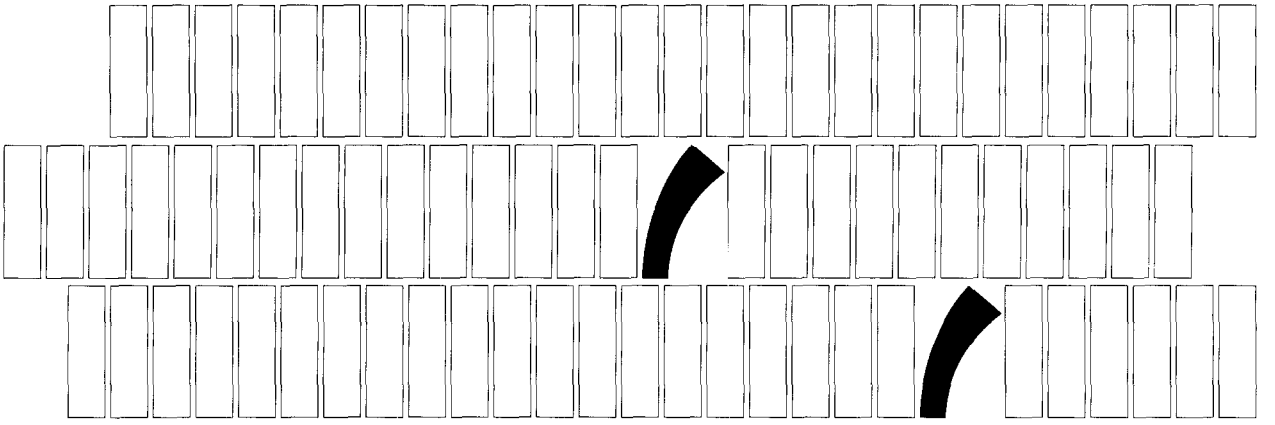
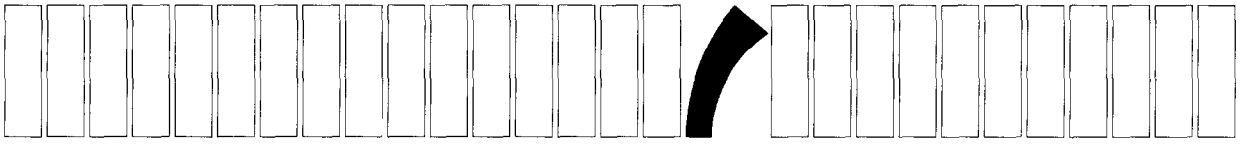


Open File on **Inclusive Education**



Support Materials for Managers and Administrators

UNESCO

The views expressed in this document
are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect
those of UNESCO.

UNESCO
Inclusive Education
Section for Combating Exclusion through Education
Division of Basic Education

7, place de Fontenoy
75352 PARIS 07 SP
France

Telephone: 33-(0)1-45 68 11 95
Fax: 33-(0)1- 45 68 56 27
E-mail: s.vayrynen@unesco.org
http://www.unesco.org/education/educprog/sne

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Open File topics:

Anupam Ahuja	India
Ana Maria Benard Da Costa	Portugal
Rosa Blanco Guijarro	UNESCO Santiago
Cynthia Duk	Chile
Birgit Dyssegaard	Denmark
Rosita Edler Carvalho	Brazil
Peter Farrell	UK
Clement Gine	Spain
Ximena Guarella	Chile
Janet Holdsworth	Lao PDR
Joseph Kisanji	Tanzania
Lilian Mariga	Zimbabwe
Cor Meijer	The Netherlands
Nithi Muthukrishna	South Africa
Oscar Nieto	Chile
Martin Omagor-Loican	Uganda
Mônica Pereira dos Santos	Brazil
Manuel Pérez	Chile
Gordon Porter	Canada
Julia Stone	Canada
Marie Schoeman	South Africa
Mariana Torredemer	Spain
Teresa Vitorino	Portugal
Adina Vrasmas	Romania
Traian Vrasmas	Romania

Revision of the draft materials:

Mithu Alur	India
Ana Maria Benard da Costa	Portugal
Birgit Dyssegaard	Denmark
Kenneth Eklindh	Sweden
Janet Holdsworth	Lao PDR
Hala Ibrahim	Jordan
Ana Luisa López	UNESCO Santiago
Susie Miles	EENET, UK
Omar Nofal	Palestine
Martin Omagor-Loican	Uganda
Isabel Pães	Portugal
Darlene Perner	USA
Teresa Vitorino	Portugal
Lena Saleh	France
Hannu Savolainen	Finland
Maite Torres-Blanqué	Spain
Traian Vrasmas	Romania

Feedback and comments on the various draft versions:

Anupam Ahuja	India
Mel Ainscow	UK
Rosa Blanco Guijarro	UNESCO Santiago
Birgit Dyssegaard	Denmark
Windyz Brazão Fereira	Brazil
Salome Katwishi	Zambia
Nithi Muthukrishna	South Africa
Isabel Pães	Portugal
Rosita Edler Carvalho	Brazil
Mônica Pereira dos Santos	Brazil
Bengt Persson	Sweden
Tirusew Teferi	Ethiopia

Introduction

This Open File is intended to support all those who are concerned with promoting inclusive education in their countries. In particular, it offers a means whereby administrators and decision-makers in different countries can draw on international experience in guiding their own countries' systems towards inclusion. The users of the Open File are likely to be staff with leadership responsibilities working in national education ministries, local government, district services and resource centres, voluntary organisations, NGOs and so on.

The Open File is not primarily concerned with national policy-making on the one hand or with classroom practice on the other. Both of these are essential considerations in the development of inclusive education. However, national policy is a matter for national governments, while classroom practice and issues of internal school development and organisation have been dealt with very effectively in UNESCO's earlier Teacher Education Resource Pack: Special Needs in the Classroom, which is drawn upon throughout the Open File.

The Open File begins at the point where a policy commitment to the principle of inclusive education has already been made. In some cases, this will be an unequivocal commitment on the part of national government, which may already be embodied in formal policy statements, or even in legislation. In other cases, the commitment will be less formalised, or will exist only at local level in particular communities, or will come in the first instance from NGOs rather than from the state. Whatever the source and strength of that commitment, the Open File asks how it can be nurtured and developed so that, over time, it can lead to a fully-functioning inclusive system.

It begins by setting out briefly, in part 2 of this Introduction, the rationale for inclusive education and indicating some of the milestones in its development. It then addresses the challenges outlined above through a series of nine topics. They are:

- Managing the transition to inclusive education (Topic 1)
- Professional development for inclusive education (Topic 2)
- Assessment in inclusive systems (Topic 3)
- Organising support in inclusive systems (Topic 4)
- Families and communities in inclusive systems (Topic 5)
- Developing an inclusive curriculum (Topic 6)
- Resourcing and funding inclusive schools (Topic 7)
- Managing transitions in inclusive systems (Topic 8)
- Working with schools (Topic 9)

Finally an appendix sets out references to materials drawn on in producing the Open File and to other resources which users might find helpful

How was the Open File produced?

The Open File is a collaborative effort by researchers, administrators, and practitioners across the world. In the first instance, a small number of contributors from different regions were asked to summarise their knowledge and experience in relation to each of the topics listed above. These contributions were collated and analysed by Professor Alan Dyson (and, in the early stages, by Dr Maria Baez) at the Special Needs Research Centre in the University of Newcastle, England. Their drafts were sent to an international panel of readers for comment and were further refined in a series of international workshops.

The Open File is, therefore, the distillation of experience from a wide range of countries. Given the enormous variation between national systems, it cannot possibly address every detail of every situation. It contents itself with attempting to identify some underlying principles which inform practice across a wide range of contexts, supported by brief illustrations from a number of countries. Most of these come from the experience of the various international contributors to each of these stages; a few were added from the growing international literature on inclusive education (see appendix). However, countries differ from each other in terms of the organisation of their education systems, the resources at their disposal and the values and cultures which inform their policies. There is no intention, therefore, that the Open File should be regarded as a step-by-step guide to developing inclusive systems. Instead, it is very much a matter for users to decide how they can draw on the international experience summarised here in the context of their own specific situation.

How to use the Open File

For the reasons given above, the Open File should be seen as a set of resource materials rather than as a definitive handbook. Users should see it as a starting point for thinking about their own situation rather than as a source for answers to every problem they might face. They should, therefore, be prepared to extend and modify its conclusions wherever they do not accord with the realities of the system within which they work.

The File is 'Open' precisely because we hope that its users will regard it as something on which they can build. We hope in particular that they will:

- add further examples to each topic as they come across them in the literature, at international conferences or through their contacts with administrators and practitioners elsewhere;
- add new topics as they come to seem relevant;
- use the questions at the end of each topic as a means of reviewing their own situations;
- add working policy documents to each topic as their own national or local responses to the issues raised therein;
- use the materials for group development and planning activities and for the training of senior professionals, perhaps rewriting them so that they are more context-specific; and
- use the Open File as a 'common language' through which they can share experiences with their counterparts in other national systems and which they can use to structure their study visits to other countries.

Despite the very high level of activity which there has been in recent years, inclusive education remains in its infancy. An Open File such as this, therefore, cannot hope to be the last word on inclusion. It will have served its purpose if each country, district and individual which makes use of it ultimately abandons it in favour of a fuller, more detailed and more context-specific version of their own.

A note on language

A major problem for writers of international texts is that the terms used by different national education systems tend to differ from each other, even when they are apparently describing the same thing. This problem is even greater in the field of inclusive education, because finding an inclusive language – one that is non-discriminatory and which celebrates difference – is often an important step towards building an inclusive system.

In the Open File, the following decisions have been made about terminology:

- The term 'formal education' is used to refer to education which takes place in settings organised for that purpose, such as schools, kindergartens, colleges and so on. The term 'non-formal education' is used to refer to education which is planned and organised but takes place outside these settings – for instance, in workshops, community learning centres and so on. 'Informal education' refers to any learning that takes place in an unplanned way and outside organised settings – for instance, while watching TV or carrying out ordinary daily activities.
- The term 'school' is used to refer to those formal education settings where basic and secondary education take place.
- The term 'learner' is used to refer to anyone who is participating in formal or non-formal education.
- The term 'student' is used to refer to anyone, however young, participating in formal education and who therefore has a place in a school, college or other learning centre. Usually, students in schools will be children, but when the Open File refers to them in this way, it is with an acknowledgement that there will be over-age learners in many schools.
- The term 'teacher' is used to refer to anyone with a teaching role in a formal education setting.

- Most countries identify a minority of students for special needs education, whether delivered in special or ordinary schools. The term 'students with special educational needs' refers to those who have been identified in this way. Of course, countries identify different proportions and different groups of students as 'having special educational needs' and some critics doubt the usefulness of this label entirely. When the Open File uses the term, therefore, it acknowledges the existence of this labelling practice, but does not thereby assume that there is any substantive educational difference between these students and all others.
- The same arguments apply to the terms 'disability', 'disabled people' or 'people with disabilities'. When the Open File uses these terms, it is with an acknowledgement that they are problematic.
- In many countries, not all students who are identified as disabled are also identified as having special educational needs – and vice versa. When the open File talks about 'students with disabilities *or* special educational needs', therefore, this is not mere repetition; it indicates that the two groups are not identical.
- The term 'parent' is used to refer to anyone with primary responsibility for the upbringing of a child, 'family' to refer to the main social unit within which the child is reared and 'community' to the wider social group to which child and family belong. In the context in which many users of the Open File work, father and (particularly) mother will clearly take the lead in matters to do with the child's education. In other contexts, it will be grandparents, or the extended family or the community as a whole that will take responsibility. As few assumptions as possible, therefore, are made about who will play the role of parent, what the structure of the family will be, or what the relationship will be between family and community.
- Different countries use different terms to refer to the schools which most student attend. In the Open File, these schools are described as 'ordinary' schools and the system of which they are a part is the 'mainstream' education system (as opposed to the special education system). Elsewhere, they might be described as 'regular' schools.

The Rationale for Inclusive Education

KEY ISSUES

- Inclusive education starts from the belief that the right to education is a basic human right and the foundation for a more just society.
- In order to realise this right, the Education for All movement has worked to make quality basic education available to all.
- Inclusive education takes the Education for All agenda forward by finding ways of enabling schools to serve *all* children in their communities, as part of an inclusive education system.
- Inclusive education is concerned with *all* learners, with a focus on those who have traditionally been excluded from educational opportunities – such as learners with special needs and disabilities, children from ethnic and linguistic minorities, and so on.

This Open File takes as its starting point the simple but powerful assertion that inclusive education is about "enabling schools to serve all children" (UNESCO, 1994, p.iii). In other words, inclusion means creating schools which welcome *all* learners, regardless of their characteristics, disadvantages or difficulties. Such schools celebrate the differences between learners rather than seeing them as problems. Inclusive education also means setting schools in the wider context of education systems – both formal and non-formal – which are themselves inclusive and which draw on all the resources of their communities to ensure that the needs of diverse learners can be met effectively.

1. Inclusive education and human rights

At the heart of inclusive education is a commitment to seeing education as fundamental to the development both of individuals and of societies. Over the past fifty years, the international community has begun to develop a vision of education as, in the words of the recent report of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century (Delors, 1996), 'the necessary Utopia'. Education, the report asserts, is not simply a mechanism whereby individuals acquire a limited range of basic skills. Rather, it is a crucial factor in social and personal development, "an indispensable asset in [humankind's] attempt to attain the ideals of peace, freedom and justice" and,

> ...one of the principal means available to foster a deeper and more harmonious form of human development and thereby to reduce poverty, exclusion, ignorance, oppression and war.
>
> (Delors, 1996, p.11)

This vision means that education has to be seen, not as a privilege for the few, but as a right for all. Half a century ago, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) asserted that education was a basic human right – a right that was reaffirmed in the following terms by article 28 of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (United Nations, 1989):

> 1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular:
>
> (a) Make primary education compulsory and available free to all;
>
> (b) Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need...
>
> (e) Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates...
>
> 3. States Parties shall promote and encourage international cooperation in matters relating to education, in particular with a view to contributing to the elimination of ignorance and illiteracy throughout the world and facilitating access to scientific and technical knowledge and modern teaching methods. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.

These words constitute a powerful statement of intent. However, statements alone are not enough. The *Convention* already recognises that there are particular problems to be overcome in 'developing countries', in areas where 'ignorance and illiteracy' are widespread and in many countries where ensuring real access to educational opportunities for children who are poor or at particular risk of drop-out is a major challenge. For these reasons, the *Convention* has been followed up in recent years by a movement which has sought to turn the rights of the child to education into reality. This movement is Education for All (EFA), particularly as realised through the drive for inclusive education.

2. Education for All

The Education for All (EFA) movement is, as its name suggests, concerned with ensuring access to (at least) basic education for all. It was launched at the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 and culminated in the World Declaration on Education for All (the 'Jomtien Declaration').

The work of the conference was based on a gloomy analysis of the world-wide state of basic education. In many countries, the conference concluded, there were three fundamental problems:

- educational opportunities were limited, with too many people having little or no access to education;
- basic education was conceived narrowly in terms of literacy and numeracy, rather than more broadly as a foundation for a lifetime of learning and citizenship; and
- certain marginalised groups – disabled people, members of ethnic and linguistic minorities, girls and women, and so on – were at particular risk of being excluded from education altogether.

Moreover, the situation was getting worse rather than better. What was needed, therefore, was a world-wide movement,

> to meet the basic learning needs of all children, youth and adults, and to reverse the serious decline in basic education services observed in many countries during recent years.
>
> (Inter-Agency Commission, 1990, p.1)

This could not be achieved simply by persevering with the policies which had created this inadequate situation in the first place. Extending basic educational opportunities to *all* learners as of right, the conference concluded,

> ...requires more than a recommitment to basic education as it now exists. What is needed is an "expanded vision" that surpasses present resource levels, institutional structures, curricula, and conventional delivery systems while building on the best in current practices.
>
> (article 2.1)

The Jomtien Declaration goes on to set out (article 2.2) the main components of this 'expanded vision':

- universalising access to all children, youth and adults, and promoting equity – by, for instance, ensuring that girls and women and other under-served groups have access to basic education;
- focusing on learning acquisition and outcome – rather than simply on enrolment;
- broadening the means and scope of basic education – partly by ensuring the availability of universal primary education but also by calling upon families, communities, early childhood care, literacy programmes, non-formal education programmes, libraries, the media and a wide range of other 'delivery systems';
- enhancing the environment for learning – by ensuring that learners receive the nutrition, health care and general physical and emotional support they need to benefit from education; and
- strengthening partnerships – amongst all sub-sectors and forms of education, government departments, non-governmental organisations, the private sector, religious groups, local communities and, above all, families and teachers.

In other words, basic education is not simply about making schools available for those who are already able to access them. It is about being proactive in identifying the barriers some groups encounter in attempting to access educational opportunities. It is also about identifying all the resources available at national and community level and bringing them to bear on overcoming those barriers.

A decade after the Jomtien Declaration, its vision was reaffirmed by the World Education Forum meeting in Dakar to review the progress made so far towards Education for All (World Education Forum, 2000). In terms similar to those of the report of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, it asserted that

> Education is a fundamental human right. It is the key to sustainable development and peace and stability within and among countries, and thus an indispensable means for effective participation in the societies and economies of the twenty-first century, which are affected by rapid globalization.
>
> (World Education Forum, 2000, par. 6)

However, like the Jomtien Declaration, the Forum drew attention to the exclusionary processes which disadvantaged groups continued to experience and called for positive action to overcome them. In particular, it identified particular barriers experienced by women and girls, as well as ethnic minorities, and saw them as symptoms of a wider problem. Despite the powerful equal opportunities agenda of the EFA movement, governments and agencies, it felt, still tended to focus on the 'easy to reach' and to neglect,

> ...those excluded from a basic education, whether for social, economic or geographic reasons.
>
> (World Education Forum, 2000, *Notes*, 16)

It is for this reason that the Forum declared that Education for All,

> ...must take account of the needs of the poor and the disadvantaged, including working children, remote rural dwellers and nomads, and ethnic and linguistic minorities, children, young people and adults affected by conflict, HIV/AIDS, hunger and poor health; and those with special learning needs.
>
> (World Education Forum, 2000, *Notes,* 19)

It is in addressing these issues that inclusive education has a particular role to play.

3. Inclusive education

The major impetus for the inclusive education approach was given by the World Conference on Special Needs Education in 1994. In the words of its final report,

> More than 300 participants representing 92 governments and 25 international organizations met in Salamanca, Spain, from 7 to 10 June 1994 to further the objective of Education for All by considering the fundamental policy shifts required to promote the approach of inclusive education, namely enabling schools to serve all children, particularly those with special educational needs.
>
> (UNESCO, 1994, p. iii)

Although the immediate focus of the conference was on special needs education, its conclusion was that:

> Special needs education – an issue of equal concern to countries of the North and of the South – cannot advance in isolation. It has to form part of an overall educational strategy and, indeed, of new social and economic policies. It calls for major reform of the ordinary school.
>
> (UNESCO, 1994, p. iii-iv)

The Salamanca Conference – like the Jomtien Conference before it – was faced with a situation where Education for All was far from a reality and where children with special educational needs were one amongst many groups who experienced barriers to their education. These problems could not be solved simply by persevering with traditional policies. In particular, the barriers which many different groups encountered could not be overcome simply by developing separate systems and schools for children with special educational needs. Instead, a very different approach was needed which saw difference as normal and which tried to develop education systems which could respond effectively to diversity. As the conference argued,

> Every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs and therefore, if the right to education is to mean anything, education systems should be designed and educational programmes implemented, to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs.
>
> (UNESCO, 1994, p. viii)

This approach is, therefore, about developing 'inclusive' education systems. This can only happen, however, if ordinary schools become more inclusive – in other words, if they become more capable of educating all children in their communities. The conference argued, therefore, that 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 marginalized areas or groups.
>
> (UNESCO, 1994, *Framework for Action on Special Needs Education,* p.6)

These inclusive schools,

> ...must recognise and respond to the diverse needs of their students, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curricula, organizational arrangements, teaching strategies, resource use and partnerships with their communities.
>
> (UNESCO, 1994, *Framework for Action on Special Needs Education,* p.11-12)

Although the development of inclusive schools is a major challenge, the conference argued for it in the following way:

> Regular schools with [an] inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system.
>
> (UNESCO, 1994, *Statement,* p.ix)

As this passage indicates, the move towards inclusive schools can be justified on a number of grounds:

- There is an educational justification; the requirement for inclusive schools to educate all children together means that they have to develop ways of teaching that respond to individual differences and thus benefit *all* children.
- There is a *social* justification; inclusive schools are able to change attitudes to difference by educating all children together and form the basis for a just and non-discriminatory society.
- There is an *economic* justification; it is likely to be less costly to establish and maintain schools which educate all children together than to set up a complex system of different types of school specialising in different groups of children. If, of course, these inclusive schools offer an effective education to all of their students, then they are also a more *cost-effective* means of delivering Education for All.

3.1. *Inclusive education, disability and special educational needs*

Like Education for All, inclusive education is about ensuring the rights to education of all learners, regardless of their individual characteristics or difficulties, in order to build a more just society. However this means that inclusive education initiatives often have a particular focus on those groups who have traditionally been excluded from educational opportunities.

