

# IMPACT OF EFA GOALS ON THE EDUCATION OF PERSONS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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## Abstract

*The paper attempted to examine the concept of inclusive education as a core of the education for All (EFA) agenda. It highlights the necessity and pertinence of inclusive education within the EFA agenda. It also suggests how the concept of inclusive education can move forward in this context while, illustrating some key features for the education on teaching and learning in an inclusive education as the core of EFA.*

## Introduction

Education for All (EFA) is an international initiative which was first launched in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 to bring benefits of Education to every "citizen in every society". Children with special needs have the same right to education as all other children. They have the right to be educated in regular inclusive schools and not in separate segregated systems. Within regular inclusive schools, they have the right to an education that responds to the diversity of their abilities and is adapted to their particular needs, with support as it is needed. The Dakar Framework for Action adopted a world Declaration on Education for All (EFA) in 2000, which established the goal to provide every girl and boy with primary school education by 2015. It also, clearly identified inclusive education as a key strategy for the development of EFA.

The aim of this paper is to highlight the impact of EFA goals on persons with special needs in an inclusive education.

Inclusive education can be interpreted as the philosophy and practice for educating students with special needs in general education settings (Bryant, Smith, and Bryant, 2008; Lipsky & Gartner, 1997; Rogers, 1993; Salend, 2001). The practice anchors on the notion that every child should be an equally valued member of the school culture. In other words, children with special needs benefit from learning in a regular classroom, while, their peers without special needs gain from being exposed to children with diverse characteristics, talents and temperaments.

Supports of inclusive used the term to refer to the commitment to educate each child, to the maximum extent appropriate, in the school and classroom he/she would otherwise, attend within his environment. It involves bringing the important service to the child, and requires only that the child will benefit from being in the class, it also, requires a commitment to move essential resources to

the child with a special need rather than placing the child in an isolated setting where services are located (Smith, 2007). For the child with special need to benefit from the inclusion, it is important for the regular teacher to be able to teach a wider arrangement of children, including those with varying special need and to collaborate and plan effectively with special education and other related professionals related to special educational programme.

Keating (1996) stated that successful change or transformation in the next century depends on the creation of a “learning society”. The first step to achieve this goal is to provide learning opportunities that will foster the full development of learning potential to all learners. This has an implication for providing personally challenging, individually appropriate educational programme to all students even those with exceptional learning needs. This is possible only in a flexible educational system that assimilates the needs of a diverse range of learners and adapts itself to meet these needs.

According to 2005 Global Monitoring Report, “Education should allow children to reach their fullest potential in terms of cognitive, emotional and creative capacities”. Education for All ensure that all children have access to basic education of good quality by creating an environment where learners both able and enable to be educated can learn. Such an environment must be inclusive, effective, friendly and welcoming to all learners.

### **Conceptual Clarifications of Inclusive Education**

The concept of inclusive education which UNESCO (1994) developed. Inclusive education therefore, as that which provides for the teaching of all children in regular local schools, not just children with special need (UNESCO). From Stainback (2005), inclusive, in education is the process of allowing all children the opportunity to fully participate in “regular classroom activities regardless of their need, race or other characteristics. Osokoya (2007), citing Michigan (1991) sees inclusive in education as the provision of educational services for students with special need in schools where non special need peers attend and with general education teachers, with appropriate special education support and assistance as determined appropriate through the individualized educational planning committee (IEPC). Farrell (2001), in his gun approach sees it as the extent to which a school or community welcomes all people as full members of the group and valued them for the contribution which they make. Similarly, Staubs and Beck (1995), take inclusive as a placement alternative for accommodating all special needs children alongside their able bodied counterparts in the same learning environment for instructional purpose (Osokoya, 2007). Basically, inclusive development is based on a human rights perception of special need and highlights equal opportunity for persons with special need and their right to play as part in the society (Gabriele, 2007).

Similarly, inclusive education dealt with all students in school, regardless of their strengths or weakness in any area, become part of the school community. They are included in the feeling of belonging among other students, teachers and supporting staff.

### **Impact of Inclusive Education on Teaching and Learning of Children with Special Need**

- a. Inclusive education provides everyone in an inclusive system with the sense of belonging and thus can be accepted and supported by others.
- b. It also emphasize that there should be no segregation in educational setting of any type to be allowed, as all children should be encourage to participate in all indoor and outdoor curricular activities.
- c. Environment should be well structured with instructional materials to facilitate individual development of learners: However, the duty to promote special need equality will require schools to have due regards to the following in the operation of their organization to:
  - i. Promote equality of opportunity between special need and non-special need persons.
  - ii. Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the law.
  - iii. Eliminate harassment of special need persons that is related to their impairment.
  - iv. Promote positive attitudes towards special need people.
  - v. Encourage participation by special need people in public life.
  - vi. Take step to take account of special need persons impairments, even where that involves treating the special need person more favorably than other persons (Disability Discrimination Amendment Act, 2005).

Inclusive education therefore, gives all children with the special need the opportunity to learn together without discrimination. This means that schools where inclusive education is taking place must be sensitive to the differences in the needs and services of various children with special needs. For instance, different provisions should be made for different inclusive situations-a class that has a deaf child must have such support services as an interpreter fluent in sign language, speech trainers, speech therapist, and school audiologist. The class should also be equipped with loops and the child should be given a hearing aid where appropriate. In case of visually impaired children, they would need brailing equipment and brailist, mobility aids, tape recorders, and optical devices, such as magnifies for those with residual vision. They will in addition require the services of mobility instructor and resource teacher of the visual Impairment. Their inclusive must be carefully planned in term of the class size which must be drastically reduced; level of inclusion will depend on the severity

of the special need. The services of the following must be provided, teacher aide, resource specialist who will assist with the development of the individualized educational programme (IEP). The physically and health impaired will need some modification of the physical environment and the provision of the mobility aids such as wheelchairs.

## Conclusion

Inclusive education is globally gaining serious attention all over the world. It gives attention to the education of people with special need has been emphasized in the National Policy on Education 2004 edition, therein, section 10 (96b and c) state that;

The education of children with special needs shall be at all level. All necessary facilities that would ensure easy access to education shall be provided.

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