

Preparing Teacher for Inclusive Education

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Abstract

Inclusive education give the opportunity to teach the children with disabilities or less able with able or more able because when children are educated together, positive academic and social outcomes occur for all the children involved. We also know that simply placing children with and without disabilities together does not produce positive outcomes. Inclusive education has been first encompassed in the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994). Inclusive education is based on three principals i.e. all children are equal, All children learn in different ways and every child's right to be included. Teachers must be prepared and Government should be devolved an educational program for this. When developing human resources to support an inclusive education system three areas must be considered: the attitudes of teachers and education staff, pre-service training programs to help the future teachers enter the profession with the skills and knowledge to work in an inclusive environment, and in-service training to improve preparing teachers for Inclusive Education the capacity of teachers already working in the field.

The purpose of education is to ensure that all students gain access to knowledge, skills, and information that will prepare them to contribute to communities and workplaces. The central purpose of education becomes more challenging as schools accommodate students with increasingly diverse backgrounds and abilities/disabilities. As the concept of 'inclusive education' has gained currency, students who would previously have been referred to specialist forms of provision, having been judged 'less able', are now believed to belong in mainstream classrooms. However, it is often argued that teachers lack the necessary knowledge and skills to work with such students in inclusive classrooms.

I. What is Inclusive Education?

Inclusion is an educational approach and philosophy that provides all students with community membership and greater opportunities for academic and social achievement.

Inclusive education is defined by UNESCO as a "process of addressing and responding to the diverse needs of all learners by increasing participation in learning and reducing exclusion within and from education." This means that all children have the right to a quality education that caters, to the extent possible, to their individual needs. Also Says Schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include disabled and gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or nomadic populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalised areas or groups

Inclusive education is about how we develop and design our schools, classrooms, programs and activities so that all students learn and participate together. Many years ago, special classes were created for students with special needs. Special educators felt that if they could just teach these students separately, in smaller groups, they could help them to catch up. However, the reality is that students in segregated special education classes have fallen further and further behind. Over time, we have learned that

inclusive education is a better way to help all students succeed

II. Principles of Inclusive Education

These are the principles that guide quality inclusive education:

- 1. All children belong-** Inclusive education is based on the simple idea that every child and family is valued equally and deserves the same opportunities and experiences. Inclusive education is about children with disabilities participating in everyday activities, building friendships, membership and having opportunities just like everyone else.
- 2. All children learn in different ways-** Inclusion is about providing the help children need to learn and participate in meaningful ways. Sometimes, with the help from friends or teachers works best. Other times, specially designed materials or technology. The key is to give only as much help as needed.
- 3. It is every child's right to be included-** Inclusive education is a right of a child, not a privilege. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act clearly states that all children with disabilities should be educated with non-disabled children their own age and have access to the general education curriculum.

IV. Changing Conceptions of Inclusion in Education

Inclusive education has been first encompassed in the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994). Since that time, these principles have been reinforced by many conventions, declarations and recommendations at global levels. The UNESCO Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education (2009) set out the following justifications for working towards inclusive practices and educating all children together:

- 1. Educational justification-** Inclusive schools have to develop ways of teaching that respond to individual differences and benefit all children.
- 2. Social justification-** Inclusive schools are able to change attitudes towards diversity and form the basis for a just, non-discriminatory society.
- 3. Economic justification-** It costs less to establish and maintain schools that educate all children together than to set up a complex system of different schools 'specialising' in different groups of children.

V. Prepare of a teacher for Inclusive Education

Inclusive education has been internationally recognized as a philosophy for attaining equity, justice and quality education for all children, especially those who have been traditionally excluded from mainstream education for reasons of disability, ethnicity, gender or other characteristics.

When developing human resources to support an inclusive education system three areas must be considered:

- The attitudes of teachers and education staff.
- Pre-service training programs to help ensure that future generations of teachers enter the profession with the skills and knowledge to work in an inclusive environment.
- In-service training to improve the capacity of teachers already working in the field.

1. Increase Awareness and Attitudinal Change

For inclusive education to succeed, it is vitally important that teachers, principals and other education stakeholders maintain a positive attitude towards inclusion. They must be firmly convinced of the benefits that inclusive practices bring to all children. Obtaining such support involves behavior and attitudinal change which is not a quick or easy process. There are a number of ways to accomplish such change-

- Organize training workshops for educators and key community members on general inclusive education techniques
- Integrate awareness about inclusive education into schools' regular professional development activities.
- Integrate knowledge about the benefits of inclusive education into initial training programs for student teachers in colleges and universities.
- Develop mass media activities and materials that emphasize the value of inclusive education.
- Increase awareness of the many benefits of inclusive education through the interaction of educators and key community members with people with disabilities.

2. Pre-Service Training

In order to build human resources in the field of education, training must be done both at the pre-service and in-service levels. Ideally, inclusive education should be a compulsory subject for all teacher candidates and an integral part of teacher training curricula. Fundamental knowledge and skills of inclusive education, such as understanding needs and abilities of children with special needs and pedagogic skills such as instructional accommodation and activity differentiation, should be provided widely to teacher candidates. As a long term goal, countries should work towards promoting inclusive education as a compulsory subject in pre-service training programs.

3. In-Service Training

In-service training includes professional development for teachers who are already working in the classroom. In addition to developing the skills of professionals before entering the workforce, it is essential that teachers already teaching be provided skills and techniques for inclusive education. Teachers are required to upgrade their professional skills on an annual or regular basis to enhance their teaching performance. In-service training programs offer a particularly effective strategy to improve the quality of an entire educational system for all children regardless of their needs. Inclusive education methods are child-centered, employing active and participative learning techniques that improve teachers' capacity to teach children both with and without disabilities. Collaborative and participative techniques not only enhance learning outcomes, but also reduce prejudice and discrimination among children.

Inclusive education is a systematic approach to different levels of the education system. i.e. school level, Ministry or Government level. Inclusive education that takes into account children's abilities, potential and diverse needs. This approach to education calls for teachers to develop creative strategies that cater to the needs of their students. Inclusion requires reforms and innovations at different levels of the education system. From planning lessons and objectives to differentiating activities that cater to diverse needs, inclusive education supports children in their school environment. It involves accurate assessments of children and the creation of friendly and collaborative environments for all children. However, in order for inclusion to be both successful and sustainable, it must

be addressed at all levels of the system, from education ministries to local teachers.

Educational Management and School Initiatives- School principals and other management staff should be trained in inclusive education principles and techniques so that they are qualified to develop inclusive education strategies at their schools, and lend support to teachers. School principals have the authority to call regular meetings on the topic and to encourage learning among the teaching staff. However, if they have no background in inclusive techniques and philosophy they could prevent rather than promote successful inclusion.

Role of Ministries in Curriculum Development and Policy Change- For any country, it is very important to involve educational authorities at the highest level. There are a number of ways to involve these officials in inclusive education

- Providing key policy makers and staff exposure to successful programs.
- Involving key Ministry of Education staff in direct activities such as curriculum development and teacher training
- Increasing the role of policy makers in piloted programs by development agencies.
- Exposing officials to inclusive programs in other countries through study tours to observe successful inclusive teacher training models and to promote interaction with international peers

The success of inclusive education in any context depends upon many factors. Teachers themselves are an essential component to ensure the quality of students' inclusion in the school environment. Teachers have direct interaction with students and play a critical role in determining students' experiences in the classroom on a daily basis. Special attention must be paid to ensure that classroom teachers have the skills and support needed to provide quality education to children with diverse learning needs. This requires the collaboration of classroom teachers, school principals, education officers and policy makers.