Amongst these vulnerable groups, children with disabilities and special educational needs are often the most marginalised within education systems and within society in general. Traditionally, they have experienced exclusion, discrimination and segregation from the mainstream and from their peers. They have often been placed in separate classes and schools or indeed, have been denied access to education of any sort. The inclusive education approach is particularly important for these groups.

The limitations on the educational opportunities available to these children is one of the considerations underpinning the UN *Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities* (Nations, 1993). Rule 6 not only affirms the equal rights of children, youth and adults with disabilities to education, but also states that education should be provided "in integrated school settings" and "in the general school setting". They also point to the link between an inclusive education system and wider community-based programmes for persons with disabilities. Both are aimed at mobilising community resources to provide cost-effective services and maintain the rights of persons with disabilities to remain in their communities.

Where countries have extensive special school systems, both the Standard Rules and the Salamanca Conference envisage that these will continue to make a contribution, at least for the time being. There will be limited circumstances in which a few students will be served best in special schools and classes. More important, special schools can play a vital part in supporting ordinary schools as they become more inclusive. However, where special schools do not already exist, the Salamanca Conference believed that countries would be best-advised to concentrate their resources on developing inclusive ordinary schools. As ordinary schools become more inclusive, moreover, the evidence is that the need for separate special schools is diminishing.

3.2 *Inclusive education and the social model of learning difficulties*

The inclusive education approach is informed by a wider change in the way that disability is understood. The traditional model of disability has focused on disabled people's impairments and has explained the difficulties they experience in their lives in terms of those impairments. This *medical* model sees disability as a 'personal tragedy' which limits the capacity of the disabled person to participate in the mainstream of society. It is the responsibility of the disabled person themselves to try to fit in with the world as they find it – a world built by non-disabled people to meet the needs of non-disabled people.

However, in the struggle of disabled people for acknowledgement of their rights to full participation, a newer, *social* model of disability has been formulated. This shifts attention from the 'personal tragedy' of the individual towards the way in which social environment within which disabled people have to live acts to exclude them from full participation. If someone has difficulty accessing public transport, or employment, or any other aspect of the social world which others take for granted, it is not simply because they

have a physical or sensory or intellectual impairment. Rather, it is because public transport is not designed to be sufficiently accessible, or because people with disabilities are systematically denied opportunities in the labour market. More generally, it is because societies are organised to meet the needs of the non-disabled majority rather than the disabled minority.

The inclusive education approach draws on the social model in understanding educational difficulties. Children who have impairments may well also experience difficulties in the education system; they may find some parts of the curriculum difficult to understand, for instance, or not be able to access oral or written instruction, or, indeed, not be able to access school buildings. However, the inclusive education approach suggests that these difficulties cannot be explained simply in terms of children's impairments. Instead, it is the features of the education system itself – badly-designed curricula, poorly-trained teachers, inappropriate medium of instruction, inaccessible buildings or whatever – that are creating 'barriers to learning' for these children. Under these circumstances, establishing or extending a separate special school sector does nothing to address the barriers that exist in ordinary schools, separates more children from their peers and families and, in any case, may be financially non-viable. A more appropriate response, therefore, is to understand what the barriers to learning are and to develop ordinary schools which work to remove these barriers and are capable of meeting these children's learning needs.

However, inclusive education is not concerned only with disabled children, or with finding an alternative to segregated special schooling. Many other groups – children living in poverty, children from ethnic and linguistic minorities, girls (in some societies), children from remote areas and so on – find learning difficult in ordinary schools as they are currently constituted. They too may find the curriculum uninspiring and the teaching demotivating, or be alienated by the culture of the school, or be unable to access the language of instruction, or experience any number of other barriers. The inclusive approach, therefore, seeks to understand these barriers and to develop ordinary schools which are capable of meeting these children's learning needs. Inclusive education, therefore is not simply about reforming special education and an inclusive school is not simply one which educates some disabled children. Rather, inclusive education is about reducing *all* types of barriers to learning and developing ordinary schools which are capable of meeting the needs of *all* learners. It is, indeed, part of a wider movement towards a more just society for *all* citizens.

3.3 Progress towards inclusive education

The agenda of inclusive education presents a considerable challenge. However, it is a challenge which countries have shown themselves able to meet. From the 1960s onwards, some countries – the Nordic nations in particular – had begun to develop education systems in which a wide range of children, including those with disabilities, were educated together. Many other countries followed their example in a more cautious manner and began to extend the range of children educated in ordinary schools.

The *Salamanca Statement and Framework* undoubtedly gave a boost to this process. Ninety-two governments participated in the Salamanca Conference and there have been governmental initiatives in many countries since that time. The president of Uganda, for instance, declared in 1997 that he would make education free for four children in each family and that priority should be given to disabled children and the girl child. Similarly, in China, the government aims to create 1.8 million places for disabled children in ordinary schools and to train up to 1 million teachers (UNESCO, 2000). In England, too, the

incoming government in 1997 signed up to the principles of Salamanca and launched a policy of moving towards inclusive education. What is clear is that a few countries can already claim to be well on the road to having an inclusive education system and that initiatives aimed at promoting a greater level of inclusion are under way in very many others. Inclusion is indeed, in the words of one review, 'a global agenda' (Pijl, Meijer, & Hegarty, 1997).

However, much remains to be done. The World Education Forum (2000), for instance points out that there are still more than 113 million children with no access to primary education and 880 million adults who are illiterate. The barriers to progress which are responsible for this situation, it argues, include:

- weak political will,
- insufficient financial resources and the inefficient use of those available,
- the burden of debt,
- inadequate attention to the learning needs of the poor and the excluded,
- a lack of attention to the quality of learning, and
- an absence of commitment to overcoming gender disparities.

For good reasons, much of the attention in the development of inclusive education to date has been focused on the school and, particularly, the classroom. However, many of the barriers which remain lie outside the school. They are at the level of national policy, of the structures of national systems of schooling and teacher training, of relationships between the education system and the communities it serves, of the management of budgets and resources.

Many of the resources on which inclusive education can be built likewise lie outside the mainstream school and classroom. They lie, for instance, in families and communities. In countries with a significant infrastructure of special education, they may also lie in special schools and teachers. The resources that are tied up in these schools and in the skills that specialist teachers and other professionals possess are too valuable to disregard. However, the development of more inclusive systems means that they have to change the focus of their work so that they can support children in their ordinary schools and maintain them in their communities. Indeed, the greatest contribution of policy-makers and administrators may be in *reorienting* the special education system so that it serves the purposes of inclusive education.

Achieving this reorientation constitutes a major challenge for policy-makers and administrators. It is the aim of the Open File on Inclusive Education to provide some starting points for those who wish to take up that challenge.

IMPLICATIONS AND QUESTIONS

Users may find it helpful to consider the following questions about the education system with which they are working:

- **Is the education system based on an explicit notion of the rights of individuals to education? How are these rights defined? Is there need for a debate about them to be started?**
- **Does the education system deliver Education for All? Who currently has limited access to educational opportunities?**
- **Are the full implications of inclusive education understood? Is it seen as about developing schools which meet the needs of all learners rather than as being only about the reform of special education?**
- **What barriers to learning are there in the education system currently and which groups experience them most? What contribution could inclusive education make to increasing educational opportunities for these groups?**
- **Educational, social and economic justifications are offered for inclusive education. Which of these is most powerful in the current situation?**
- **What other rationales for inclusive education might be relevant?**

1

TOPIC 1: Managing the Development of Inclusive Policies and Practices

KEY ISSUES

- The move to more inclusive education does not happen overnight. It requires a process of ongoing change based on a clearly-articulated set of principles and should be seen in terms of a system-wide development.
- Initiating change involves mobilising opinion, building consensus, carrying out a situation analysis, reforming legislation and supporting local projects.
- It is often necessary to change administrative structures, for instance, to unite the management of special and mainstream education.
- The process of change itself requires financial, human and intellectual resources. It is important to identify these resources, and to build partnerships with stake-holders and with international organisations and NGOs.

RATIONALE

This topic is concerned with the ways in which national systems can manage the development of more inclusive policies and practices. There are good reasons why education systems do not 'become inclusive' overnight:

- Even though some individuals, groups and institutions may be highly committed, others will be reluctant or unprepared; a process of change will be necessary.
- Inclusive education is about removing barriers and increasing educational opportunities. This does not happen through legislation or organisational change alone, but is an on-going process.

Countries therefore need to develop strategies for managing the process of change over sustained periods of time.

The precise starting point for each national system will, of course, be different. Countries have to be prepared to analyse their own situations, identify barriers and facilitators of inclusion and plan a process of development that is appropriate for them. This topic is intended to support policy-makers and administrators in this process. It is particularly concerned with the broad preparatory measures that countries might undertake and with the ways in which they can begin to build up some support for the notion of inclusion.

It deals with three main issues:

- initiating change
- changing administrative structures and
- mobilising resources.

EXAMPLES OF STRATEGIES

1 Initiating change

1.1 Developing a philosophy of inclusion

The transition to inclusive education is not simply a technical or organisational change. It is a movement in a clear philosophical direction. At some early point, it is important to think through the principles which will guide the process of change.

The Introduction to the Open File refers to a range of international declarations, conventions and reports relevant to inclusive education. These form a set of resources on which users can draw in defining their own philosophical positions. However, international

declarations have to be interpreted in the light of local circumstances and many countries have found it useful to formulate an explicit statement of the principles which guide their own transition towards greater inclusion. Such statements have been made more powerful where they have been incorporated into legislation, as in the case of South Africa:

> ✓ In South Africa the transition process has been based on clear principles which have been built into legislation and other government documentation. The notion of equality of rights is built into the 1996 constitution. Alongside it is a constitutional commitment to education for all. The 1995 White Paper on Education and Training and 1996 South African Schools Act translate this commitment into more specific terms. They set out an obligation on the state to protect the right to education and training for all citizens, irrespective of differences such as race, class and gender. They also set out an obligation on public schools to provide quality education for all. A report on *Quality Education for All: Overcoming barriers to learning and development* (Department of Education, Pretoria, 1997) sets out a rights-based approach to the reform of special education in South Africa and the development of a more inclusive system of schooling.

Even where radical legislative reform is not desirable or practicable, statements of principles at government level can generate a debate around inclusive education and begin the process of consensus-building. In England, for instance, the transition to greater inclusion is not seen as needing significant legislative reform. Nonetheless, the government produced a Green Paper (DfEE, 1997) which contains a declaration of its commitment to inclusive education and to the Salamanca Statement. This has stimulated a good deal of activity around inclusion.

1.2 Inclusion as a system-wide development

The development of inclusive education demands wide-ranging changes involving the whole of the education system. It is important that the move towards inclusive education is not undertaken in isolation, for two reasons in particular:

- inclusive education is difficult to realise where other aspects of the educational and social systems remain unreformed and exclusive in their effects; and
- in terms of generating a momentum behind the inclusive education movement, it is easier to build consensus where inclusion can be seen as part of a wider attempt to create a more effective education system or a more inclusive society.

There are a number of ways in which the development of inclusive education can become part of wider changes in the education system or in society as a whole:

- *Inclusive education can be part of a reform of the education system as a whole.* In countries such as England, South Africa and Spain, inclusive education has been at the core of a wider reform to enhance the system's effectiveness. It has therefore been seen as a means of improving the quality of education for all learners and not just those with disabilities or special educational needs. This is important in order to avoid the danger of inclusion being seen as something that does not concern the wider education system and that does not, therefore, merit national energies and resources.

- *Inclusive education can be part of a reform of the position of disabled people and other marginalised groups in society as a whole.* In Chile, for instance, the provision of all services to persons with disabilities is covered by legislation (The Social Integration of Persons with Disabilities Act, 1994). The inclusion of disabled children in schools is in part governed by regulations associated with this more wide-ranging Act so that inclusion is seen as a social rather than a purely educational policy. Similarly, in Brazil the commitment to inclusion is linked to an attempt to address issues of poverty, illiteracy and marginalisation.
- *Inclusive education can be part of more fundamental democratic reforms.* In many countries in transition, for instance, it is not possible to separate the move to inclusion from a wider effort to rebuild democracy and refocus on human rights. The inclusive education movement can then call upon the values, energies and momentum which underpin this political and social restructuring.

1.3 Mobilising opinion and building consensus

The move towards inclusion is not always widely understood or welcomed where people are used to segregated systems or where educators are fearful of their ability to cope with diversity. It is necessary, therefore, to mobilise opinion in favour of inclusion and to begin a process of consensus-building at an early stage.

Most of the ideas in this topic have an impact in these areas. However, there are also some specific strategies which have been employed:

- *Advocacy and parental groups* often run ahead of public and professional opinion as a whole, have a vested interest in changing that opinion and sometimes have a network of international contacts capable of bringing new ideas into a country. They can be given legitimacy and support by receiving government funding, being commissioned to carry out tasks (research, resource production, conference organisation) by government, or simply by senior political figures appearing on platforms with their leaders.

  ✓ In Ethiopia, the National Associations of the Blind (ENAB) the Deaf (ENAD) and Support Organisation of Mentally Handicapped Children (SOOM) have made several attempts to bring about a positive impact on the attitude of both policy makers and the general public by organising awareness-raising seminars and workshops and by using the media. A committee organised by the National Association of the Blind consists of people from the Association, from the Ministry of Education and from Addis Ababa University. It examines critical issues surrounding blind students and teachers and suggests areas of intervention. It has direct contact with the Minister of Education.

- *Professional organisations* are likely to have mixed views but are important in the consensus-building process. They can be involved in the decision-making process and encouraged to undertake their own publicity and dissemination events. It seems to be particularly important to ensure that groups from a range of relevant disciplines are involved (i.e. health, social services, administration and not just education). All of these groups play a part in the delivery of inclusive provision and the diversity of views is likely to promote a genuine debate and break down set positions.

- *Researchers and research students* can play a part in shaping opinion and in providing the data on which any reform will have to be built. They can analyse and publicise the problems of existing systems. They can also find practicable local solutions to difficulties in the transition to more inclusive provision, particularly if they work closely with teachers and policy-makers. Many countries send research students abroad for training. This can be an important source of new ideas if they are encouraged to study inclusive practices in their host countries and then replicate their studies on their return.
- It is often possible to identify *key opinion-formers* such as respected academics, teachers' leaders and leaders of voluntary organisations. They can be involved in decision-making and in dissemination events.
- Opinion can be mobilised by *establishing partnerships and networking with other agencies*. Facilitating dialogue between specialist organisations and ordinary schools can be important in breaking down the technical 'mystique' associated with special education and introducing a broader philosophy. This might be done by establishing a forum for discussion.
- It may be crucial to *mobilise education authorities and service-providers at local level*. These are likely to be key players because of their ability to work directly with schools and to allocate resources to them. In some cases, inclusion initiatives start at this local level and the task of decision-makers and administrators at the centre is to support these initiatives and to promote their dissemination to other areas.
- The involvement of *those responsible for training teachers and other professionals* is important in opinion-forming. The incorporation of inclusive principles and practices into professional training does not bring about overnight change but builds a corps of inclusively-oriented professionals in the country.
- *Key channels of communication* can be identified and activated. The principal channel is the mass media. A media management strategy may therefore be necessary. Other channels include professional journals, videos and specially-organised conferences and dissemination events. Such events are often used to celebrate successes in inclusive education (the conclusion of projects or research programmes, for instance) rather than simply to advocate inclusive education in the abstract. As policy is being developed, the processes of dissemination and consultation can be combined in the same events, enhancing the sense of ownership which stakeholders feel.

1.4 Developing a situation analysis

In moving from statements of principles to the practical implementation of inclusive education, an important early step is to carry out a thorough situation analysis. This focuses on identifying both the barriers to inclusion (ideological and practical) and the opportunities within the existing system for developing inclusive practices.

Such analyses are sometimes carried out either entirely within the framework of government (i.e. by government officials and advisers) or entirely outside such a framework (e.g. by independent 'think tanks' or lobby groups). However, there is much to be said for a mid-point position in which a group is established which operates within a remit given to it by government but which retains important elements of independence. Such groups have been important instruments of policy development in countries as diverse as Canada, England and South Africa.

The members of these groups have to:

- possess the appropriate *skills and knowledge* for them to be able to carry out their task; and
- be *representative of the key stakeholders* in the field; this is important both to ensure the credibility of their recommendations and to help with building consensus around any actions which flow from their report.

Politicians may be members of such groups or may remain at 'arm's length' so that the group is seen to be independent.

Typically, such groups would have a clear remit to carry out a situational analysis and produce detailed recommendations for action. They may:

- gather evidence from expert witnesses and representatives of stakeholder groups
- carry out field visits to assess the situation in the country
- draw upon international evidence
- analyse data supplied by government departments and, in some cases,
- commission original research and/or surveys of stakeholder opinion.

1.5 The role of legislation

Legislation can play an important part in the transition process. It tends to have four main roles:

- *the articulation of principles and rights* in order to create a framework for inclusion;
- *the reform of elements in the existing system which constitute major barriers to inclusion* (for instance policies which do not allow children from specific groups – such as children with disabilities or from different language groups – to attend their neighbourhood school);
- *the mandating of fundamental inclusive practices* (requiring, for instance, that schools should educate all children in their communities); and
- *the establishment of procedures and practices throughout the education system which are likely to facilitate inclusion* (for instance, the formulation of a flexible curriculum or the introduction of community governance).

There are some principles which seem to govern the way these roles should be approached:

- Countries tend to introduce legislation at different points in the development process. The more powerful a barrier existing legislation constitutes to inclusion, the earlier it will be necessary to introduce legislative reform. However, there seems to be a consensus that *legislation should not be the **first** step in the process*. It should follow preparatory stages where a debate around inclusion has been started and some momentum has been established behind the inclusion movement.
- It seems to be important *not to move too quickly to highly detailed legislation* which may, in years to come, operate as a strait-jacket on further developments. In Chile, for instance, four levels of integration were mandated by legislation. However, it is already becoming obvious that this has created a situation in which students who might benefit from the highest level of integration are

actually being confined to the lowest level. In order to avoid such problems, therefore, it might be better to begin with generalised legislation embodying broad principles and removing the principal barriers to inclusion. Experiments and other developments can then take place which can, if necessary, be formalised in more detail in subsequent legislation.

- It also seems to be important early in the process to *review existing legislation to see what barriers it presents to inclusion.* In many industrialised countries, for instance, legislation tended to require children with learning difficulties and disabilities to attend segregated special schools in order to receive appropriate education. The first moves towards inclusion, therefore, involved removing this requirement. In many countries, barriers to inclusion exist not only in legislation relating to special education, but in more general educational legislation, relating to curriculum, admissions policies, funding and so on. Some critics in countries as different as England and South Africa, for instance, have argued that those countries' ambitious aims regarding inclusion demand a review of the system of school funding and admissions since this produces considerable differences in the resources available to, and difficulties faced by schools in different areas.
- It is useful to *combine fairly general legislation with more detailed regulation and guidance,* since these can be changed more rapidly in the light of experience. Wherever possible, these should be practically-focused with real examples. In Romania, for instance, the Ministry of Education has overseen groups of teachers, headteachers and academics in developing sets of 'success criteria' for inclusive schools. In England, the government formulated a 'Code of Practice' setting out the ways in which regular schools should meet students' special needs. In response to requests from schools, this has now been revised to shift the balance from procedural regulation to practical guidance.

One key task which may be necessary is unifying the legislative framework which governs regular and special education. In many countries, special and regular education are covered by separate legislation, are administered by separate sections or departments at national and local level, have separate systems of training and funding and have distinct curricula and assessment procedures. Indeed, some learners' development may be governed by Health or Social Services legislation rather than by educational legislation. In such cases, a necessary early step in the development process may be to unify the two systems within a common administrative and legislative framework.

✓ The Netherlands has historically been one of the more segregated countries of western Europe, with all the divisions between special and regular education noted above. In recent years, however, the government has established an integration programme – 'Together to School Again' – aimed at promoting inclusive practices, building consensus, developing teachers' skills and awareness, co-ordinating a situational analysis of barriers and opportunities. Legislative reform has been part of this process. Special education has been brought within the framework of mainstream primary education and a system has been set up for devolving funds to clusters of regular and special schools so that they can make their own, local decisions about the balance between special school and ordinary school placements for learners with difficulties. Full inclusion, therefore, is not mandatory and the development of this new system is not problem-free. However, an enabling framework has been created within which experiments and developments in inclusion can be facilitated.

1.6 Developing inclusive education through small scale initiatives

Macro-level change can be difficult and slow, especially in countries where economic resources are scarce. In some countries, there are particular difficulties because universal education has not been achieved and/or there is a lack of structural and administrative cohesion in the system. In these situations, macro-level efforts may be impossible and micro-level efforts become crucial in initiating change towards inclusive education. Indeed, small-scale initiatives can be essential early steps in all national contexts, acting as a catalyst in changing policy within the wider educational system and developing inclusive practices without having to wait for changes at national policy level.

The following example from India is of a small-scale initiative which has had a multiplying ripple effect. The initiative provided much needed services but also showed that a move towards more inclusive education is possible even where it is not part of a systemic change.

✓ A non-governmental organisation in Mumbai, the Spastics Society of India, set out nearly three decades ago to open special schools for children who had no school to attend. The impact has been considerable. This move had a ripple effect and more schools were opened in different parts of the country.

