



## **Executive summary**

### **Eastern and Western Sub-Saharan Africa Workshop on Inclusive Education (Nairobi, Kenya, 25-27 July 2007)**

Within the seminar entitled “Poverty Alleviation, HIV and AIDS Education and Inclusive Education: Priority Issues for Quality Education for all in Eastern and Western Sub-Saharan Africa”, policy-makers, directors of education, curriculum specialists and teacher trainers from Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania and Uganda as well as representatives from ED/BAS, Nairobi Cluster Office and local UN Country team discussed around Inclusive Education during two days (23 participants). It was co-organized by Kenyan Ministry of Education, the Kenyan Institute for Education (KIE) and IBE.

The discussion was mainly focused on the need to broaden the concept and scope of Inclusive Education in at least three main aspects: (i) its links to EFA goals as education for all learners by addressing the needs of diverse social marginalised groups (i.e. girls, those affected by HIV and AIDS, nomadic population, orphans and street children, out of school youth); (ii) inclusive education is strongly associated with fostering an inclusive curriculum which means, among other things, the design of a common curriculum framework from Childhood onwards, the strengthening of Basic Education and emphasizing the need for early education interventions and the development of competency and life-skills approaches and (iii) a concerted effort to harness appropriate and relevant resources to provide a continuum of services and support based upon a multi-sectoral approach (conceptual and operational coordination of social policies), involving all types of schools. It was clearly acknowledged that a highly academic, heavily overloaded curriculum, with a strong division between Primary and Secondary Education, which is moreover exam oriented and far from responding to the needs and expectations of students, is a major source of exclusion. In a certain way teachers are delivering a curriculum that excludes more than it includes. Nonetheless, when participants referred to concrete practices on inclusive education, it is clear that the integration of children with special needs (mainly disabilities) into mainstream schools still remains the major policy framework and action.

The main challenges appear to be related to: (i) the need to develop an inclusive education policy which implies a paradigm shift from a narrow conception of disability with specific theories, practices and models to a broader conceptualization of inclusion to accommodate diverse groups of learners excluded from education; (ii) the struggle against poverty and all factors of marginalization, segregation and exclusion such as HIV and AIDS should recognize the crucial role of the curriculum in providing effective learning conditions and opportunities for all learners (reforms in curriculum approaches,

structures, contents and strategies); (iii) the acknowledgment of cultural diversity and multiculturalism as both a right and a learning context; (iv) safeguarding the rights of all excluded groups and (v) utilization of existing institutions (i.e. NEPAD and ADEA) to drive the inclusive education agenda forward.

A consensual statement on Inclusive Education was elaborated by the participants and addressed to the African Union Meeting of Ministers (COMEDAF) that took place in Johannesburg, South Africa August 9-10. The objective pursued by the participants is to establish a Community of Practice on Inclusive Education in Africa to support Education For All (EFA) and MDG Goals. The regional roadmap as discussed during the workshop emphasizes the removal of barriers to participation and learning for girls and women, all disadvantaged and excluded groups, including children with disabilities and out of school children.