salamanca Statement (1994) on Inclusive Education
- The Dakar Framework for Action (2000)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)

Education as a Human Right: a worrisome reality

UNESCO
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Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

International Bureau of Education

- Insufficient consciousness and **lack of political willingness** on the importance of funding and investing in Basic Education.
- The maintenance of **school fees** and the penalization of the most socially deprived sectors.
- The existence of **discriminatory visions, provisions and practices** related to gender, ethnic origin, migrant status and rural residence.
- **Unbearable cultural, social and educational gaps** between groups and persons. The equity and quality dimensions and their interdependence.

Education for All (EFA) Goals as a powerful commitment of the international community

- The expansion of **early childhood care and education**.
- The provision of **free and compulsory primary education for all**.
- The promotion of **learning and life skills for young people and adults**.
- The increase of **adult literacy** by 50 per cent.
- The achievement of **gender parity** by 2005 and gender equality by 2015.
- The improvement of the **quality of education**.

Pending Challenges on EFA goals

- Assuming and implementing in a more decisive way a **human-rights based approach**.

- Better visualizing **education as a public good** based on an irreplaceable government mission and responsibility.

- Developing a clear and explicit comprehensive **agenda of educational change and policy reform** in order to attain a high quality equitable education.

The democratization of Basic Education as a key issue in the UNESCO Agenda

- Removal of institutional, pedagogical, curricular and teaching barriers between Childhood, Primary and Youth Education. **EFA goals altogether form the Basic Education Agenda**.

- Ensuring real access to knowledge and skills (a relevant and pertinent curriculum) based on a triad: a solid and shared **educational policy**, a **common curriculum framework** for all levels of Basic Education and a strong emphasis on the **teacher's professional development**.

3. Significant sources of exclusion

- **Endogenous vision** of the educational policy.
- A **prescriptive top-down vision of curriculum** far form the school mission and the classroom.
- The "imposition" of **homogenous ways of teaching**. The ideal over the real student.
- Lack of learning materials, principally **textbooks**.
- A **worrisome miscomprehension** of teachers' histories, identities, beliefs and expectations.
- Non critical assimilation of an **international model** that must be "followed".

4. Concept and key dimensions of inclusive education BEFORE

- Group of students categorized as with special needs such as and predominantly **physically and/or mentally handicapped students and refugees**.

- The approaches and the responses have been essentially remedial and corrective. **Institutional and curricular segregation.**

The concept of Inclusive Education TODAY

- The concept has evolved towards the idea that **all children and young people should have equal learning conditions and opportunities in different types of schools** regardless of their cultural and social backgrounds as well of their differences on abilities and capacities.

- It implies **the generation of inclusive settings** in all schools through the provision of complementary offers that are part of a school network and by the articulation with other social services.

The concept of Inclusive Education TODAY

- The nature of the concept is not the outcome of adding categories of prioritized students (a supposedly endless list). Quite to the contrary, it is about providing **friendly and effective learning opportunities to every child** by respecting and taking care of its uniqueness and diversity. The development of curricular and pedagogical responses with regards to the diversity of student's situations, contexts and profiles is a core issue.

- UNESCO defines Inclusion "**as 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".

Inclusive Education

- _From a societal vision_:

  the **type of society and the quality of democracy we wish and we pursue.** It is reflected in the **type of curriculum we choose** (political and technical dimensions).

  Social inclusion and inclusive education, a complex and critical relationship.

  Education as a **central social policy**.

- _From a strictly educational vision:_

  a careful consideration of the **specificity and uniqueness of each child and teenager** so as to provide them a real educational opportunity all along their lives.

  Key role of **Cognitive Education**.

  Mutual empathy and nearness between teachers and students.

Five critical dimensions to consider as part of an Agenda on Inclusive Education:

- The significance and priority given to IE within the **government policies**.

- The integration between the different ladders and pathways of the education system. **Navigability, density and flexibility**.

- The **individualization of the learning needs** of both potential and current students taking into account their cultural, social and cognitive diversities.

- The conceptualization and organization of the **school as an integrated institutional and pedagogical unit**.

- The renovation and recreation of the **teachers' profile and role** (teachers education and professional development).

Inclusive Education implies four key elements:

- **to learn how to learn from the differences;**

- **to stimulate students' capacity of addressing and resolving problems;**

- **the right of every child to attend school and have high quality learning experiences;**

- **the moral responsibility of prioritizing those students who are in risk of being marginalized and excluded from the school.**