Today, through the effort of non-governmental organisations, more than 16 States out of the 30 in India have set up schools for children with disabilities who were previously out of the school system. The Spastics Society of India, Mumbai, has now moved away from the ideology of segregated special schools for children with disabilities to the inclusion of all children facing barriers to learning. It has launched a National Resource Centre for Inclusion - India (NRCI-India) in partnership with Canada.

A process of desegregation and networking with existing agencies with similar goals has begun at the various centres all over the city of Mumbai and a much broader definition of disability has been introduced. Children suffering from acute social and economic constraints, living in slum settlements and on the streets, have been included into existing special schools, thus demonstrating what inclusive classrooms could look like. More than 1000 children, with a special focus on girls and on children with disability, are attending inclusive classrooms. These are within the Spastics Society of India schools as well as within community schools set up in the slum settlements of the city. Meanwhile changes at a macro-level are being targeted in special and general teacher education in order to have a wider impact on inclusive practices all over the country by changing pedagogy.

This example shows the power of micro-level efforts. It also shows how inclusive educational practices have to be context- and culture-specific. In the transition period, each country's initiatives for policy change, combined with grassroots practices embedded in the local context, culture and environment can spearhead a wider systemic change.

Even in very segregated systems, there always tend to be examples here and there of schools or teachers adopting more inclusive practices or of communities working to develop more inclusive schools. Such isolated examples can be encouraged through professional support and additional funding, particularly if there is an enabling legislative framework. They can eventually become demonstration projects from which the rest of the

system can learn. It may also be possible to involve other stakeholder groups – teacher trainers, professionals from other agencies and so on - in such local projects.

✓ In Peru, the Ministry of Education, UNESCO and DANIDA have co-operated in an inclusion project which has elements of both top-down and bottom-up approaches. A number of schools have been identified to participate in the project, partly on the basis of the commitment of staff to inclusion. The schools have been given training and ongoing support in order to set up integrated classes in each school. These schools serve as demonstration projects which other teachers can visit and where they can be trained.

Work in the community has gone alongside work in schools. A process of awareness-raising has taken place through meetings and workshops where parents of learners with difficulties have talked about their experiences. The aim is to use parents as change agents in transforming the attitudes of the community towards disability.

Partly as a result of these projects, a new national law was passed in December 1998 setting out a framework of inclusive principles for the education of disabled and other learners in vulnerable conditions. The intention is that this will be followed by more detailed educational legislation and by the 'rolling out' of the demonstration projects to schools elsewhere in the country.

1.7 Success factors in local projects

The key factors in the success of such projects appear to be:

- working with schools and areas where there is a likelihood of success (e.g. because of adequate facilities, prior experience in similar work, well-trained and -motivated staff);
- working with schools and headteachers which already have high reputations so that inclusion is not seen simply as an option for schools that are inadequate in other aspects of their work;
- supporting project schools through expertise and resources;
- building a 'roll-out' strategy which disseminates the initiative to other schools; and
- ensuring sustainability.

These factors are illustrated in the following example:

✓ In Timisoara, Romania, an inclusion project was launched in one school by the Ministry of Education in co-operation with UNICEF and a UNESCO consultant. However, this was soon joined by a second school where the headteacher had been stimulated by workshops on the UNESCO Teacher Education Resource Pack: Special Needs in the Classroom. She introduced the workshop into school and drew up a development plan to create a 'school for all'.

Both of the schools already had sound reputations for the high attainments of their students and their headteachers were well-respected. They had some pre-existing experience in inclusive practices, had additional facilities (such as a speech therapy room) and were supported with additional resources from the education authority.

The second school has now gone on to be a centre for training and development work. It has offered courses in inclusive education for teachers from local schools, produced resource materials and organised workshops for school inspectors. In each of these activities it has had support from local education authorities and UNICEF.

Topic 9 provides more ideas on building 'bottom-up' strategies by working with schools.

2 Changing administrative structures

2.1 Merging separate structures

In many countries, the systems through which education is administered are themselves barriers to inclusive practices. It is not just the legislative systems that are different. Often, special and mainstream education are administered through different departments or teams, with different decision-making processes, regulations, funding arrangements and so on.

✓ A UNESCO *Review of the Present Situation of Special Education* (1995) covering issues related to policies, legislation, administration, found that in the majority (96%) of the 63 countries that participated in the study the national ministry of education holds sole responsibility for administration and organisation of services for children with special educational needs. However, in four percent of countries, children with special educational needs are not the responsibility of the national ministry of education but of social welfare or health. In these countries the predominant source of funding for educating children with disabilities continues to be NGOs.

An early step, in situations such as this, might be the incorporation of special and regular education within a single administrative structure. Such a development has recently taken place in Peru, where special education has come within the ambit of primary education for administrative purposes. This seems to have facilitated the development of inclusion projects.

2.2 Creating a focus

Not all countries, of course, already have an established administrative unit for special education within their ministry of education. Given the need to merge administrative structures as far as possible, it would not seem sensible to establish one where none exists. However, it is necessary to create a focus for activities relating to marginalised learners without separating it off into an entirely different structure. This might be done by allocating responsibilities to the most appropriate existing unit or directorate, designating one or more officials to co-ordinate, lead and manage initiatives and gradually enabling inclusive concerns to permeate other directorates.

2.3 *Devolved management*

In some countries, the move to more inclusive education has been accompanied by a move towards devolved management structures. This devolution seems to encourage flexibility and risk-taking. It also counteracts the tendency of centralised bureaucracies to set up rigid decision-making procedures. Two levels of devolution tend to be used:

- *Decentralisation to the local level* (e.g. the municipality or district). Local administrations, managing both the ordinary and special schools in a given area are able to respond flexibly to local circumstances, and to take into account the needs of particular groups or even individual students. They can avoid making decisions on the basis of inflexible systems of assessment and categorisation. However, they are large enough to generate some economies of scale, co-ordinate local services, offer targeted training and act as a mechanism for disseminating innovations rapidly. They are also capable of being more responsive than national or regional governments to the needs of their communities.
- *Decentralisation to the school level.* More recently, a number of countries have opted for what in the USA is called 'site-based management' and in England 'local management of schools'. This means that many decision-making powers and substantial amounts of the education budget, are devolved to individual schools. This frees schools up to manage their own resources in order to meet the needs of learners in their communities, to take risks in developing inclusive education programmes and to be proactive in co-ordinating other services and mobilising community resources in the interests of their students.

Decentralisation to both of these levels carries with it risks as well as opportunities:

- Schools and local authorities can be *resisters* of change as well as leaders of change.
- Devolving power to schools and local administrations invites them to pursue their own *self-interest* rather than the implementation of national policy. This is a particular problem if national policy itself is ambiguous or has multiple, conflicting aims.
- The diversity which results from devolution inevitably raises questions about *equity.* It is likely that levels of inclusion will vary significantly from school to school and district to district. Levels of resourcing may vary similarly, unless national funding mechanisms are sensitive to local needs.

✓ One solution to the problems of decentralisation is for the state to adopt minimum standards with which schools and districts must comply. In Chile, for instance, each school is required to develop its own curricular plans to meet the particular needs of local communities. However, national decrees set out a curriculum framework and local developments must meet or exceed the minimum standards which this framework requires.

In England, local authorities are free to develop their own policies on special needs education and on provision for marginalised groups of learners. However, their policies are vetted and approved by the national government, which also makes public information on how effective those policies are in promoting inclusion.

3 Mobilising resources for inclusion

It is important for those wishing to develop more inclusive provision to find ways of resourcing the transition process itself. This is different from the establishment of long-term funding mechanisms (see Topic 7) since it is more concerned with initiating new projects and developments. It is also about finding a range of resources - human, intellectual and material, as well as financial – that can support the change process.

3.1 Identifying resources

An early step in the transition process might be the identification of a pool of resources which will be available to support the implementation of legislative change or to pump-prime experimental developments. These may be funded by 'new' money allocated from the national budget or result from the 'ear-marking' of an element in the existing education budget. Within devolved systems, a requirement for the creation of similar resource-pools can be placed on local authorities and/or schools. Alternatively, access to the national pool can be made dependent on the pursuit of inclusive policies.

✓ In Spain, when the first inclusive education projects started, schools were invited to present plans for consideration by the Education Ministry. The successful plans received additional funding from the national government, thus creating an incentive for schools to adopt more inclusive policies.

Similarly, in Chile, the passing of legislation protecting the rights of disabled people was accompanied by the creation of a national disability fund. Schools, local authorities and community groups are able to present projects for this fund in order to resource more inclusive educational provision.

3.2 Building partnerships

In many countries, central government will not have the financial resources to sustain the change process, while in *all* countries, central government will need to mobilise human and intellectual resources that it does not directly control. This is even more true where the impetus for inclusive education comes from outside government. It is essential, therefore, that partnerships are formed between key stakeholders who can support the transition process. These include:

- all parents
- teachers and other education professionals
- professionals in other services who will be affected by the move to inclusion (e.g. Health, Social Services)
- teacher trainers and researchers
- national, local and school-level administrators and managers
- civic groups in the community
- members of minority groups at risk of exclusion

Although individual partners may only have limited resources to contribute, together they may be able to support significant change. An example from Brazil illustrates what is possible:

✓ The Children's Pastoral in Favour of Life (a religious organisation) has developed the project 'Life' in partnership with the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte, the State University, industries, Social Services and rural associations. It aims at seeking favourable conditions for the physical, emotional, intellectual and social development of children from 0 to 6. The partnership does this by financing equipment and human resources to support educational interventions e.g. by organising educational toy-making workshops for parents, by training community leaders and co-ordinators in courses such as alternative nutrition and by organising courses to prepare people to participate in community councils in both rural and urban peripheral areas.

The danger of targeting resources to projects, of course, is that provision might become dependent on continued external resourcing. In this case, however, the partnership is engaged in capacity-building so that it can ultimately become self-sustaining. It is also easy to see how all stakeholders in the partnership stand to gain from its activities and are therefore more likely to be committed to its success.

3.3 Top-down and bottom-up approaches to involvement

One way to involve these stakeholders is through a 'top-down' approach in which national government gives a vigorous lead, articulates fundamental principles and disseminates those principles to partner groups. However, this 'top-down' approach has its limitations. In particular, it may only reach limited numbers of partners and it puts the onus on the government to 'sell' its policies to groups who have had only a limited role in formulating them.

An alternative is to take a more 'bottom-up' approach. This means enabling partners to be involved in developing examples of inclusive education and, subsequently, to have a real role in formulating policy.

✓ In Mumbai, the National Resource Centre for Inclusion – India held training workshops for parents in inclusive education and human rights, The aim was to demystify special needs education and inclusive education and empower parents to be active partners. In the workshops, parents and professionals were not segregated in different groups, but worked together. Parents were encouraged to work out their anxieties and fears and play a critical role in decision making. Empowerment and the strength to refuse suggestions were built over a period of time. Now it is parents who identify the schools they would like their children to attend. 75% of the inclusion achieved by the Centre this year has been initiated and accomplished by parents.

In some countries, there is already close co-operation between parents and the authorities in developing community-based programmes for disabled children. A logical next step is for such parents to become involved in supporting inclusive education projects in schools. Sometimes, parents of children with difficulties can find themselves in dispute with schools and authorities as they press for better provision. In some cases such parents – and the parental organisations which represent them – have been invited into the policy-formulation process. They might be involved simply in negotiating provision for their child, or in becoming part of schools' governing body, or in joining local or national policy-review groups. In one local authority in England, for instance, parents of children with disabilities were elected to office and introduced radical inclusive education policies across the whole area as a result of their experiences with their own children.

Where parents lack the confidence and skills to participate in such development, it might be necessary to undertake some developmental activities with them. This might mean creating networks of parents who can act as mutual support groups, or training parents in skills to work with their own children, or acting as parental advocates in their dealings with schools and authorities. (Further possibilities for partnership with parents are presented in Topic 5).

One further advantage of 'bottom-up' approaches is that the range of individuals and groups who can initiate the move towards more inclusive practices is extended. Sometimes, as the example below shows, the involvement of a single individual can have an important impact.

✓ In one part of Brazil, an army sergeant initiated a literacy programme using army premises. He was highly proactive in persuading students to participate and in persuading farmers to enrol their employees. He also secured funding for the project from local businesses. Within two years, the programme has expanded to that it has halved the rate of illiteracy in ten cities.

3.4 Involving international organisations and NGOs

International organisations and NGOs can play a range of roles in the transition to inclusion. They can:

- help align national developments with current international thinking
- provide access to international expertise and experience
- work at national level with ministries in formulating inclusive education policies
- support inclusive education projects with advice and resources in order to catalyse national developments and
- support the implementation of national inclusive education policy with advice and resources.

✓ The joint Indo-Canadian National Resource Centre for Inclusion (NRCI) initiative is an example of effective international partnership (see above).

The Centre has three major activities: a Policy Studies and Change Unit which will be directed towards the development of an Indian national policy on inclusive education; a Demonstration Resource Unit with a mandate to examine and develop pedagogical practices on inclusion in the specific context of India; and a Public Education and Social and Community Development Unit which will ensure that information on policy and practice

concerning effective, inclusive education is made broadly available to policy makers, educators, parents and other stakeholders in education throughout the sub-continent. The centre goal is to support India's social and economic policy reforms within a human rights context.

Although keeping pace with international developments in the field, it is working specifically in the context and culture of India. This initiative with an international partner has a special micro/macro-level thrust. The Demonstration Resource Centre at a micro-level will provide inclusive classrooms and the Policy Unit will move towards macro level pedagogic change. Meanwhile, the Public Education Unit is moving towards mass media sensitisation and awareness programmes.

There are, however, some problems which may arise in working with these organisations:

- International agendas may be imported into a country without sufficient thought as to how they need to be reinterpreted in the light of that country's situation.
- Demonstration projects and other initiatives may be dependent on a level of resourcing which is not sustainable so that they cannot be 'rolled out' throughout the national system.
- Excellent initiatives may take place in isolation and never be fully incorporated into national policy and practice.

The key to avoiding these dangers seems to be for a genuine partnership to be formed between the international organisation and the national government and for there to be a clear plan for the role each will play in the transition process.

✓ In Lesotho the commitment to inclusion came very clearly from the national government, though the resources to implement that commitment were not available. It was the role of international organisations, therefore, to support the implementation of a policy that had already been formulated internally.

Similarly, in South Africa, use has been made of international resource persons to work with teachers, parents, government officials and others. However, the agenda to which those experts contribute is one that has been formulated within the country itself rather than one which they have imported from outside. The consequence is that their contributions have been interpreted carefully in the light of national priorities.

3.5 Making the most of limited resources

A theme which is common to many countries in the transition process is that the development of inclusive provision does not necessarily require large amounts of new money and other resources. The key factors seem to be that:

- existing funding is redirected towards developmental projects
- such developments become self-sustaining in the long term and
- incentives are built into resourcing mechanisms for schools, local authorities and others to involve themselves in inclusive developments.

IMPLICATIONS AND QUESTIONS

Although we have reported in this topic a series of strategies which countries can pursue in managing the transition to inclusive education, this process is not easy to set out sequentially and there is no single 'recipe' of steps to take which all countries should follow. Some countries (South Africa, Chile, parts of Europe, for instance) are undergoing rapid and wholesale social and political change of which inclusive education is simply a part. Other countries (such as the countries of western Europe) are involved in much more limited changes and have relatively high levels of available resources. Other countries again (such as many of the countries of Africa and the Indian sub-continent) are undertaking the transition to inclusive education in the context of strictly limited resources and as part of an attempt to extend basic education to groups who are currently excluded.

What matters, therefore, is that each country develops a clear analysis of its own situation in terms of the direction it wishes to pursue, the obstacles in it way and the opportunities that present themselves. The following questions may be useful starting points for thinking about these issues:

- **Is there a clearly-articulated set of principles on which the change process can be based?**
- **How can the development of inclusive education be linked to wider change efforts?**
- **How can opinion be mobilised in favour of inclusive education?**
- **How could a situation analysis be drawn up, and who could be involved in this process?**
- **What legislative obstacles are there to the development of inclusive education? How and when does legislation need to be changed?**
- **What local initiatives are under way and/or could be supported? How could these be 'rolled out' as the basis for wider developments?**
- **How far do existing administrative structures create barriers to more inclusive education? Is there an appropriate administrative focus for the change? What restructuring is necessary?**
- **What resources are available to support the transition process? Who are the key stakeholders and what partnerships could be formed to support change?**
- **How can international organisations and NGOs be involved in the transition process?**

2

TOPIC 2: Professional Development for Inclusive Education

KEY ISSUES

- Professional development needs to be seen as part of a whole-system approach to change.
- School-based training, aimed at supporting school development, can be particularly powerful in the early stages of the move towards more inclusive education.
- Where training resources are scarce, cascade models can enable training to be disseminated throughout the system.
- Where there are logistical problems in giving teachers access to training, distance learning can be important.
- At some point, it will be necessary to review the structures of teacher education. In particular, it will be necessary to set up a 'hierarchy' of training opportunities, so that all teachers know something about barriers to learning and some teachers have the opportunity to develop further expertise.
- It will be necessary to give special educators access to training which helps them reorient their roles towards working in inclusive settings.
- Teacher trainers also may need opportunities for reorienting their role, particularly where mainstream and special education training have traditionally been separate from each other.
- Training efforts need to be sustained over time in a planned, systematic manner.

RATIONALE

This topic deals with how professional development for teachers can be organised in order to support an inclusive education system. Professional development includes both initial training and the continuing development that takes place throughout a teacher's career. It takes place through formal types of training – leading, perhaps to diplomas/or other certification from Universities and Teacher Training Institutions – and a through less formal activities that take place on an occasional basis.

For all countries, teachers are the most costly – and most powerful – resource that can be deployed in the education system. The development of the teaching force is, therefore, crucial, particularly in countries where other kinds of resource are relatively scarce. As systems become more inclusive, professional development is particularly important because of the major new challenges that face both ordinary school teachers – who have to respond to a greater diversity of student needs – and special educators – who find the context and focus of their work changing in major ways. The key issues for professional development seem to be these:

- In inclusive approaches, special educators spend more of their time working in ordinary schools and supporting the teachers in those schools. They have to develop a new range of skills in consultancy, the mainstream curriculum, inclusive classroom practices and so on.
- If teachers are to be trained in inclusive approaches, then their training programmes also have to be organised on inclusive lines. The rigid separation between mainstream education and special needs education programmes has to be replaced by more integrated programmes or more flexible pathways through programmes.
- In order to train teachers in inclusive approaches, teacher trainers themselves have to understand inclusive practice. They have to develop a greater knowledge of mainstream education and, in particular, of the sorts of practices that are appropriate in inclusive classrooms
- Inclusive approaches are based on sets of attitudes and values as well as on pedagogical knowledge and skills. Both initial and in-service training, therefore, have to provide opportunity for reflection and debate on these matters.

EXAMPLES OF STRATEGIES

1 A whole-system approach

Countries find themselves in very different situations in terms of their existing professional development provision. In some countries, there are extensive and well-resourced programmes which simply need to be reoriented towards inclusive ends; in other countries, training is patchy, mainstream educators in particular may be trained only to a relatively low level and the need is to establish effective programmes in the context of limited resources. Despite these differences, however, there are a number of approaches which seem to be common across nearly all countries as they move towards greater inclusion:

It seems to be important not to rely too heavily on short training inputs as the only motor for change. Countries have found it much more effective to ensure that changes in professional development are sustained over time and that they are accompanied by changes in other aspects of the system – funding support, for instance, or assessment procedures – so that newly-trained teachers are enabled to work on the application of new practices. For this reason, all the developments outlined in this Open File can be seen as essential complements to the impact of training.

In some countries, training is built into an overall programme of change on an area-by-area basis

✓ In India, the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) has encouraged districts to bring together existing resources for promoting inclusive education. These include extensive in-service training programmes for teachers. All DPEP teachers, for instance, are sensitised in disability issues. In collaboration with the NGO sector, DPEP schemes for increasing the basic competencies of all school students have been implemented. These include continuous assessment rather than end-of the year examination, innovative, culture-specific and environmentally suitable teaching and learning material, easy to follow textbooks and a focus on skills.

One issue which this approach has highlighted is that of 'training overload'. Due to a very high frequency of training workshops, teachers have become wary and the retention rates and effectiveness of the workshops have not been evaluated formally. Despite this, the programme has had a marked impact in schools and classrooms and in most villages there is at least an 80% reported improvement in reading and writing competencies.

In contexts where there is scarcity of expertise, initiating action along these lines could provide experiences on which to build more widespread change.

The following example also illustrates whole system approach in action:

✓ The Lao Integrated Education Project was set up in 1995 to promote the inclusion of learners with disabilities, those in isolated rural areas and those from very poor families in an education system with limited resources. It was also anticipated that this would reduce the massive failure, repetition and drop-out rates by improving the quality of basic education.

Traditional training techniques were inappropriate because there was no adequate expertise in addressing these issues anywhere in the education system. A three-strand structure was therefore put in place:

In terms of organisation:

- an expanding National Implementation Team drawn from the Ministry of Education, National Rehabilitation Centre, experienced headteachers and national provincial team members – to carry out training, support, evaluation and training
- similar provincial teams with a growing membership as the project develops;
- a network of partnership schools, with at least two participating schools in each district and
- clear directions on procedures.

In terms of support:

- monitoring and support visits by the national and provincial teams
- a newsletter by which schools and teachers can share their experiences
- an annual review meeting to share experiences
- provincial review meetings as the project grows, so that more teachers can take part
- school staff meetings and the sharing of information and experiences and
- systems for requesting help from the Implementation teams.

In terms of training:

- short training workshops for headteachers and district administrators so that they could lead the development
- five-day workshops for teachers (starting in kindergarten and grades 1 and 2) on inclusive education, factors that impact learning, teaching methods, classroom organisation, observation and planning, recording progress, working with families, and programme management.

In both of these examples, although the training inputs themselves may be relatively limited, they are part of a wider programme of change and on-going support. This means that the impacts of training are reinforced by other changes in the system and that they are sustained over time, making it more likely that they will become embedded in practice in the longer term.

2 Supported school development

In the early stages of the move towards more inclusive approaches, the most urgent need for teacher development is in ordinary schools. Many successful training programmes, therefore, have been based around providing external support to schools and at the same time enabling teachers in those schools to support each other.

✓ Since 1996, there has been in Santiago de Chile a good deal of networking and shared development amongst schools. The RIE (Red de Integración Educativa) network is formed by public and private schools which share the experience of having children with special educational needs included in their classrooms. Representatives of these schools meet approximately every month in order to exchange information and experiences and to develop collaborative projects. During the meetings, they identify issues of common concern and establish groups to analyse and discuss them, inviting, where necessary, an expert on the subject to support their work. They undertake joint activities which relate to their everyday practice, such as developing an observation instrument for analysing classroom factors which facilitate or impede student learning.

In some places, teachers have been offered a specific methodology for developing their collaborative work:

✓ In Catalunya, Spain, a three-year joint project between the Education Department from Catalan Government of the Generalitat de Catalonia and UNESCO hasworked with a small number of schools to develop initiatives leading to more inclusive approaches. The starting point for the project was the UNESCO Teacher Education Resource Pack: Special Needs in the Classroom which encourages teachers to observe (sometimes using video) and to analyse their own practices. School timetables were reorganised so that teachers could spend time together discussing their work. As the project developed, these discussions focused more and more on pedagogical issues and became more and more independent of the Pack.

As teachers became more assured and the interaction between them increased, a better working environment was created in the schools and teachers became more confident in decision-making. Gradually, new ways emerged for teachers to co-operate with each other, such as working in teams of two or three within the same educational level. Significantly, these habits became more permanent during the second year. The need to encourage greater interaction between tutors and specialists working within the same year level became apparent too.

The project produced changes in classroom methodology. In particular, more group work was introduced and this led teachers to consider different ways of organising their classrooms. In addition, teachers realised the need to improve communication in class and to improve the relationship among students and between students and teachers. There is now a need to deal with some of their theoretical ideas relating to inclusion. However, this is not a need which has been imposed on teachers by their trainers, but one which has arisen out of a clear focus on classroom practicalities.

A similar approach has been used in Brazil, where it has helped to overcome the lack of trainers with expertise in inclusion:

✓ The 'New Face' school project in São Paulo grew out of the need to reverse the high rates of school drop-outs and failure in Brazil. It includes a training programme aimed at promoting the professional development of first grade teachers in order to implement a new school model in which all students are successful. The training is centred on the school and relates theory and practice through a strategy called 'action-reflection-action'.

There are four phases in the training process:

- the identification of needs and problems experienced by all teachers in the school;
- the formulation of questions to be addressed through training;
- training activities for all teachers in the school, built around reflection and collective discussion of the realities of the situation in the school;
- support and evaluation activities in the workplace, combining professional practice with a systematic approach to knowledge; new subjects and issues are identified from teachers' own experience and are analysed in collective discussions.

The advantages of approaches such as these are:

- They do not rely on the availability of 'expert' trainers (though some facilitation of school-based work may be needed, for instance from district teams or partner schools or resources such as the UNESCO materials).
- They focus on the realities and practicalities of the inclusive classroom rather than expecting teachers to translate theoretical knowledge into terms which they can apply in practice.
- They focus on the pedagogical problems which student diversity poses rather than on the medical or psychological characteristics of particular 'types' of students. This emphasises the common needs of students as learners and values the pedagogical skills which mainstream teachers have rather than encouraging them to defer to the expertise of 'specialists'.
- They emphasise teacher collaboration and the establishment of school-based teams and therefore build a developmental process into schools which can become self-sustaining.

3 Cascade models

The examples cited above are particularly useful where small groups of schools are beginning to explore how they might become more inclusive. However, where countries are attempting more widespread change, such approaches cannot reach *all* the teachers involved. One solution to this problem is to opt for 'cascade' models in which a relatively small number of professionals is trained, who then have to disseminate (or 'cascade') their skills and knowledge to wider groups, who in turn cascade to others:

✓ In 1994, representatives of the education system in Paraguay participated in a sub-regional workshop delivered within the framework of MERCOSUR, in which two facilitators per country were trained, responsible for special needs education and teacher training in their respective ministries of education. In the following year, a workshop was delivered in Paraguay to train 30 facilitators at national level, the majority of whom were teachers and supervisors of special needs and mainstream education. These facilitators cascaded the project to mainstream and special needs education teachers, supervisors and teacher trainers. By 1997, the project was incorporated into a reform of the mainstream education system as a whole, involving, to date, the training of some 3000 teachers.

The advantage of cascade models is the speed with which large numbers of teachers can be reached and the relatively small investment in 'expert' training in the initial phase. However, they have to be used with some caution. The 'message' of the training can become changed or diluted as it passes down the cascade, while the recipients of the message at the lower levels may be less enthusiastic about it than those who received the initial training. Cascade models therefore tend to be most effective when they are used in conjunction with whole-system change (as in this example) or with school-based development which acknowledges the need for the 'message' to be reinterpreted to fit the context of every institution.

4 Distance learning

In many countries there are serious logistical problems in giving teachers access to training because of the considerable distances between remote schools and the larger centres of population. One danger in such situations is that training is offered repeatedly to teachers in urban schools whilst their rural counterparts receive little or nothing. This problem sometimes has been addressed through creating systems of distance education:

✓ In Brazil, the 'Jump to the Future' training programme makes extensive use of telecommunications technology. Activities take place in reception centres (telesala) which screen a closed circuit TV programme, followed by teachers working through printed material with the support of a facilitator. Alternatively, teleconferences are held in which teachers attend a closed-circuit TV conference, followed by group discussion with the aid of specially-written guides. Both models are interactive, allowing communication through fax, e-mail, telephone etc..

In Mexico, 'technological means rooms' have been created in schools and in-service teacher training centres so that training activities using audio-visual programmes and computers can take place. This is seen as an essential strategy for reaching teachers based in remote areas.

In England, telecommunications has been combined with school-focused development through the 'SENCO-forum'. This is an e-mail discussion list for 'SENCOs' (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators) in ordinary schools. Through the list, SENCOs can share information and experiences, ask each other questions, and make contact with researchers and teacher-trainers. It is associated with a web-site containing information of special needs issues and linked to a wide range of other relevant sites.

In Sweden, long distances often make in-service training difficult. Most teachers enrolled in inclusive education training programmes at universities, therefore, choose to follow those programmes through distance education. They attend lectures and seminars at the university 4-6 times a years. The rest of the time, they work together in local and regional networks and communicate with their tutors via e-mail and the internet.

As with the cascade model, care has to be taken that distance training does not deliver a 'watered-down' message. As these examples show, it may be necessary to combine distance models with on-site support, with collaborative teamwork and/or with opportunities for interaction.

5 Reviewing the structures of teacher education

Although small-scale or one-off training initiatives are important in the early phases of the move towards inclusion, there is eventually a need to establish a longer-term structure for teacher education. This has to be capable of delivering a steady supply of teachers capable of working in an inclusive way. A major barrier to the establishment of such a structure in many countries is that training for special educators is organised differently from training for mainstream educators. The result is that special needs education teachers and teacher-trainers see themselves as working in a quite different system to their mainstream

counterparts and find it difficult to share their expertise with them. At the same time, mainstream teachers and teacher-trainers become deskilled. They tend to feel that they have no alternative other than to refer students with difficulties on to the special needs education system.

In order to avoid this problem, some countries find it useful to identify a hierarchy of training opportunities, based firmly in the training of teachers for mainstream education. There seem to be three levels that need to be built into such a system:

- *All* teachers need to have an understanding of inclusive practices in the classroom, developed through both initial training and ongoing processes of professional development.
- *Many* teachers (ideally, at least one per school) will need to develop some level of expertise in the more common difficulties and disabilities which learners experience. Such teachers need to be trained not only to improve their own practice, but also to act as advisers and consultants to their colleagues.
- A *few* teachers need to develop a high level of expertise. However, it seems helpful for such teachers not to be placed on separate training tracks from the outset, but to develop skills and experience as mainstream educators and only later to specialise. Moreover, given the diversity of difficulties with which they will be confronted, it also seems important for their expertise not to be defined too narrowly and for it to be built on a broad base of expertise at lower levels of training.

✓ The Brazilian Ministry of Education's Special Needs Education Secretariat (1998) has proposed a restructuring of all teacher training courses for all educational levels to make them consistent with inclusive education policies. They propose that pre-school, primary and secondary courses address 'knowledge' and 'what to do with knowledge' in respect of diversity and special educational needs. Both mainstream teachers' training programmes and courses and degrees in pedagogy will include a topic on special needs education and on teaching approaches to meet children's special educational needs. For instance, courses on the Sociology of Education will deal with issues such as: the social construction of stigma; preconception, stereotyping and the segregation of differences; the exclusion and inclusion of individuals in social groups; and cultural, economic, political and ideological determinants in the social representation of differences.

They also propose that the training of support teachers and specialists should only take place after the teacher has completed general training, and that it should take the form of continuing professional development leading to a master's degree or doctorate.

In this case, direct government intervention in the training system has been thought necessary. The problem is not just the separation of special and mainstream training, but the high level of autonomy which the training institutions enjoy. Where they are reluctant to keep pace with changes in the school system, direct intervention may be unavoidable.

5.1 Initial training

The first level of the hierarchy is concerned with ensuring that all teachers have some understanding of inclusive approaches. This means that such approaches have to form part of initial teacher training and issues in how to respond to diversity have to be incorporated into mainstream education courses. However, it is not likely to be enough simply to add 'packages' of specific knowledge (on visual impairment, for instance, or types of physical disability or multilingual and multicultural teaching) to such courses. Instead, trainee-teachers have to be given the opportunity from the beginning to think what the *practical* implications of student diversity are for teaching and learning in ordinary classrooms. This may mean changing the way in which training is delivered so that it is focused clearly on the realities of the classroom:

✓ The UNESCO Teacher Education Resource Pack: Special Needs in the Classroom was developed to assist Member States to adopt more inclusive strategies for responding to children's special learning needs in ordinary schools (as in the Catalunya example above) and to support mainstream teacher education.

The main elements of the Resource Pack are:

- study materials – these include an extensive range of readings, stimulus sheets and classroom activities; a course leader's guide with detailed guidance on how to organize a course and facilitate sessions based on the study materials; and
- two demonstration videos, with documentation on recommended approaches during training courses and examples of inclusive practices in schools.

The Pack introduces new thinking in special needs education and looks at disabilities and learning difficulties from the point of view of interaction between the learner and the environment, discarding the 'medical model' which locates difficulties within the individual learner. It promotes participatory approaches to learning and teaching, encouraging students and teachers to work collaboratively, and invites schools to open their doors to community participation. The materials are used flexibly and can be modified to suit local training contexts at the pre-service and in-service level, as well as in school-based training.

Whether the UNESCO pack is used or not, trainee teachers can learn a great deal about inclusion by spending some time working alongside experienced teachers in inclusive settings. Their tutors can then help them reflect on what they have seen. It helps, of course, if those tutors have themselves spent time working in inclusive settings, or if experienced teachers are brought into the university or other teacher training institutions from time to time to work with the trainee teachers.

One further issue in initial training is that there may be a need to encourage members of marginalised groups themselves to enter the teaching profession and to progress through it to the highest levels possible. In this way, they can act as role models for marginalised learners, and also bring their particular personal and social knowledge to enrich the education system as a whole. There may be a need for some positive discrimination in teacher recruitment and training to make this happen. This is important, for instance, for members of minority ethnic groups, for economically-disadvantaged groups,

for disabled people and (depending on the cultural meanings of gender) for men or women. It is important to review the structural barriers which exist to the participation of such groups. This might show the need to encourage the emergence of appropriate role models, reduce non-essential entry qualifications, set up quota or preference systems and so on.

5.2 New roles for special educators

The second and third levels of the hierarchy have to do with those teachers who go on to become specialists in some aspect of special needs education, multicultural or multilingual education and so on. Because these specialists will be based in ordinary schools or will work closely with them, it is important that they develop skills for working collaboratively with mainstream educators and making their expertise more widely available. Such teachers will need not only to know something about a wide range of barriers to learning, but also to have skills in consultancy and in administration and management. They also need to know something about working with specialists, parents and agencies outside the school.

✓ In England, almost all mainstream schools have a 'Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator' (SENCO) whose task is to ensure that the school is able to meet the learning needs of students experiencing a wide range of difficulties. Typically, SENCOs are trained as mainstream teachers and continue to work as such whilst carrying out their SENCO role. Some of them take courses in special needs education as part of their initial or in-service training and nearly all attend short training events organised by the local authorities which manage education in their areas.

In some parts of the country, in-service training for SENCOs is provided by a higher education tutors and local authority specialist personnel working in partnership. The higher education tutors are able to inform SENCOs of current developments in inclusive education. The specialist personnel include educational psychologists, peripatetic specialist teachers and consultants who work with their schools on school improvement issues. They are able to pass on some of their expertise to SENCOs, develop their ability to work with outside agencies and help them relate their training to issues within their own schools. In some courses, SENCOs are asked to carry out a school improvement project aimed at making their school more responsive to student diversity.

As part of an initiative to raise the quality and coherence of training for these teachers, a set of nationally-agreed 'standards' has recently been produced. These set out the skills, knowledge and attributes that SENCOs require. They are used mainly to structure the training provided by higher education institutions and local authorities, but they can also be used to give SENCOs a basis for planning their own professional development, to inform the appraisal of SENCOs' work by their managers and to form the basis for job descriptions and appointments procedures.

In this example, the SENCOs already have training and experience in mainstream education. In other cases, it is necessary to reorient special educators so that they are able to work effectively in ordinary schools. An important strategy for achieving this is the

creation of opportunities for joint training with their mainstream teacher colleagues. The same is also true of allied professionals, such as social workers, health workers and psychologists. Joint training enables specialists to learn about realities of ordinary schools and classrooms. It also offers the opportunity for mainstream and special teachers to work collaboratively, sharing their expertise and resources:

✓ In Ghana, initiatives around the inclusion of learners with special needs in ordinary schools were spread over a period of three years with the support of UNESCO. A national core team has been responsible for a programme of training and development at regional level involving peripatetic specialist teachers, ordinary school teachers, headteachers, teacher educators, district level administrators, regional co-ordinators and community-based rehabilitation managers.

In regional workshops, opportunities were provided for constant reflection and review of new knowledge in the context of workplace realities. Co-operative learning approaches were encouraged and means of using existing resources for problem-solving were explored. Planning for and seeking support and collaboration in the workplace was integral to the programme in order to secure transfer and institutionalisation of change. Participants planned and carried out action research to transfer and fine-tune new skills to the work-place setting. An important feature has been the high level of co-operation between professionals from different departments working in partnership with external agencies.

6 Training the trainers

The development of more inclusive approaches means that teacher educators themselves may need to develop new skills. This is particularly the case if mainstream and special needs education trainers have traditionally worked separately from each other and if neither group has first-hand experience of inclusive approaches. One way in which this problem can be addressed is by encouraging higher education specialists to involve themselves in school-based developments towards inclusive education. In some countries, academics and researchers routinely work in schools and with teachers. By doing this, they become facilitators for the teachers and they themselves gain practical experience of the implementation of inclusive education.

✓ In the USA, many academic researchers and teacher trainers work routinely with ordinary schools and are often funded by federal grants to undertake such work. A common pattern is for academics to devise a series of inclusive strategies on the basis of previous research and to turn these into a programme which is trialed in schools. By working closely with the schools in question, the academics are able to learn how their programmes work in practice and frequently make major changes to the programmes as a result of this. When this development phase is over, the modified programme is made available to a wider range of schools, perhaps on a commercial basis. The research continues so that the programme can be developed further and its effectiveness evaluated in a range of settings. In this way, academic knowledge about inclusive education develops hand in hand with practice, while academics themselves are never far away from schools and teachers.

Similar approaches can be found in India, though here the relationships between academics and schools are co-ordinated through national and local initiatives rather than through the entrepreneurship of individual universities and researchers:

> ✓ In order to make teacher training responsive to the needs of inclusive schools, a networking of institutions and agencies at different levels is essential. The Multi-Site Action Research Project (MARP) in India involves District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs), colleges, university departments, schools, NGOs and local education authorities in teacher education reform.
>
> Similarly, Training Resource Groups at national, state district and block levels form networks with resource persons in general training institutes like the national and regional councils of educational research and training. Since the resource groups provide support to teachers in inclusive settings, there is a direct link between researchers, teacher trainers and the realities of classroom life.
>
> DIETs are the single most important training institutes working at the grassroots level. They are in contact with all teachers and conduct courses on regular basis. All 765 districts in India have these institutes. Efforts to sensitise DIET master trainers in issues of inclusion have been initiated in Maharashtra by the National Resource Centre for Inclusion which has begun to work in close contact with DIETs. Information on inclusion has been developed for the state in Marathi – the local vernacular language.

Again, it is possible to see a dual benefit from such approaches. Not only do researchers and trainers come to understand the concern of practitioners more fully, but practitioners also gain direct access to the specialist knowledge which researchers and trainers can contribute.

7 Making training systematic

In many countries, considerable effort is put into the training of teachers and other professionals in the early stages of the move towards inclusive education. At this point, the need to re-skill teachers is obvious. However, if inclusive approaches are to be sustained over time, it is important that training efforts are also sustained. There are a number of ways in which this has been achieved:

- Teachers and schools can be required to have development plans which specify their training needs. These plans can be monitored to ensure that they are appropriately inclusive in their orientation.
- National and local governments can structure the pay and conditions of teachers in such a way that there are incentives for teachers to undertake further training once they have gained some experience in schools. They can also ensure that good teachers who are experienced inclusive education practitioners to remain in the classroom rather than moving to 'higher status' jobs in management, local administration or higher education.
- Governments can use their school inspection systems both to ensure that schools have appropriate training plans and to act as network managers, identifying training needs and linking schools and teachers to training providers.

All of this implies that ministries of education and local authorities themselves need to develop long-term training plans. These will need to be supported by creating a network of providers at local and national level who can be persuaded to support the plan and/or brought into line with the plan through the control of their funding:

✓ In England, planning for the professional development of the teacher workforce is currently the responsibility of the Teacher Training Agency (TTA). This body identifies national priorities, sets detailed standards for training, funds training providers and inspects the quality of provision.

Most of the training is undertaken by traditional providers in higher education. However, the TTA will also fund independent providers who meet its standards and can contribute to its plans. In addition, the national ministry of education, working in close collaboration with the TTA, funds more short-term training through local authorities. It too has a training plan, including a set of national training priorities to which local providers must conform.

As the country moves towards more inclusive provision, TTA is able to specify the knowledge and skills that must be taught to all teachers in their initial training and the specialist knowledge and skills which a minority of teachers will require as part of their continuing professional development. At the same time, the ministry is able to fund annual programmes of training at local level to support inclusion initiatives.

IMPLICATIONS AND QUESTIONS

The following principles have emerged from reflection on experiences in Latin America. They sum up many of the lessons from the examples cited throughout this topic and may form a useful basis for coherent training systems in many countries:

It is essential to:

- Design long-term training plans that take into account all the actors involved and the different models needed to meet different needs. Such plans should incorporate an evaluation design and allow for ongoing monitoring and improvement.
- Implement training actions directed to both mainstream and specialist teachers so that they share the same approach and are enabled to work in partnership. This does not exclude some training directed towards different groups with different roles.
- Include the relationship between theory and practice and opportunities for reflection in all training actions. Seminars and workshops should include a phase of facilitated group work, a phase of classroom application and a phase of feedback.
- Start from the needs felt by the teachers themselves by creating opportunities for teachers to participate in the design of content, strategies and activities.
- Emphasise training directed to the school as a whole whilst retaining an array of strategies and models to achieve different objectives and address different needs.

- Promote self-development, creating opportunities for networking amongst teachers and schools.
- Provide adequate support materials as well as encouraging teachers themselves to develop new teaching materials.

In reviewing their systems of professional development in the light of these principles, administrators and decision-makers might wish to consider the following questions:

- **What opportunities do teachers in ordinary schools have to engage in professional development activities of any kind? How many of these opportunities deal directly with inclusive education? How can these opportunities be extended?**
- **How can issues to do with inclusive education be introduced into development activities which are more widely focused on improving the overall quality of education?**
- **What opportunities do teachers in ordinary schools have to support each other and work together on problem-solving activities in their own schools?**
- **What networks and clusters can be set up between schools or between schools and other agencies?**
- **What opportunities do special educators and other specialists have to work directly with mainstream educators on challenges of inclusive practice? How can these opportunities be increased?**
- **What is the balance between initial and in-service education and training? Is there a coherent pattern of professional development which encompasses both phases and offers teachers the opportunity of training, development and support on an on-going basis?**
- **How far are higher education and teacher training built around separate tracks for mainstream and special educators? How far can these tracks be merged? How can issues in inclusion be permeated throughout the training of all mainstream educators?**
- **What opportunities can be provided for academics and teacher trainers to work directly with teachers in inclusive settings as part of their own development?**

3

TOPIC 3: Education Assessment as Part of Quality Education

KEY ISSUES

- The aim of assessment is to make it possible for teachers and schools to provide responses to a wide diversity of students. It has to help teachers plan for student diversity in their classrooms and has to help schools develop so that they become more inclusive.
- Much of the most useful assessment can be carried out by teachers themselves, and the range of techniques at their disposal needs to be extended by training.
- Where specialist assessment is undertaken, it has to inform educational decisions about how students should be taught. This is more likely if teachers have access to specialists in the school and working in teams close to the school.
- Parents, families and students themselves can make an important contribution to the assessment process.
- Early assessment of emerging difficulties is essential so that early intervention can take place. Early assessment is not just about the first years of the child's life. It is about identifying potential problems at *any* stage.

RATIONALE

In an effective education system, *all* students are assessed on an on-going basis in terms of their progress through the curriculum. The aim is to make it possible for teachers to provide responses to a wide diversity of students. This means that teachers and other professionals have to have good information on their students' characteristics and attainments. In particular, teachers need to know how their students differ from each other.

However, it is not enough simply to be able to identify the level at which each student is performing, or to be able to list the particular difficulties or disabilities which some may experience. Teachers in inclusive systems also need to know how effective their teaching is for different students and what they need to do to enable each one to learn as well as possible. Assessment, therefore, should not focus only on the characteristics and attainments of the students. It also has to focus on the curriculum and how each student can learn within that curriculum.

This in turn means that the most useful forms of assessment take place in the ordinary school and classroom. Teachers, therefore, will need to have the skills to carry out most assessments for themselves. However, they will also need to find ways of working with special educators, psychologists, social workers and medical professionals so that they can use of their specialist assessments for educational purposes. The most important partners of all will be colleagues, parents and students themselves.

This topic is concerned with the ways in which different countries have addressed these tasks.

EXAMPLES OF STRATEGIES

1 Purposes of Assessment

1.1 The use of assessment to inform planning and provision

The fundamental purpose of assessment is to inform planning and provision:

- At the level of individual teachers, knowing a student's current level of attainment and how she/he learns best enables the teacher to plan what to teach next and how to teach it.
- At the school level, the assessment of how well students are learning provides information on the effectiveness of the provision in the school in enabling them to learn. It allows headteachers to plan, for instance, how to manage their resources to provide support to students, how to develop teaching practices and what further training to provide for staff.
- At the district level, assessment allows management decisions to be taken in the light of the actual needs of students and the effectiveness of current forms of provision in enabling them to learn.

1.2 The use of assessment for teacher planning

Teachers often plan their work in terms of how they will teach some part of the curriculum to their classes as a whole. They then make decisions as they go along about how to modify their teaching to take account of student diversity. This form of planning can be made more powerful if it is based, not just on a record of what the teacher has taught, but on careful assessment of what each of the students has actually learned and of what helps each student to learn best. In some countries, teachers are expected to use their assessments to help them draw up formal plans. These set out the learning activities they propose for the class as a whole and the way they will meet the learning needs of different groups and individuals within these activities. This has the advantage of ensuring that teachers plan in a way that takes account of student diversity, of making those plans explicit so that they can be checked by headteachers, parents and others, and of providing an opportunity for joint planning by class teachers, support teachers and other specialists.

Some countries (Australia, England, Scotland, the USA, for instance) have gone further and have legislation or guidance which demands Individual Education Plans (IEPs) be drawn up for students with the greatest difficulties. Typically, these are based on a detailed assessment of students' learning characteristics and progress. Used properly, they have some advantages:

- they ensure that teachers take the needs of individual students into account in their planning
- they ensure that the necessary teaching resources and materials are available in the classroom
- they provide a means whereby teachers, external specialists, parents and the student her/himself can plan together.

However, they also have some dangers:

- they focus on the individual student in isolation and take too little account of any barriers to learning in the school environment (such as inappropriate teaching or inadequate teaching materials)
- they tend to plan for individual programmes which are separate from the mainstream curriculum and can become very narrow
- the individual programmes they prescribe tend to underestimate the importance of peer learning and support.

The lesson from IEPs seems to be that individual assessment and planning needs to be set in the context of the mainstream curriculum and of the environment of the ordinary classroom. One way of achieving this is shown in the following example:

✓ A flexible qualitative approach to assessment has been developed in a primary school in Portugal as a part of the educational school project. Students are encouraged to engage with and take part in decision-making processes, taking responsibility for their own learning. Each student is helped to build an individual weekly learning plan and to evaluate it by the end of the week. This process is enriched by the negotiation and evaluation of rules and collective activities and projects set up in weekly students' assemblies.

Although there are times during the school day designated for individual work, collaborative learning approaches are set up in order to enable child-to-child help and support.

To ensure success, teachers work together on a daily basis to support all students' needs. This helps to develop strategies and plans that facilitate the self-monitoring of the learning and progress of each student and the management of all aspects of school life. At the same time every teacher has the chance to work with each student. In this way the whole process is very closely monitored.

In this example:

- individual assessment and planning is a feature of provision for all students, not just those who are seen as having greastest difficulties
- individualisation is set within the context of the ordinary classroom and mainstream curriculum
- collaborative learning is encouraged
- the involvement of students in their own assessment and planning means that they have the opportunity to learn from these processes and
- the involvement of students also gives teachers rapid feedback on how their teaching is impacting on students and on any bariers to learning which students might experience.

1.3 The use of assessment for school development

It is a short step from saying that assessment should lead to planning to saying that assessment can form the basis of school development. This can happen in two main ways:

- The assessment of individual students may provide detailed information about how they learn and how well they respond to particular teaching styles. It then forms the basis for planning changes in teaching. The expectation is that repeated, careful assessment will lead to a process of continuous improvement.
- Assessment may be focused less on the student than on the teacher and classroom. In other words, the appropriateness and effectiveness of teaching may be assessed directly.

The process of observation and development is one which all teachers undertake simply in order to manage their classrooms effectively. It is also possible to build practice in such observation into their initial and in-service training. Some schools deliberately create opportunities for teachers to observe each other's practice or involve other education professionals in such observation. Although this approach depends on relationships of trust, it need not be complex. A simple agreed checklist of what is to be observed is all that is necessary in the first instance.

✓ In Catalunya, Spain, there are councelling teams composed of school psychologists and social workers. These teams go to the schools assigned in their area of action to provide support and advice as necessary. Five schools have participated in projects which involve working collaboratively with their councelling teams. In some cases, these have focused on assessing students. The psychologist has given advice to the class teachers on how to plan observations and how to interpret their results. The class teachers, in turn, have been able to tell the psychologists how the results of the assessment might be turned into new classroom practice.

In other cases, the collaboration has focused on assessing classrooms rather than students. In one example, teachers video-recorded sessions of co-operative work in their own classrooms. All of the staff then watched and analysed these recordings with their psychologists, using a simple framework:

- what helped students work co-operatively?
- what difficulties were encountered?
- how might practice be improved?

Each group of teachers and psychologists then presented their findings to the others and the whole group planned jointly for changes in their teaching on the basis of what they had learned.

This approach can help to develop schools as learning communities. It is one which can be used relatively informally and is particularly powerful where teachers take responsibility for it themselves, as the following example shows:

✓ In one school in Mozambique teachers decided to organise supplementary classes on Saturday mornings for groups of children who are experiencing particular difficulties in their learning. The school has overcrowded classrooms and few support resources for working with these students. The teachers also cannot meet during the week due to the high number of students attending school in three different shifts during the day. They decided, therefore, to use these Saturday sessions in order to observe and assess their practices in a collegial and classroom-based way.

One of the teachers at a time plans and leads the lesson for a group of pupils. Meanwhile the other teachers of the school sit at the back of the classroom observing and taking notes on the details of practice. At the end of the lesson all the school staff meet to reflect upon what they have been observing. This kind of assessment allows them to share their different ideas and experiences, enabling them to improve their own teaching skills and also to find strategies to deal with a range of teaching problems.

This kind of approach seems to be very powerful not only in improving teaching but also for developing the school through continuous assessment of existing practice. In other countries, there have been attempts to build the use of assessment for school development more formally into the assessment process.

✓ The South African education reforms stress the importance of 'systems analysis'. The aim is not simply to identify the weaknesses of students but to identify the 'barriers to learning' which they experience. These barriers are seen as stemming from the interaction of students' characteristics with the learning environment in which they are placed. This implies not simply the 'testing' of individual students, but a rigorous assessment of the environment as a whole based on the views of teachers, students, parents and other stakeholders. Systems analysis of this kind is seen both as a way of improving provision for individuals, and as a way of bringing about institutional transformation.

Internationally, this sort of contextual assessment is under-developed. The culture of attributing all of a learner's difficulties to the learner him/herself remains strong and is an issue which many countries might need to address in moving towards more inclusive education. The UNESCO Teacher Education Pack: Special Needs in the Classroom has been found in many countries to be a useful resource in helping schools use self-evaluation as the basis for development in this way.

2 Teacher assessment techniques

In traditional special needs education, assessment has often been seen as a matter for 'specialists' such as medical and psychological personnel and for special educators. However, such specialists do not *necessarily* help the teacher to understand how the student learns in the ordinary classroom, what barriers to learning the student experiences in the classroom, or how the teacher can help the student to learn better. Teachers, on the other hand, work with students on a day-to-day basis and in the context of the mainstream curriculum and ordinary classroom. They are best placed, therefore, to carry out the most educationally useful assessments.

2.1 The qualitative assessment of learning

One of the main areas where teachers can take the lead in assessment is in exploring how a student learns best in order to determine how best to teach her/him. This means that there have to be regular opportunities for teachers to observe students engaged in individual and group learning activities and to analyse those activities. This form of assessment can be built into routine classroom activities, can utilise the materials normally available and can draw upon the skills that most teachers already possess in observing their students. It does not demand specialist techniques or equipment.

✓ In Mongolia, teachers working in inclusive pilot classes have found it useful to assemble a range of materials which provide children with the opportunity to demonstrate skills in different ways. By observing how children use these materials, teachers can learn a good deal about their strengths and the areas in which they need improvement. For instance:

- picture books may give information on the state of a child's pre-reading skills; i.e. visual perception, language and cognitive development
- crayons and paper may give information on a child's pre-writing skills, body image, self-image and environmental awareness
- clay and mud may give information on a child's tactile awareness, and fine motor development
- containers with lids of different sizes or boxes of different sizes and colours may give information on a child's ability to classify and sequence and on her/his language development
- dolls may give information on the development of symbolic play and on a child's social development.

Such observation can be given structure and focus through the use of checklists or statements of attainment. It can also become increasingly useful if it is undertaken on a recurrent basis and if observation notes or specimens of the student's work are kept on file. A cumulative picture of the student and his/her development is then built up. This makes it easier to identify new achievements or patterns of recurrent difficulty. It also means that the teacher can pass on to other teachers or professionals a much fuller account of the student than a set of attainment scores alone could provide.

The resources needed for this form of assessment can be found ready to hand in most classrooms. What is important is that the teacher knows what s/he is trying to find out and is able to use the results of the assessment to develop a teaching programme. Where the school has an internal specialist or the teacher has access to an external support team, assessments and programmes can be developed collaboratively.

There is a range of other assessment techniques which teachers can use with ease, in addition to traditional summative assessments of students' attainments. These include:

- authentic assessment: instead of testing students on rote learning, they are assessed on 'real-life' complex activities
- behavioural assessment: focuses on the assessment of observable behaviour and the impact of environmental factors (e.g. student grouping, time of day, teacher actions) on that behaviour
- mastery assessment: breaks a complex task down into simpler sub-tasks and assesses the learner's performance of each sub-task as it is taught
- portfolio assessment: assembles a selection of the learner's work showing its development over time and invites the learner to contribute self-evaluation.

Each of these types of assessment reveals different aspects of how students learn and has different uses in developing high quality educational provision. Behavioural and mastery assessment, for instance, are useful for a detailed diagnosis of particular difficulties, while authentic and portfolio assessment are useful for understanding how students perform in naturalistic settings. A good teacher will need all of these techniques at different times and in different circumstances.

2.2 Principles of inclusive teacher assessment

Whatever techniques are used, there is an important principle to which inclusive assessment techniques should adhere. These techniques must enable students to demonstrate their strengths and potentials and must not unfairly discriminate between groups of students. This means that:

- assessments must be carried out in the learner's preferred language
- assessment tasks must be meaningful in the child's own culture (for instance, some reading tasks developed in western countries use texts describing situations and objects which only occur in those countries)
- the assessment situation must be constructed in such a way that students are not culturally disadvantaged (for instance, in many cultures, females will be reticent in the presence of male assessors and children generally in the presence of unknown adults).

This means that assessments should, so far as possible, be undertaken in naturalistic settings by teachers themselves. In particular, when assessment materials (such as tests) are imported into a country, care must be taken that such materials are 'culture-fair' and that the standardisation procedures hold good across national boundaries.

3 Developing teachers' skills

A greater curriculum and classroom focus in assessment means that teachers have to develop the ability to carry out assessments alone or in collaboration with other professionals. The skills teachers need for assessment are not different in kind from the skills they use in their daily practice with all of their students. Indeed, the more assessment is curriculum-based, the more teachers can call upon those generic skills. This means that there is no need for teachers to be trained in the use of highly specialist assessment techniques, provided, of course, that they know when they should call in specialists who are able to use such techniques.

Much of the training teachers need can, therefore, take place in their ordinary initial training or through short in-service training events. However, a great deal of professional development also takes place where teachers are able to collaborate in assessment with special needs education teachers or with multi-disciplinary assessement teams (see below). In these cases, it is possible for teachers to acquire some of the skills of these specialists and, in particular, to understand how these specialists can enhance their own assessments.

A basic assessment curriculum for teachers, therefore, might include:

- how to assess the progress of all students through the curriculum, including how to assess students whose attainments are low and whose progress is slow;
- how to use assessment as a planning tool for the class as a whole
- how to use assessments to draw up individual plans for students
- how to observe students in learning situations, including the use of simple checklists and observation schedules
- how to relate the behaviours of particular students to normal patterns of development (particularly important for teachers of young children)
- how to involve parents and pupils in the assessment process
- how to work with other professionals, including knowing when to call on their specialisms and how to use their assessments for educational purposes.

4 Building assessment teams

A great deal of assessment can be carried out successfully by ordinary class teachers using the skills at their disposal. However, where students' difficulties are more complex, the teacher will need to work with other professionals who have more specialist skills. In particular s/he will need to work with professionals who can collaborate in a holistic assessment of the student which might include medical, social, as well as educational, inputs. Specialist assessments are also necessary for a range of non-educational purposes (for instance, in deciding on medical or social care). However, they are most likely to serve an *educational* purpose where:

- they are part of a wider range of assessments
- the assessment process focuses both on the student and on the learning environment
- the assessment process is continuous rather than 'once-for-all'
- the range includes forms of assessment which teachers (and parents) can undertake for themselves; and
- the assessment process involves a partnership between specialists, teachers, parents and students themselves.

In the first instance, ordinary teachers are likely to collaborate with specialist teachers in and around the school. Other parts of the Open File describe the role of the special educator operating as a 'resource teacher' within the school and the development of specialist teaching teams operating on a peripatetic basis in schools or located at local centres (see Topic 4, for instance). In each of these cases, class teachers need to have:

- ready access to these specialists
- clear procedures for calling on them to become involved in assessment and
- a system for using their assessment to inform their own planning.

Sometimes, teachers will need to work with non-teaching specialists beyond the school. The same principles apply here. In particular, the specialists contributing to the assessment have to see themselves as supplementing and supporting the work of the teacher – not as carrying out an entirely separate assessment process.

✓ In England, most assessment of students with special educational needs is carried out by class teachers and is curriculum-based. There is a national Special Educational Needs Code of Practice which advises the teacher to call on the school's resource teacher (known as the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator or SENCO) when s/he becomes concerned about a student's progress. The SENCO will then work with the class teacher on a more detailed assessment of the barriers to learning experienced by the student and together they will produce an individual education plan.

If the student still fails to make progress, the SENCO calls on specialist peripatetic teachers or educational psychologists for further assessment. In the most problematic cases, a multi-disciplinary assessment can be carried out, involving the teacher, the educational psychologist, specialist teachers, medical professionals and, possibly, social workers. These assessments lead to a revised plan, drawn up collaboratively, and usually requiring different specialists to contribute to provision for the student. Parents and the student have to be involved throughout this process.

This system promotes inclusive approaches provided that the specialist assessment is used to maintain students in ordinary schools rather than to remove them to special schools. The government, therefore, has recently published a report recommending that educational psychologists spend less time assessing students for special needs education and more time sharing their skills with ordinary teachers and working alongside them to develop responses to students' needs and characteristics in the ordinary school and classroom.

The progression from less to more specialist and extensive assessment is most straightforward where the school has access to a multi-disciplinary team. In many countries, establishing such teams involves bringing together specialists – such as social workers, health workers and educational psychologists – who have traditionally worked separately and this in turn may involve some reorganisation at ministry level. Where such specialists are scarce, it also involves persuading professionals to work flexibly so that they can take on some of the assessment work normally regarded as the preserve of other professionals. In particular, it may involve developing specialist teachers who can undertake some aspects of, for instance, psychological assessment, and who can relate the whole assessment process to the needs of teachers in ordinary schools.

✓ In Uganda, a country-wide Educational Assessment and Resource Services/Special Needs Education (EARS/SNE) programme has been established. At national level, the ministries of Education and Sports and Health, in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development develope policies for students with special educational needs. Joint committees, also involving representatives of disabled people's organisations are responsible, amongst other things, for setting up assessment procedures.

At district level, different departments are brought together in a EARS/SNE centre. Specialist input is provided by medical workers (physiotherapist, ophthalmologist, occupational therapist, physicians), and social workers. However, because specialists are scarce, EARS/SNE teachers have been given basic training in responding to a wide range of needs and can in turn offer training to mainstream teachers and work with them in the assessment process.

The process is similar to that in England. The initial responsibility for assessment lies with the class teacher. If s/he is concerned about a student, s/he can call on the EARS/SNE teacher for further assessment and advice. In turn, the EARS/SNE teacher can call upon other specialists.

5 The role of parents and students

The part that parents and students themselves can play in the assessment process has figured throughout this topic (see also Topic 5). Parents and students are key contributors to assessment, bringing insights and experiences which teachers and other professionals cannot access in other ways. They can, for instance:

- provide information on how the student behaves outside the school, identifying strengths and difficulties that may not be apparent in the classroom;
- describe the student's early childhood development
- become involved in setting targets and planning programmes of work which they feel they 'own' and are likely to support
- give teachers and other specialists rapid feedback on the effectiveness of their work with the student.

The willingness of professionals to involve parents and students depends partly on the attitudes they have towards them and partly on the expectations that have been engendered by professional training. In some countries, positive attitudes have been reinforced by giving parents and students legal rights in the assessment process.

✓ In Uganda parents have rights:

- to place or transfer a child in a school of their choice
- to request a formal assessment of their child and
- to know and contribute to what the child learns at school.

In Denmark, parents:

- have to agree to any form of special needs education provision for their child, including school placement
- have the right to request a re-evaluation of their child's placement on an annual basis and
- are well-represented on school boards.

In England, parents

- have the right to be informed and involved as soon as the school suspects their child may have difficulties
- have statutory rights to contribute to their child's assessment and
- have access to an independent 'named person' who can liaise between them, the school and the local authorities in the course of the assessment process.

Although the rights given to parents and students in the assessment process vary from country to country, the conventions and declarations referred to in the introduction to the Open File offer a useful framework for determining what those rights should be.

This approach to parents and students can be extended more generally to the involvement of the community as a whole. This may be particularly relevant in countries and cultures where children are seen as a community rather than as an individual family responsibility. However, encouraging community groups to act as advocates for and supporters of parents and children in the assessment process may have benefits elsewhere. One experiment in inner-city schools in the USA, for instance, has involved community leaders in acting as advocates for marginalised students, eliciting assessment information from professionals (rather than the other way round) and keeping records of the students' progress.

6 Early assessment and intervention

This topic has emphasised the importance of educational assessment as a continuous process which informs teaching on a daily basis. However, early assessment of a child's difficulties is also important so that early interventions can be put in place. 'Early' in this sense does not simply mean in the child's first years. It also means that potential difficulties have to be identified before they have turned into serious educational problems. Early assessment and intervention in this sense:

- minimise the impact of any difficulties
- reduce the need for costly programmes of rehabilitation and remediation
- make it more likely that the student's needs can be met in the mainstream.

There are three stages at which such early assessment and intervention are particularly important:

- the early years of life
- the school years
- the transition phase.

These points of assessment are important for all children so that difficulties in learning can be detected as early as possible. In general, countries find that assessment systems work best where there is a basic system which applies to all children, but which can become more intensive and specialised in individual cases. Such universal systems make it more likely that particular difficulties will be identified. They also make it more likely that assessment will remain focused on supporting the child's progress and development rather than simply on labelling and categorising him or her.

6.1 Assessment and intervention in the early years

Typically, early years assessments are the responsibility of health professionals such as hospital doctors, midwives and community nurses. They focus, therefore, on screening for medical challenges, disabilities and the achievement of developmental milestones. However, these assessments have major educational implications and call for educational as well as medical intervention. This means that there has to be an effective system for passing information between health and educational professionals and for planning joint action.

In some countries, there is a sophisticated system of professional screening, usually led by health workers. All babies are screened at and shortly after birth; peripatetic health workers then visit babies in the home to check on progress, with further and more intensive checks on those found to be 'at risk'; and there is a sophisticated system of primary health care which parents can access if they are concerned about their children's progress.

Within such developed systems, there is usually a formalised system for communication between the health and education services and a range of alternatives for intervention.

✓ In countries such as Denmark and England, all children are routinely screened by doctors and midwives at birth and their development is monitored in the home by health visitors. In each area, a designated medical officer is required to notify his/her counterpart in the education service of young children who might experience significant educational difficulty. There are then options for intervention such as:

- providing extra support in the home (for instance from a social worker who can help the family function effectively in the light of the child's needs); or
- working collaboratively with parents to deliver a pre-school teaching programme which may be informal (e.g. by making educational toys available and helping the parents to play creatively with the child) or formal (such as the 'Portage' scheme); or
- offering the child a place in a kindergarten where specialist support for development can be provided.

Where assessment is led by health professionals in this way, it is important that they have training which makes them aware of current educational issues or, better still, that they come into regular contact with educators in early intervention teams. This is for two reasons:

- health professionals need to be aware of the educational implications of the difficulties they identify and pass the appropriate information on to the education service; and
- health professionals need to avoid giving educational advice to parents – for instance, insisting that their child will have to be placed in special school, or will need some other form of educational provision.

Where high levels of professional assessment and intervention are not available, the role of parents and such professionals as are available becomes even more crucial.

✓ In Uganda, the importance of parents has been recognised in a training programme for parents, teachers, nursery teachers, medical personnel and village councillors. Training is delivered as part of a national programme by specialist inspectors and aimed to give those involved basic knowledge and skills in early assessment and intervention.

In India the WHO ten-point assessment of childhood questionnaire has been tried out in the community in Dharavi, Asia's largest slum in Mumbai, and has been very successful. The questionnaire has also been tested in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka and is a very simple identification tool which can be administered with minimal training by a non-specialist. It asks simple questions to check for difficulties with vision and hearing, understanding of spoken language, motor skills, learning skills, speech, and medical problems.

From an educational point of view, such checklists should not be seen simply as a means of categorising children as disabled or otherwise. They have to lead directly to action, on the part of teachers and other professionals, which enables the child to learn more effectively.

6.2 Early assessment and intervention in the school years

Many potential difficulties are first noticed when the child enters school. A common problem in all countries is that teachers wait until there is some clear evidence of educational failure before intervening and this may mean a delay of one or two years before a child's difficulties are addressed. In order to avoid this, four steps seem to be necessary:

- Teachers of young children should be familiar with usual patterns of child development and should be able to identify any significant deviations from these patterns. This knowledge has to be part of initial and in-service training for such teachers.
- Teachers need to listen to parents and elicit information from them about their child's development, skills, interests and difficulties.
- Teachers have to be able to use simple screening instruments. These may take the form of checklists of motor development, language development, social and emotional development, school-related learning and sensory acuity. Such checklists not only indicate immediate problems, but also provide a base-line against which subsequent progress can be checked.
- Teachers need to be able to work closely with health and social work personnel so that they can seek advice from them or refer children to them as necessary.

The techniques for early assessment in the school setting need not be sophisticated. In particular, standardised tests, especially ones developed in different cultural contexts, may be of limited use. However, it is important that teachers realise that students may have different abilities and talents that may not be related to school curriculum.

✓ In Mongolia, as in many countries, assessment tools have been developed by teachers themselves. Typically, these tools consist of a simple checklist which describes the child's achievements and difficulties in a range of areas:

- gross motor development
- fine motor development
- communication and language development
- cognitive development (thinking skills)
- self-help skills (daily living skills, life skills)
- school-related learning (e.g. behaviours, language, [pre-] reading, [pre-] writing, [pre-] numeracy, social studies)
- social development
- emotional development
- sensory problems

Such checklists can be completed on the basis of the teacher's daily contact with the child, and achievements can be recorded as they arise. Alternatively, a more formal assessment of the child may be appropriate. In this case, teachers are encouraged to work in pairs. One engages the child in a series of play-like tasks; the other notes down how the child responds. The assessment then leads to a 3 to 6 month plan of how the teachers intend to work with the child in the classroom.

6.3 *Early assessment in the school years: curriculum-based assessment*

Early assessment needs not rely only on checklists and 'one-off' assessments of their underlying characteristics and difficulties. If all students are assessed continuously in terms of their progress through the curriculum, then emerging difficulties will become apparent long before they become serious. This means, of course, that the curriculum and its associated assessments have to be organised in a flexible manner which is responsive to individual differences (see Topic 6). In particular, it has to be possible to track the progress of even the lowest-attaining students through the curriculum.

✓ South Africa has recently changed its curriculum structure. The old curriculum was relatively inflexible and progression through it was governed by grade-related assessments. Such assessments offered no incentive for teachers to develop sophisticated assessment skills. The new curriculum, based on principles of 'outcomes-based education' encourages every learner to progress at his/her own pace, regardless of grade level. This means that teachers have to be capable of assessing the current attainments of every learner and planning an appropriate programme to generate progress. As a recent policy document puts it, "The central purpose of assessment is to provide information on learner achievement and progress and set the direction for ongoing teaching and learning." (Draft Assessment Policy in the General Education and Training Phase: grade R to 9 and ABET [Dept. of National Education, 1998]). The development of assessment skills by teachers is supported by government publications, training workshops and by development work undertaken by teachers in their own schools. This new form of

assessment is seen as a major component of the country's attempt to develop a more inclusive education system.

In England, the attainment of all students is assessed in terms of their progress through the National Curriculum. There are a series of 'levels of attainment', with descriptors of each level for each subject. Recently, these descriptors have been refined through 'P Scales', which sub-divide the lowest levels into a series of small steps and extend below the first level proper. This means that every student's progress can be recorded in National Curriculum terms. Some schools and local authorities use the P Scales and levels to predict the rate of progress which students might be expected to make. If the student is making less progress than might be expected, the school can investigate why this is the case and take corrective action.

In both of these cases, curriculum assessment is not simply about whether a student reaches the 'required' level at the end of a grade to move up to the next grade. Instead, assessment provides rapid feedback of the progress a student is making. If that progress is not adequate, then it is the *teaching* the student receives that has to change to ensure that the student learns effectively in future.

6.4 *Early assessment for transition from school to adult life*

There are similar issues around assessment in preparation for the transition from schooling to the adult life. At this point, the demands on learners change significantly and existing assessment information may not provide adequate information about how learners can be supported to meet these demands. These issues are dealt with in more detail in the topic on 'Managing Transitions through Education' (Topic 8).

IMPLICATIONS AND QUESTIONS

This topic has emphasised the importance of assessment in inclusive systems and the need to focus on forms of assessment which enable mainstream teachers to educate all their students more effectively.

In developing assessment systems, therefore, countries might wish consider the following questions:

- **What are the current forms of assessment in the education system? To what extent do these provide information that is *educationally* useful to teachers in mainstream education settings?**
- **How can teachers be helped to develop a wider range of assessment strategies? What are the implications for initial and in-service training?**

- What forms of assessment tools and techniques are currently available? How can these be extended? How culture-fair are current techniques? How far is contextual assessment a reality?
- How can teachers be supported in the assessment process by in-school specialists and teams and external specialists?
- What forms of multi-disciplinary assessment teams need to be established?
- What strategies are in place for early assessment and intervention? How effective are these in the early years, in the school years and in transition from schooling to adulthood?
- How can the involvement of parents and students be encouraged? How much can be done by attitudinal change and how much demands legislative change?

4

TOPIC 4: Organising Support in Inclusive Systems

KEY ISSUES

- Support includes everything that enables learners to learn. It particularly includes those resources which supplement what the ordinary class teacher can provide.
- The most important form of support is that which is provided from the resources which are at the disposal of every school – that is children supporting children, teachers supporting teachers, parents as partners in the education of their children and communities as supporters of schools.
- In many situations there will also be support from teachers with specialist knowledge, resource centres, other professionals from other sectors and so on. Where these forms of support exists it is important to ensure that they contribute effectively to an inclusive approach. This may mean reorienting them towards providing support in the ordinary school.
- Support has to be delivered holistically. Services and agencies have to work together rather than in isolation from each other. This may mean creating local management structures for services which are the same as those for managing schools.

RATIONALE

Inclusive education is about providing opportunities for all students to become successful students in the ordinary schools which serve their communities. A wide range of resources – teaching materials, special equipment, additional personnel, teaching approaches, other students – can support students in the task of learning in ordinary schools and classrooms. 'Support' means all of these resources, but refers particularly to resources over and above what the class teacher alone is able to provide. The range and effectiveness of support in this sense is crucial to creating schools in which a diversity of students are enabled to learn.

In some countries, there will be very few sources of support beyond the classroom and few resources for establishing specialist services. The task here will be to use whatever resources are already to hand in order to supplement the work of class teachers in ordinary schools. Elsewhere, there may already be a wide range of well-resourced specialist services. Even here, however, there will be work to do: these services will need to be relocated and reoriented so that they support students in, rather than removing them from, their schools and communities. There will also be work to do in delivering support holistically, ensuring that services and agencies work collaboratively rather than in isolation from each other. In any case, the key will be to build support from the bottom upwards, starting where the students already are, in ordinary schools.

This topic deals with the different ways in which countries have tackled the issue of building support.

EXAMPLES OF STRATEGIES

1 Mobilising support in and around schools

The first task in building effective support is to mobilise those resources which already exist in and around schools. In many cases, this will be all that is necessary for meeting the needs of a wide range of students. In particular, it is not possible to decide what *additional* support is needed unless the resources *already* available in schools are used to their best effect. The sorts of strategies that are commonly used to increase this effectiveness include:

- child to child support in which students work collaboratively within the classroom and are able to help each other with their work
- teacher to teacher support in which the staff of a school work collaboratively to decide how best to meet the diverse needs of their students
- 'differentiation' in the classroom, in which teachers develop the ability and resources to manage different types or levels of activities for the range of students in their classes
- resource rooms, where special resources can be built up, specialist teachers (if available) can work and students can be offered individualised teaching as and when they need it.

The UNESCO Teacher Education Resource Pack: Special Needs in the Classroom is a useful source of strategies for developing resources in schools. Also useful is the *Index for Inclusion* (Booth et al., 2000) which encourages schools to review the ways in which they respond to student diversity. In particular, the *Index* defines 'support' as *anything* which enables the school to respond to diversity. This definition may be helpful in dissuading teachers and others from assuming that support must *always* mean additional resources or always be located outside the ordinary classroom.

Beyond this, any adult who is able to work in schools and communities with students experiencing disadvantages and difficulties constitutes a potential source of support. Schools, for instance, have head teachers who may have time for more than administration; they may have counsellors or guidance staff or other teachers who are not obliged to spend all their time teaching classes; in the community, they may be able to access health workers and social workers, voluntary workers and ordinary community members. In particular, parents may be willing and able to offer support to their own and other children. Together, these adults form a team which the school can call upon to support its students. (More is said about community support in Topic 5).

2 Building support to schools and communities

In addition to the support systems that schools can develop for themselves, it will be necessary to build forms of support beyond the ordinary school. This may involve reorienting existing specialist services, or it may mean building support from scratch. A number of strategies have been used for achieving this:

2.1 Developing school-based teams

In some countries, school-based teams will provide virtually all of the support that any student can expect to receive. However, even in countries with well-resourced systems, where there are extensive networks of support beyond schools, school-based teams are an essential part of the support structure:

> ✓ In New Brunswick, Canada, there are District Support Teams which offer consultancy and other forms of support to between 20 and 50 schools. The teams comprise specialist teachers, psychologists, social workers and therapists. These teams are paralleled in schools by School Based Student Services Teams, comprising school managers, specialist teachers and other staff who might be helpful to the process. There is a staged series of interventions where students begin to cause concern, starting with modifications of classroom practices, and moving onto individual planning and parental involvement before the Team is involved in finding new solutions or offering direct support to student and teacher. Where necessary, the school team can seek further guidance and support from the district team.

In inclusive systems, school-based teams are an important strategy for delivering support to students in their local schools and communities. Such teams avoid the need to

refer students outwards in order to access specialist services; instead, students can be supported in their ordinary schools and classrooms. This is why the first task of the school-based team in the example above is not to assess and refer, but to find ways of changing what is happening in the classroom so that the student can be maintained where s/he already is.

2.2 *The creation of peripatetic services*

A second strategy is to set up teams of specialists who can move from school to school carrying out assessments, offering advice, providing materials and, perhaps, doing some direct teaching. Such teams are often called 'peripatetic', 'itinerant' or 'outreach' teams. They can be located at *local* level – in a particular district, community or group of schools. This is particularly appropriate where relatively large numbers of students experience the difficulties and disadvantages which the team is set up to address. It also allows the team to develop a close working relationship with a limited number of ordinary schools. Such teams, for instance, might work with marginalised students and their teachers in the poorer areas of large cities, or might offer services to students with the less severe forms of learning difficulty and their teachers in a group of ordinary schools.

Alternatively, teams can be located at *area* or even *national* level, serving a larger number of schools and communities. This is particularly appropriate where the team is providing services for students with difficulties that are relatively uncommon.

Experiences in Kenya illustrate how such services might be started:

✓ During the mid-1980s, Kenya began to develop itinerant services for children with visual and other impairments. This development was based on the recognition that existing special schools could not absorb all children of school age with special needs and that special schools were costly to run.

The service began with one school in the city of Nairobi admitting two blind children. The itinerant teacher, based at the ordinary school, was initially involved in teaching the children Braille, orientation and mobility. He also assisted the class teacher to maximise children's learning. In the following year, another school enrolled blind children. The itinerant teacher also began to visit this school daily to teach and to support teachers.

The itinerant service, based in ordinary schools, has now covered a large part of Nairobi and is expanding beyond the capital city.

It is not necessary to create a large-scale service before useful work can be done. As in this case, a single professional, freed to work in a peripatetic way, can offer important support which maintains students in their ordinary schools. Such workers in turn can train other peripatetic staff and can pass some of their skills on to mainstream teachers.

The peripatetic services model offers the advantage of making specialist services directly accessible in every school and community. However, care needs to be taken that these services are not spread so thinly that little of real worth can be provided either to student or to the school. It is also important, where such services focus on direct teaching, that their work actively promotes the real participation of marginalised students in the mainstream classroom. Where peripatetic services already exist, this may mean that their work has to be reoriented:

✓ In Mexico, the General Project for Special Needs Education was set up to develop an integration policy. This implied the reorientation of the Special Needs Education Services according to three principles:

- The services are not restricted to working with a pre-selected population separate from all other students.
- The basic curriculum is common to all students; there is no separate curriculum for students with special educational needs.
- Special needs education services are organised so that a graduated response to students' difficulties is possible; in other words, levels of support can be increased gradually rather than in an 'all-or-nothing' manner.

The basic strategy of integration is based on the development and increased autonomy of individuals and their social participation. A multi-professional group works with the child, the mainstream teacher, the family, and the community to promote social acceptance. This model does not focus solely on students with disabilities but also on those with other special needs not related to disability.

In conclusion, Special needs education is no longer a separate and parallel system to mainstream education. It adheres to global criteria for the quality of education, relevance, coverage, efficiency and equity. There are multiple options of gradual integration to achieve a quality school for all. Thus, a larger proportion of the population can now access services, eliminating the diagnostic filters that excluded some students with educational difficulties from these services.

What is crucial here is that the reoriented services have the task of promoting inclusive approaches rather than of 'removing' students from the mainstream. This means that they work with mainstream teachers and with the family and community as well as with the student. It also means in this case that their remit goes beyond the traditional categories of special education to include all students who experience difficulties in schools.

2.3 Developing outreach capacity in special schools

In many countries, there will be an established infrastructure of special schools, operating independently of the mainstream education system and providing services only to those students who are placed in them. These constitute an important source of potential support if they can be re-oriented so that they work more closely with ordinary schools. In some countries, therefore, special schools and other specialist centres have become the bases for outreach work into ordinary schools and into communities. When they work in this way, such schools can provide some or all of the services that are provided by peripatetic teams or by resource centres.

Outreach services can be started in a number of ways. One is to locate additional staff in the special school exclusively for this purpose. Another is to reduce the number of students placed in the school and use the staff time made available in this way to work with students in ordinary schools. A third is to initiate an integration programme so that special educators accompany their students when they attend ordinary schools and/or work with them in their own homes.

Another possibility is for special schools to operate a flexible pattern of placements. Instead of students attending full time throughout their educational career, they can attend part time, or for short periods of time. This encourages the special school to define clearly some specialist input which it is unrealistic for ordinary schools to make. It also demands a high level of liaison between special and ordinary schools which develops the capacity of both.

The advantage of special school outreach is that it makes use of existing resources and reassures special educators that they continue to have a role to play. However, some caution has to be exercised. Where special schools are not distributed evenly across the country, their outreach services may not be able to reach certain areas. Similarly, the pattern of expertise in special schools may not match all of the difficulties which students experience (for instance, there may well be no specialists in bi-lingual education or in gender issues). Finally, it cannot be assumed that special school teachers have the very different skills needed for outreach unless they are offered some additional training. This training may have to be part of a careful preparatory process in which special school teachers and managers are reassured regarding any concerns they may have about the process of change.

2.4 The establishment of resource centres

Some countries have opted to create resource centres as bases for teams of specialists in each district. Whereas peripatetic services move out to schools, in the resource centre model, teachers, families and students move to the team's centre. This model offers the advantage of centralising resources and expertise so that intensive – and, perhaps, multi-disciplinary – interventions become possible. It is important, however, that centres are located so that they are accessible to students and families who remain based in their local schools and their own communities.

Typically, such centres carry out a range of tasks: conducting assessments; offering advice, consultancy and support to teachers and parents; offering professional development to teachers, and training and awareness-raising to families; providing special materials and equipment; referring onwards to more specialised centres at regional or national level and providing information about the range of services available; undertaking some limited direct teaching.

The work that resource centres undertake with schools and teachers can make them important catalysts for change towards more inclusive approaches. This is clearly the case where centres are well-resourced and sophisticated in their operation. However, it can also be the case where centre operate on a small scale:

✓ In the area of Ramallah, Palestine, since the beginning of the Inclusive Education programme, a centre for special educational needs (learning difficulties/intellectual disability) has been engaged in guidance and training. When a school in this area wanted to develop more inclusive practices, a support teacher visited the school every day in order to work with teachers, parents, students and other resource people.

The Resource Centres for Teachers (CRP) are educational services opened by the Department of Education from the Generalitat (government) of Catalunya, Spain and they have been set up to help teachers in their daily work. They are accessible to and provide support for all non-university teachers in the area.

Their main aims are:

- to give access to educational resources
- to develop strategies for information sharing and
- to provide in-service teacher training

CRP are centres of pedagogical innovation and support, researching new methodologies which they can make available to schools and helping teachers to improve their practices. They provide teachers with pedagogical materials and didactic resources and offer advice on their use. CRP are used as meeting points where schools can share experiences and contribute to new research.

In addition, they:

- make available resources and a wide range of facilities to schools and teachers; specific materials for different subjects of the curriculum are provided as well as specialised educational technology
- catalogue educational resources about the local environment, drawing up guidelines and supporting information to make them more useful to teachers
- give support to learning activities and to the sharing of educational experiences in order to develop teachers' practice and
- co-ordinate and organise training activities between teachers and university staff.

As these examples illustrate, resource centres can be located in or close to ordinary schools and can develop a flexible range of services which involves them in working closely with mainstream educators. In many cases, the best strategy will not, in fact, be to create entirely new centres, but to expand the role of existing centres by giving them additional responsibilities and offering some of their personnel additional training. In practice, resource centres can take many different forms and have many different roles. However they are organised, the aim is that teachers should have access to some additional support in the form of materials, advice, expertise and training so that they can respond effectively to a wider range of student diversity than might otherwise be the case.

2.5 Supplementary education

Sometimes, it is possible to increase educational opportunities by mobilising resources beyond ordinary schools and the services which support those schools. This may be particularly important where the formal school system is not yet fully developed or where groups of students can be identified who might benefit from greater provision than is available within the formal school system.

In some countries, a range of 'supplementary' schools have sprung up. Unlike special schools, supplementary schools are not intended as alternative placements for students

who experience difficulties which ordinary schools are unable to meet. Instead, as their name suggests, they supplement the provision that is available in ordinary schools. In some cases, they act as *interim* forms of provision while the ordinary school system is developed. In other cases, they offer *additional* opportunities for learning outside the timetable of ordinary schools. They can be funded in the same way as ordinary schools, or they can arise from community initiatives with more or less co-ordination from state and district government.

✓ In India, there has been an impressive growth in provision within the formal school system and 94% of the rural population now has access to primary schools. Nonetheless, a sizeable number of children either do not join schools or drop out before their schooling is complete. To address this problem, the District Primary Education Programme (a centrally-sponsored government scheme for elementary education) has begun an Alternative Schools Programme. This is establishing schools for children aged 6-14, organised flexibly to meet local conditions, and opening for four hours per day in single or double shifts. Each school has two teachers, one of whom must be female so that girls are encouraged to attend and their particular needs are met.

In some parts of India – Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Assam – Makhtabs are traditional institutions which provide religious education to children of the Muslim community. Children learn the text of the Quran and religious teaching based on the principles of the Islamic law. The strategy now is to work with religious leaders to persuade them to extend the work of these institutions so that it also includes the formal school curriculum.

In England and the USA, as in many economically richer countries, there is concern about the educational achievements of a wide range of groups – children from minority ethnic groups, children in public care, boys who are disaffected from schooling, and so on – who do not do well in ordinary schools. One strategy to address this issue is the development of different forms of supplementary education which take place in school holidays, before and after the school day and at weekends. Supplementary schooling is funded by a mixture of government grants, charitable funding and business sponsorship. In some areas there are also supplementary schools run by community ethnic groups which preserve students' religious and/or linguistic heritage and support their mainstream education.

Although supplementary education is a powerful strategy, it needs to be used with care. In particular, it is important that it acts as a *supplement* and not as an *alternative*. In other words, it needs to enhance the resources that are available around ordinary schools and not simply provide an excuse for failing to develop quality education for all within those schools.

3 Developing holistic services

However support is organised, it is important that it involves multisectoral collaboration – that is, joint working between a range of services and agencies. There are a number of reasons for this:

- The barriers to learning experienced by students do not fall neatly into the administrative categories created by the different responsibilities of different agencies. They often call for inter-disciplinary interventions.
- It may be the health and social difficulties of students, rather than their purely educational difficulties, which make it difficult for them to thrive in mainstream education.
- Available resources and services may not be divided equally between different agencies. Where education services are poorly resourced relative to other services, for instance, the best psychological or speech and language services may be found in the health service.
- In more inclusive systems, support is located close to schools and communities. However, at local level it is more cost-effective to deliver services collaboratively than for each service to have its own local delivery-system.

This means that the specialists who work directly with students, families and schools have to be capable of bringing to bear a inter-disciplinary perspective on their work. This can be achieved in two ways:

- Individual specialists can be trained across a range of disciplines. For instance, peripatetic teachers can be trained to undertake some of the assessments traditionally regarded as the preserve of psychologists, or can acquire some basic social work skills.
- Specialists can work in inter-disciplinary teams. Although they may not have a high level of skill in a particular discipline themselves, they can always turn to a colleague for advice or refer a case to a colleague for specialist input. This means that there is a strong case for a multi-level structure of support services with generalists working directly with schools and communities, supported by increasing levels of expertise at district, area and national level.

Developing a more holistic approach has a number of benefits. First, it reduces the bureaucracy, delays and barriers to access which occur when services are entirely separate from each other. Second, it provides service-users – students, their families and their teachers – with a single point of access which they may find more user-friendly than a large number of remote specialists. Third, it may lead to an increased focus on the actual difficulties students face in the context of school and community rather than on a decontextualised assessment of their needs.

In many cases, the work of specialists in health and social services may be central in developing holistic forms of support. However, it is important to look beyond these specialists if all the resources available locally are to be drawn upon and if the full range of barriers to learning which students encounter are to be addressed. Other professionals, such as language teachers, art teachers, anthropologists, or handicraft specialists, may well have something to offer. Similarly, it is important that different cultures and local solutions are respected. For instance, in some places it will be important to involve religious leaders, or tribal chiefs or other local leaders. The aim is to bring together as many resources, perspectives and types of expertise as possible to support the school and teachers in meeting the needs of their students.

4 Local management of services

Where support is provided through specialist services, operated separately from the mainstream education system, these services are also likely to be managed through some separate structure. They may be autonomous (managed by NGOs, for instance) or may be the responsibility of a separate branch of the local authority or national ministry. However, when support is built in or close to schools and communities, it is important that there is some form of local control and, preferably, that support-providers are managed by the same agencies that manage ordinary schools. This makes it more likely that they will operate in a way which meets local needs, that they will be able to develop close working relationships with local schools and that a continuum will be developed from a solid base of support in schools to a range of external services.

IMPLICATIONS AND QUESTIONS

This topic has argued that support needs to be built from the bottom upwards, beginning with the support that children and teachers in ordinary schools can provide and strengthening this through school-based support systems and/or teams and in some instances through external support structures which retain a focus on maintaining students in the ordinary school and the home community. Countries face very different challenges in establishing appropriate forms of support and, in undertaking this task, administrators and decision-makers might find it useful to consider the following questions:

- **What potential sources of support are already available in schools and communities? How can these be mobilised and constituted (whether formally or informally) as school-based support teams?**
- **What forms of support can be found beyond the school and how can these be established? Will this involve establishing forms of support from scratch, or extending the role of existing support structures, or reorienting the work of specialist services which already exist?**
- **How can support be provided in or close to ordinary schools and students' home communities? Should support be provided through peripatetic services, or resources centres, or special schools with outreach or through some mixture of these?**
- **Where should the management of services be located? How far can local services be locally managed in order to meet local needs?**
- **What should be the balance between services provided directly to students and those provided to their schools and to their families? Where there are support services at local and/or national level, how should they work with schools and families and, in particular, what should be the respective responsibilities of ordinary schools and the external support structures which surround them?**

5

TOPIC 5: Families and Communities Participating in Inclusive Education

KEY ISSUES

- The participation of families and local communities is fundamental in assuring a quality education for all. Education is not simply a matter for professionals.
- Families and communities have rights to involvement and can make a range of contributions. In particular, they have knowledge of their children which professionals do not have.
- Building family and community involvement is a step-by-step process based on trust. Particular efforts are needed to promote the involvement of marginalised groups.
- Families and community groups can sometimes take a lead role as activists for inclusive education.
- Families' rights to involvement can be built into legislation or into the system of school governance.
- Communities can also be involved successfully in the governance of schools or of the education system as a whole.
- Schools can act as a resource for the community by offering services or becoming the base for other agencies.

RATIONALE

This topic of the Open File centres on the role played by families and communities in the promotion and development of quality education for all.

In some countries, education has been seen as largely a matter for professionals. Families and communities have had little part to play; they have simply received the services provided by those professionals. They have not been expected to have any significant role in the education of their children and have had few formal rights to participate in decision-making. Indeed, children have often been separated from their families and communities in order to receive their schooling. These problems have been made worse in societies where certain characteristics which contribute to disadvantage in the education system – disability, belonging to ethnic or linguistic minorities, poverty and so on – have also brought with them a wider social stigma.

In countries which have adopted more inclusive approaches, however, families and communities have become central to the process. In some cases, they have been encouraged to participate in decision-making and to contribute to the education of their children. In other cases, it has been families and communities themselves who have taken the lead in who have been advocating a move towards more inclusive education.

The aim of inclusive education is not only to educate learners in ordinary schools but also to maintain them in their families and communities. Moreover, the broad vision of Education for All sees learning as a holistic concept – something which takes place in the home and community as well as in schools and other centres of learning. The active participation of families and communities is essential.

This topic, therefore, is about the relationships between professional educators on the one hand and families and communities on the other.

EXAMPLES OF STRATEGIES

1 Building partnerships: school and family

1.1 The contribution of families

Families have a major contribution to make to children's education. Partnerships can only be built if both professionals and families themselves respect this contribution and understand the part they can play in making it a reality. A starting point is the recognition of the range of forms this contribution can take:

- *The right to a family.* In considering the needs of children, inclusive education starts from an acknowledgement of children's rights as set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This involves a recognition of the entitlement to a home, family and membership of the local community as basic

rights of the child. In particular, this means that education systems have to avoid situations in which children have to be separated from their families and communities in order to receive an education.

- *Inclusion in the family.* The right to having a family is only meaningful if the child is fully included in that family. If the goal is for children to be included in society, it is necessary that this begins within their own family. Moreover, access to everyday experiences in the setting of the home is essential for the full development of the child. Families, however, often experience great distress when they realise that their child has some particular difficulties, and this may lead to problems in the relationship with the child. Schools and other parts of the education system can encourage contact between the family and other families, or the family and the school in order to relieve stress, rebuild hope, and enable the child to experience family life.
- *Support for the child's learning and development at home.* Children will learn more successfully when there is harmony between expectations and opportunities to learn at home and at school. When parents and teachers work together, the development of the child can be supported and the needs of the child can be met more fully. There are also simple ways to promote children's development through reinforcement of learning experiences in the natural setting of home and through encouraging play and wider social contacts. The education system can support families in offering appropriate learning experiences to their children.
- *Co-operation with the school in sharing knowledge about the child.* Families have knowledge about how their children develop which is valuable for understanding their educational needs. This knowledge includes information on the child's functioning in the home and community, on the child's development and on his/her views and wishes. Professionals – and particularly teachers working only in the school – cannot easily acquire this sort of knowledge without the help of families. In order to share this knowledge, families can, for instance, be encouraged to start a diary with observations, comments on progress, helpful tips or just 'things to remember'. This knowledge enables better planning and a better understanding of the child's development.
- *A contribution as of right.* The education system can recognise that families have a right to be involved in the decisions that are made about their children, whether or not this is protected in legislation. For instance, parents can be invited to meetings at school where the situation of their own child is to be discussed. This ensures that decisions are taken on the basis of all available information. It also enables the family to act as advocates for the rights of the child in the decision-making process. Families can also be encouraged to take part in community meetings and workshops to develop leadership skills which will enable them to lobby for more inclusive communities.
- *The responsibilities of parents.* Whilst there is a growing recognition that parents, families and communities have the right to be involved in the decision making regarding the education of their children, there is also a duty and responsibility on all those involved with children to ensure that the child's rights are protected. Families can act as advocates for children's rights, but sometimes there are circumstances in which the wishes of the family and the interests of the child are different. Education systems have to have ways of involving families so that these conflicts do not arise too often, and of managing them when they do arise.

1.2 Building partnership

Building partnership with families is a process which cannot be expected to happen overnight. It occurs through carefully planned steps aimed to build up a trusting relationship with the school, with teachers and with other professionals. Through these initial steps, families can build their confidence in working in collaboration as equal partners. In the long term, this confidence-building will produce a sense of empowerment and ownership which make it possible for families to become 'partners' in the school in a meaningful sense.

The first step might be some exchange of information about the child of the sort outlined above. One possibility is for families to provide profile of the child, describing her/his skills, interests, developmental milestones and so on. This might take the form of a work-book which the child can help to complete, so that the child's contributions provide direct evidence of her/his attainments. In some countries, teachers visit children in their homes before they enter school and talk to their families about their development. Schools can also help by making sure families know what they can expect from the school and what opportunities there are for involvement – though of course these will vary from context to context.

Information-exchange of this kind can set the pattern for regular information-giving sessions throughout the child's school career. In some countries, there are formal programmes which enable families and community to make a direct contribution to children's learning:

✓ Schemes for involving families in literacy development, are common in England, the USA and elsewhere. These see family members as co-teachers of their children and support them by providing books for child and older family members to read together and instruction in how best to help the child. Other schemes avoid placing family members in the teacher role by encouraging them to enjoy books together. For instance, they can be encouraged to visit the local library or school library together to choose books and can take part in discussion groups where they talk about the books they have read. In other schemes, family members who have limited literacy are taught alongside their children, or are taught literacy skills so that they can help their children to read.

In China, 'parent schools' have been introduced in many kindergartens in order to give parents information on issues in child health, welfare and education and in order to encourage them to be fully involved in their education. In Anhui province, these schools have been transformed into parents' associations which are able to be more influential within the education system.

Where schools educate children with disabilities, they may recognise that the education they provide has to be reinforced continuously in the home if it is to be effective. Therefore, they place a high value on the family's contribution and involve family members in delivering structured teaching programmes to their children.

✓ Action for Autism (AFA), a national non-governmental organisation in India, runs a school called Open Door. The school works on the principle of encouraging active family involvement in children's education. It seeks to

establish a strong relationship between families and professionals while devising a highly individualised, structured programme for each child. Family members are invited and encouraged to observe and participate in the teaching process for three months. This provides and excellent basis of joint training for both family members and professionals.

The results of this collaborative approach have been very encouraging. The approach could be adapted for use in a more inclusive setting and a national workshop carrying this message is organised annually by AFA. In this workshop, families and professionals from all over India and from neighbouring countries come together and share a common platform.

This sort of involvement need not wait until the child begins school. The support and interaction which children receive from family members in the early years are vital to their development. Early intervention to help families play and talk productively with their young children is likely to have an impact on the whole of the child's education. Many countries, therefore, focus their efforts on supporting families at this stage.

✓ In Ethiopia, the Longitudinal Early Psychosocial Intervention Project was run as a collaboration between Addis Ababa University and the University of Oslo, Norway. It focused on promoting the quality of mother-child interaction in low-income families in the first three years of life.

Mothers were helped over three months to interact with their children in ways that promoted learning. At the end of this period, their interactions were assessed using video recordings and were compared with the interactions of mothers who had not been part of the programme. The mothers who had received support were much better at focusing on their children, listening to them, talking to them, playing with them, letting them take the lead and helping them understand their surroundings. The children, too, had developed a range of learning skills that would help them when they started school.

1.3 Families as activists

Families' views on inclusive education can be mixed. This is particularly the case where ordinary schools are not yet capable of responding to diversity and families see segregated provision as a preferable alternative. However, in many cases, it is families, particularly organised into networks, associations and lobby groups, which have played a lead role in moving education systems towards more inclusive approaches:

✓ In Canada, parents have pressed for inclusive education by challenging the legality of segregation in the courts, using educational legislation, human rights arguments and, particularly, the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms,* which enshrines a right to equality for all citizens. The Quebec Association for Social Integration has been particularly successful in lobbying for change in policy and legislation and has developed guidelines for parents on how to be effective in their campaigns. Parents are encouraged and supported:

- to talk about issues affecting them,
- to discuss and find common viewpoints,
- to develop a standard position statement, to write a list of questions usually raised and answers to them,
- to understand the benefits of school inclusion for other learners and the importance of a continuum of services from health, welfare, labour and education, and a successful transition to the world of work.

Parents have been encouraged to create and strengthen alliances with other groups. They are encouraged to write up their experiences of participation in schools and those of others through printed case studies of successful school inclusion. Parents have also worked with trainee teachers, telling them about their experiences in order to promote educational change.

Although families and parental groups will sometimes become active of their own accord, this is less likely to happen where families have been systematically disempowered over many years. It may therefore be necessary to support them in becoming advocates for their own children and in developing advocacy groups. This process can be started by implementing simple strategies at school and community levels. Many schools and local administrations, for instance, set up groups where family members can come together to talk about issues of common concern. In the first instance, it may be necessary for teachers or other professionals to lead these groups. In the longer term, however, group members should be able to run them for themselves. In some cases, schools can simply invite existing associations and networks of families to set up groups in their locality.

There are also strategies which can be implemented at the level of the system as a whole. Some of these can enable families to become involved in promoting and advancing changes in policy and legislation:

✓ Inclusion International, a world-wide federation of parent-driven associations advocating for children and adults with intellectual disability, has worked with local and national associations in many countries. They explore the role that such associations might play in influencing policy where education authorities have not yet addressed the issue of inclusive education. It seems that parent groups can have an impact where they:

- identify schools that are willing to move forward and are interested in staff development
- establish links and partnerships with Ministry of Education and local authorities
- organise information seminar and training workshops to introduce new thinking and new practice
- facilitate school based staff development, monitoring, support, evaluation and dissemination
- engage with educational authorities on policy development in support of inclusive education.

In South Africa, parents associated with Inclusion International have been formally represented on national policy forums dealing with marginalised learners. Organisations such as the Parents' Association for Children with Special Educational Needs (Pacsen), the Disabled Children's Action Group (Dicag) and the Down Syndrome Association have campaigned vigorously on behalf of disabled learners. Working with disabled people's organisations, they have organised public meetings and workshops on inclusive education. With

support from UNESCO and other donor organisations, they have brought international advisers to the country and have used them extensively in teacher education and public awareness campaigns; this has had a significant impact on policy development.

In India, the parent movement has given rise to an organisation called *Parivar* that is working towards raising the awareness of parents. The aim is that parents should raise their expectations of what is possible for their children, particularly for children with intellectual disability. Members of this organisation contributed to the passage of the 1995 Persons with Disabilities Act. The impact of their campaigns and their lobbying at central and state level is most evident in the establishment of a National Trust for The Welfare of Persons with Mental Retardation and Cerebral Palsy. The National Trust Bill was passed by Parliament in 1999.

The international evidence suggests that organisations of and for families are a highly effective way of building family capacity. Local networks can grow into national organisations and can make contacts with their counterparts internationally. They can offer support to individual families, raise public awareness and engage in lobbying and policy-formulation. They can also offer an important means of empowerment for families – particularly, in many cases, women who are themselves marginalised.

The dilemma for administrators and decision-makers is that such organisations lie outside the control of the education system and may press for policies which run counter to those of local and national governments and which may, indeed, be opposed to inclusion. International experience seems to suggest nonetheless, that:

- the advantages of encouraging such groups outweigh the disadvantages
- they should be helped to develop as broad a base of family membership as possible and
- relationships with them are most productive if they are brought into partnership with decision-makers rather than excluded from the decision-making process.

1.4 Families from marginalised groups

A particular issue in promoting family involvement is that the parents of marginalised learners themselves often experience marginalisation. Like their children, they may live in poverty, or in isolated communities, or be members of ethnic and linguistic minorities.

In such situations, the encouragement of family support groups is doubly important, since the group offers parents and other family members the support, confidence and personal development they need. It may also be important to build alliances between family support groups representing learners who experience different forms of marginalisation. In this way, those groups who are better resourced and better informed can offer support to groups whose members have less experience in working with people in positions of power.

✓ In India, Mahila Mandals or Women's Co-operatives were formed to empower impoverished mothers in Asia's largest slum, Dharavi. Women in urban slums, usually uneducated, may be victims of wife-beating and have little or no say in household matters. Women with disabilities and mothers of disabled children are particularly vulnerable.

Along with hygiene, literacy and nutrition, the women were taught basic skills that would generate an income. After they had attained a certain amount of proficiency, job orders were procured and carried out by the members of the co-operative. The payments received for this were divided by the members after deducting expenses.

The incentive for the women was two fold:

- they generated much needed income; and
- they could be with their children who attended the school nearby.

The generation of income led to the women gaining respect and respectability and the sense that they were permitted to have a voice, for instance on matters to do with the education of their children. As a result, articles on inclusion have appeared regularly in the press along with interviews with some of the women as advocates for inclusion. Media and other resources have been mobilised in this way.

As this example shows, if families from marginalised groups are to offer support to their own children and to advocate for more inclusive approaches, it may first be necessary to give them a sense of confidence and self-worth. Whatever opportunities there are for them and their children, and however much these may be formalised in terms of rights and entitlements, it is unlikely that these groups will take them up without some proactive support. However this example also shows that the most effective form of support may be that which members of marginalised groups are able to provide for each other.

This example also shows that marginalisation can be gender-specific in its effects. Women are often the primary care-givers for their children and need support and encouragement to play that role effectively. Moreover, where women take the lead in issues to do with children, they sometimes live in societies where men are expected to take the lead in public affairs and where, as a result, they gain little experience in dealing with professionals and officials.

Fathers may be marginalised in different ways. The government of India, for instance, has recognised that the lack of involvement of fathers in the education of their children is a serious challenge and it is working to increase that involvement alongside the sorts of initiatives reported above which aim to support mothers. In countries such as England, too, the lack of involvement of fathers, particularly in disadvantaged communities, is seen as a problem. It deprives boys in particular of positive role models which they can follow. One response has been to encourage fathers to come into schools and to engage in activities which have come to be seen as mainly female. Many schools, for instance, run 'Dads and Lads' clubs, where fathers work with their sons on school tasks, such as reading.

1.5 Families' rights

The relationship between families and the education system should not be based simply on legal rights and obligations. However, family lobbying has led many countries to recognise the importance of developing a concept of rights for families (usually parents) enshrined in legislation. In particular, such countries recognise that legislation should give the families of marginalised and vulnerable children (such as children with disabilities) the right to a clearly-defined role in decision-making about their child's education – and that this role should be no less than the role ascribed to families of other children.

Many countries (Denmark, England, Italy, Norway and the USA, for instance) have formal and legally-governed systems for the identification and assessment of learners seen as needing specialist intervention and resources. Typically, in such countries, families have a right of involvement to a greater or lesser extent in the decision-making process:

- In Norway, parents must give their written approval before an assessment can take place and before any placement in special school.
- In Italy, parents work with health and social services professionals in drawing up a profile of the child's strengths and difficulties, on the basis of which curriculum planning can take place.
- In England, parents have a right to be informed and involved as soon as the school suspects their child may be experiencing difficulties. If any form of specialist intervention is proposed, parents have to be consulted and they have the right of appeal to an independent Tribunal if they disagree with decisions made by professionals.

1.6 Family involvement in governance

The involvement of families in decision-making may also be secured by reserving places for them on decision-making bodies, such as school or district boards:

✓ In Finland, every school has a school board, including representatives from parents and the school staff. One of the functions of the board is to approve the curriculum developed in the school and the contribution that parents can make to this task is seen as of great importance. Parents therefore become involved in curriculum preparation work, such as deciding what themes are to be tackled during the school year.

In Bihar, India, non-formal schools have been set up to teach the large number of children in marginalised communities who cannot enrol in formal schools because of the strong caste bias in society. The teachers – women, where possible – are drawn from the same community. *Mata Samiti* or mothers' committee members play an active role in the management of the schools. They are involved in selecting and appointing teachers, procuring materials and making sure that children attend school.

In South Africa, radical changes in policy regarding parents' roles are being implemented. For instance, parents' wishes have to be taken into account, but they have no specific rights of veto or appeal. However, educational legislation as a whole is framed in terms of rights. Moreover, South Africa follows another common path to protecting the rights of parents, which is to give them a formal role in the governance of schools. The South African Schools Act (1996) stipulates that parental representatives should constitute the majority of schools' governing bodies and allows for the co-option of other community members.

There are, however, dangers in involving parents in this way. In Sweden, for instance, experiments are being undertaken with school boards where parents make up the majority of members. Preliminary evaluations suggest that those parents who engage in this work do so mainly in order to support their own children. They may not fully take account of the diverse needs of the student population as a whole. Moreover, parent board members

tend to be drawn from those parts of the parent body which are best resourced economically and socially.

As the Swedish example shows, particular efforts are needed to ensure that the families of marginalised learners are represented and that those family members who do participate in governance will pursue inclusive policies on behalf of the community as a whole. However, parents and family members are clearly capable of participating in school governance and their involvement offers an important counterbalance to professional control.

Which of these routes countries follow will depend greatly on their legislative traditions and cultures. However, while legislative protection is an important basis for parental involvement, it is not in itself enough. Not all parents and family members are capable of taking up their legal rights in order to battle for more inclusive provision. Other forms of parental involvement are therefore essential complements to legislative protection.

2 Building partnerships: wider community involvement

The involvement of the wider community is even less well-developed in many countries than is family involvement. Where communities are themselves marginalised, or where there is no tradition of involvement in education, it is common for the wider community either to be ignored entirely or to be seen simply as the recipient of services provided by professionals. Nonetheless, some countries have taken the view that the purpose of schools is to serve their communities rather than the interests of professionals and have established structures which enable communities to be fully involved in running their school systems:

✓ In Bolivia, the Education Reform Legislation of July 1994 established formal mechanisms for community participation in education. These include the following:

- In the class council, children can participate in matters related to the general organisation of the class. This provides an opportunity for the students to evaluate their development as a group and to establish agreements on future actions.
- The School Board (formed by community members), the Area Boards and the District Boards – on which representatives of the School Boards and the Area Boards serve – are responsible for planning and monitoring curricular activities, and for the management of educational and human resources.
- Departmental Councils, First People's Councils and a National Council on Education are formed from representatives of the various Boards and other community members, in order to monitor, evaluate and develop the activities of the Boards.

Sometimes, the impetus for community involvement comes from local initiatives rather than from national legislation:

✓ In Porto Alegre, Brazil, the Workers' Party municipal government set up a system of 'participatory budgeting'. Government officials attend weekly meetings at which they report on how the budget is being spent and decide on future priorities. The community elects representatives to attend these meetings on their behalf and the meetings are in any case open to all. This system has been in operation for over a decade and has developed so that schools can now present projects that they would like to undertake. Those projects that win the most votes from the community receive funding.

This system has had its problems, but the general view is that it has been successful. Other municipal governments and other political parties are interested in setting up similar systems. In particular, because community members are involved in making decisions about educational provision, they have become much more knowledgeable about how the education system works.

Both of these examples are extensions of the involvement of families in school governance because the community is involved in the management of the system as a whole rather than of a particular school. As with involvement in school governance, there is often a problem in trying to secure the involvement of marginalised groups who may feel excluded from normal decision-making processes. However, there is growing international evidence that even very disadvantaged communities have internal resources which can be mobilised by means of relatively low levels of support. In many countries, religious and social organisations create a powerful infrastructure, providing support, advocacy and education to their members. Elsewhere, members of religious and ethnic minorities form their own support networks which may supplement the formal efforts of the state education system.

✓ At a school in the West End of Brisbane, Australia, the school buildings are used extensively by the community outside school hours. Five ethnic schools (Vietnamese, Fijian, Chinese, Turkish and Iranian) use the premises each weekend. In other countries, such as the UK and the USA, community groups from religious and ethnic minorities organise supplementary schools of this kind (see also Topic 4). Partly, these support students' work in the mainstream curriculum; partly, they keep alive the community's linguistic and cultural heritage.

In Western Cape Province in South Africa, disadvantaged communities are establishing community learning centres, perhaps based in municipal libraries and focusing on tackling illiteracy and developing other basic skills. The Cape Flats Development Association, for instance, offers support to intellectually disabled learners, together with social activities (such as ballet) and vocational guidance. These initiatives are supported by the national Reconstruction and Development Programme which has 'forums' based in each community.

There is also a particular contribution which members of marginalised or minority groups can make in promoting inclusive approaches within ordinary schools. By becoming involved with schools, they can raise the status of the groups to which they belong and/or can offer role models to learners within those groups. For instance, members of cultural, ethnic or religious minorities can make a direct contribution to the curriculum by explaining their customs and practices to learners from majority groups. Similarly, parents

of disabled children or representatives of disability groups may have a role to play in 'demystifying' disability for both students and teachers.

In some cases, the most telling contribution will come not from direct attempts to explain minority cultures, but from the mere presence of minority group members in positions of responsibility in schools. In some countries, therefore, there is a deliberate policy of trying to ensure that members of minority ethnic groups are fully represented in the teaching force.

There is also growing evidence that learners who are members of minority or marginalised groups can benefit from having access to positive role models from those same groups. These role models need not necessarily be teachers. For instance, some schools have 'mentoring' schemes whereby learners who are felt to be at risk have regular one-to-one sessions with adult or young adult members of their own group who have successfully overcome those risk factors.

✓ In Portugal, there are two schools which are located in a deprived neighbourhood where a high number of African families are living. The number of challenges faced by this community is enormous: poverty, illiteracy among adults, behaviour misconduct among adolescents, and so on.

In order to cope with this situation, these two schools decided to include in their staff young adults who are members of the local communities and who act as "mediators". These mediators are selected from volunteers in the families living in the neighbourhood. In order to become mediators, they have to participate in an initial training programme (based at the school) and have to continue this training in group sessions throughout the year.

This experience has been very successful. It has facilitated communication between the school, the families and the community; helped to solve problems concerning school-family interaction; created a positive image of the school among parents and community members; and made it possible to support students who are reluctant to communicate with the professionals in the school. The mediators, belonging to the community, can talk with parents easily (in many cases they already know them) and they can play an important role in developing the links between them and the other members of the school staff. When some students run out of school they are often able to contact them and to talk to their peer groups outside the school (for instance, with gangs of which they are members).

3 Building partnerships: the school as a community resource

Most strategies for building partnerships between schools, families and communities focus on finding ways in which families and communities can support the school. However, the school can also act as a resource for the community. This means that it provides services and facilities which promote the life of the community but which are not necessarily to do with education.

Many schools do this informally. They are obvious places where community groups can meet and teachers are obvious leaders of some community activities. In some schools, this role is more fully developed:

✓ A primary school serving an economically poorer area in the north-east of England has established a strong community role. It accepts children from the age of three into its nursery and it also offers child care facilities for all its students before and after school. In this area, it is often women who are able to find work most easily and the child care facility means that they can take a job without having to worry about collecting their children from school as soon as the normal day is over.

The school has established links with a local college which offers courses to train unemployed adults for work. A bus collects parents from the school after they have delivered their children in the morning and takes them to the college. They take the courses during the day and are back in time to collect their children in the afternoon.

The school welcomes parents and community members as volunteer helpers. It also also employs out-of-work parents and other community members as classroom assistants. It offers them training and qualifications and some can even go on to become teachers.

Schools such as this build positive relationships with parents and communities which means that they are more likely to support the school's work with their children. At the same time, they help to promote the development of the community so that children grow up in a more supportive environment.

Another strategy which many schools have adopted internationally is to establish themselves as a base for a range of community services. These 'full-service' schools offer families a single point of access to services which they might otherwise find it difficult to approach. These services are also available to support children and to work with them and their families in a holistic way (see also Topic 4 on organising support).

✓ The idea of the 'full-service school', originated in the USA but is now being adopted more widely in Europe and beyond. Although such schools take many forms, the basic principle is that a range of agencies are based in the school or have clear links with it. This means that children experiencing difficulties are more likely to receive integrated services from the various agencies. If the school operates as a community resource, it also means that parents and other members of the community can use the school as a 'one stop shop' where they can access a wide range of services. This encourages them to see the school as an important part of the community and to be more willing to become involved with the school in the education of their children.

Such schools are characterised by:

- close links with the local community, including involvement of the community in developing the school's approach
- a curriculum which is designed to reflect the cultural background of the school's students
- a range of services provided both to students and to community members; this might include, for instance, health care, housing advice and support, drug programmes, employment advice, additional language tuition and crisis intervention
- a partnership approach to developing and managing the school between the education service, other social agencies and voluntary organisations and other NGOs.

IMPLICATIONS AND QUESTIONS

This topic has stressed the importance of the involvement of families and communities as partners in supporting inclusive education. The relationship between families, communities and professionals can act as a powerful support for more inclusive practices where it is based on mutual respect and a willingness to work collaboratively. It can also hinder the development of these practices if parents and communities are kept at arm's length. Some family and community members, of course, will participate more in their children's education than others. What matters in an inclusive system of education is that their role is recognised and their views and opinion are valued and respected.

In reviewing the current situation, administrators and decision-makers might wish to consider the following questions:

- **What forms of involvement can families and communities have in supporting children's education?**
- **How can they be enabled to make their knowledge of their children available to schools?**
- **What involvement can families have in decision-making regarding their children and how far should this be protected by legislation? Should that protection be in terms of broader rights, of involvement in school governance, of specific procedures or in terms of all of these?**
- **How can families and community groups have a voice in the local and national policy-making process? Does this demand formal legal entitlements and decision-making structures, or more informal strategies which are appropriate in particular cultures and situations?**
- **How can families and communities from marginalised groups become involved in education? How can their involvement be encouraged and supported?**
- **How can community educational resources be mobilised? What infrastructures already exist and how can national and local government support community initiatives?**
- **How can schools operate as a community resource? What scope is there for schools to take part in community development or to act as the base for a range of other services?**

6

TOPIC 6: Developing an Inclusive Curriculum

KEY ISSUES

- The curriculum has to be structured and to be capable of being taught in such a way that *all* students can access it.
- The curriculum has to be underpinned by a model of learning which is itself inclusive. It needs to accommodate a range of learning styles and to emphasise skills and knowledge which are relevant to students.
- The curriculum should have sufficient flexibility for responding to the needs of particular students, communities and religious, linguistic, ethnic or other groups. Therefore it cannot be *rigidly* prescribed at national or central level.
- The curriculum needs to have basic levels which students with varying levels of entry skills can access. Progress needs to be managed and assessed so that all students experience success.
- More inclusive curricula make greater demands on teachers and they will need support in implementing them effectively.

RATIONALE

The curriculum embraces all the learning experiences that are available to students in their schools and communities. At its heart are the planned teaching and learning opportunities which are available in ordinary classroom – the 'formal' curriculum of schools. However, there are many other potential learning experiences which are more difficult to plan, but which can certainly be influenced by schools and other parts of the education system. These include:

- interactions amongst students
- interactions between students and teachers in and out of the classroom and
- the learning experiences that are available in the community – within the family, for instance, or in other social or religious organisations.

Although this topic focuses mainly on the formal curriculum, it is important that it is seen as part of this wider range of learning experiences.

The formal curriculum has to serve at least two purposes:

- It has to embody all the knowledge, skills and values which the country wishes its young people to acquire.
- It has to deliver quality education to students, both in terms of the level of engagement it generates and the outcomes it produces.

Above all, the curriculum has to achieve these purposes for *all* students equally. It therefore has to be rigorous, but it also has to be flexible enough to respond to the very diverse characteristics of students.

EXAMPLES OF STRATEGIES

1 Broadening the definition of learning

Developing a curriculum which is inclusive of all learners may well involve broadening the definition of learning which is used by teachers and decision-makers in the education system. So long as learning is understood as the acquisition of bodies of knowledge presented by the teacher, schools are likely to be locked into rigidly-organised curricula and teaching practices. Commonly, therefore, inclusive curricula are based on a view of learning as something which takes place when students are actively involved in making sense of their experiences. Learners, in other words, cannot simply be *told* what is the case; they have to find things out and understand things for themselves.

Such a view emphasises the role of the teacher as facilitator rather than instructor. This makes it easier for a diverse group of students to be educated together, since they do not all have to be at the same point in their learning or receive the same instruction from their teacher. Instead, they have to work at their own pace and in their own way within a common framework of activities and objectives. This view assumes that students often learn most effectively from each other, either by working together to understand some problem or by students who are more advanced helping those who are working at a lower level. This

means that child-to-child help is not only a low-cost way of including a diverse range of students in the classroom, it is also an effective way of enabling all students to learn.

Approaches based on this view demand that the classroom is organised differently from the traditional teacher-dominated model:

✓ This example is of a Basic School (grades 1-9), located in a socio-economically deprived suburb of Lisbon, Portugal. The attainments of students have historically been low and the school has used the flexibility of the Portuguese curriculum to address this problem. The traditional form of organisation – one teacher to one class – has been replaced by a more flexible structure. Specialist teachers work with classes and there is a greater emphasis on project work addressing cross-curricular objectives. Project work is the responsibility of specially-trained teachers who liase closely with the class teachers. The project approach is now beginning to influence the remainder of the curriculum, delivered by class teachers.

In addition to project work, a range of activities take place outside the classroom, either as part of the formal curriculum or as out-of-hours clubs. These include sports, library, story corner, music, visual arts, English and informatics. A 'supported study' time also appears on the timetable in order to address the difficulties students experience due to the lack of favourable conditions for homework in many of their homes and their own lack of strategies for individual study. This time is also used for work on social attitudes and citizenship.

Students with severe learning difficulties attend some lessons in this school, with help from a support teacher and the adaptation of curricular programmes. There is also a programme called the 'grade after the 9th grade' for students who do not achieve the 9th grade diploma. This combines a general academic programme with social and cultural development, technical training (tile making, computerised design, project design and materials technology) and workshops (tile, clay, woodwork, home economics).

An approach of this kind means that teachers have to provide opportunities to students to work together and to tackle tasks in their own chosen way. There is likely to be an emphasis on students' solving problems and undertaking extended pieces of work under their own direction. The teacher is also likely to spend much of her/his time working with groups and individuals rather than instructing the whole class.

This approach creates maximum flexibility for giving *all* students access to the curriculum. However, it is not the only approach that is possible. Others emphasise the importance of direct instruction by the teacher.

✓ In the USA the 'Success for All' programme has been designed to raise attainment in schools serving disadvantaged areas. Teachers are trained to work intensively with their classes on literacy and other skills. They are clear what skills they wish their students to learn, make use of prepared programmes of teaching and place the emphasis on a high level of interaction with all of their students. Students who struggle to acquire skills receive additional individual tuition and schools also work intensively with students' families where there are problems in the home.

In England, the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are based in part on Success for All. They require most primary (5-11) schools to set aside

a fixed amount of time for literacy and numeracy teaching and to follow a prescribed programme. The teacher works intensively with the whole class, instructing them in the same skills and engaging in a high level of interaction with all the students. As in Success for All, there are structured opportunities for small group and individual work and students who struggle to learn are offered additional tuition.

These strategies are not about a return to traditional didactic forms of teaching. They are not simply a case of the teacher passing on information within a prescribed curriculum in the hope that students will be able to make sense of it. They are based on intensive and highly-planned interactions between teacher and class aimed at ensuring that every student masters the same skills.

There are many arguments around these and other approaches to teaching and learning. From the perspective of inclusive education, it is important that a *range* of approaches is encouraged so that students are not marginalised by a single dominant approach which does not meet their needs. It is not enough, therefore, for teachers to be well-informed about the content of the curriculum. They also need to understand the approaches to learning which underpin it and to be able to call upon a repertoire of teaching styles as the need arises.

2 Cultural relevance

Many countries have inherited curricula with in-built cultural assumptions which alienate some students. In South Africa, for instance, the curriculum had to be reformed not only because of its inflexibility, but because it was based on the assumptions of apartheid and failed to acknowledge the history or cultural contribution of the majority population in the country. In other countries in transition, curriculum reform is often driven by similar concerns.

In many countries, there are some groups whose cultures and traditions are not represented in curricula and who are not depicted in curriculum materials. Such groups may include ethnic or religious minorities, disabled people, women and so on. More subtly, the ways of learning valued in dominant cultures may exclude alternative ways of learning (e.g. individualistic and competitive learning may be privileged over co-operative learning). Often, teaching is not available in the first language of minority linguistic groups and even where it is, the sign language for deaf people and augmented forms of communication such as BLISS may not enjoy a similar status.

There are a number of ways in which these issues have been addressed:

- As countries develop more inclusive approaches, it is possible for individual schools and teachers to adapt the curriculum to local needs and cultural differences. In countries such as Bolivia, Canada, Paraguay or South Africa, for instance, multi-culturalism and multi-lingualism are major issues. In these countries, more than one language is accepted for curriculum delivery and the acknowledgement of cultural diversity permeates the curriculum.
- In other countries, issues to do with cultural diversity and the status of minority groups are built into curriculum materials. In Chile, a maths text, for instance, may use examples which show women or minority group members in a positive light and will try to exclude all discriminatory language.

- In other countries, subjects such as 'citizenship' or 'personal and social education' appear on the timetable and offer opportunities for issues of cultural diversity and discrimination to be addressed explicitly. In Australia, for instance, there has been an attempt at national level to define 'cultural understanding' as a Key Competency which all students should acquire.

3 Curriculum flexibility

Most countries recognise that it is necessary to prescribe the curriculum at some level above that of the individual school (i.e. the municipality, the state or the national level). This helps to ensure that the curriculum will help to achieve national goals. Many countries feel that it is important that the centrally-prescribed curriculum applies to all students and that none is excluded from it, so that all students share some basic common entitlements. However, the more fully the curriculum is prescribed at the centre, the more important it is to take into account the differences between students and the needs of particular communities and to develop strategies to address these.

3.1 Strategies for curriculum flexibility

Countries have introduced flexibility in two ways:

- They may prescribe a 'core' curriculum, but encourage schools and local authorities to develop other content areas or courses within the curriculum at local level. The core may be in terms of a limited number of content areas (for instance, first language, mathematics and, perhaps, science and second language) or of a minimal prescribed content across a wider range of content areas.
- They may prescribe the curriculum, not in terms of detailed content to be learned, but of broad objectives. Schools then have the flexibility to pursue these objectives through whatever content and teaching methods they feel are appropriate to meet students' educational needs.

In practice, as the following examples show, most countries use some mixture of these two approaches:

✓ Portugal is developing a flexible and inclusive curriculum to replace the existing rigid and content-heavy one. The new curriculum is not based on the detailed specification of content, but on the development of fundamental competencies in three areas:

- competence in becoming an autonomous student;
- the development of appropriate attitudes and social skills;
- individual development and the search for quality of life.

Starting with these principles, the curriculum specifies a core curriculum, the competencies that students should have achieved by the end of the 9th grade and a set of 'transversal' (or cross-curricular) learning contents: time and space, diversity in nature and in societies, environment, ethics and citizenship, problem-solving, artistic and aesthetic education.

Within this framework, schools are free to propose their own learning programmes and organise their own timetables and teaching methods.

The structure in Catalunya is different, but the end result is much the same – a curriculum specified in general terms at central level, but open to adaptation by schools in order to meet the needs of their students:

✓ In Catalunya, Spain, schools' curricula are based on general principles which are set out in prescriptions established by the Catalan Government. The state specifies:

- competencies to be developed
- subject-areas in the curriculum
- general objectives
- broad contents of the curriculum
- long-term goals.

Although there is considerable curriculum flexibility at school level, it is still necessary for each school to set out what it intends to provide for each educational stage.

However, the curriculum can be modified to take into account the needs and characteristics of each school. This flexibility is the basis for adapting the learning process to students' needs. Any modifications must be shown in the schools' policy documents which must specify:

- the school's educational goals
- the school's curriculum design
- the school's year grade plan.

In addition, class teachers can make further modifications for individual students. Some students may also have an individual educational programme which can only be modified with the consent of parents, teachers and the school advisory team.

In both of these examples, schools have considerable freedom to adapt the curriculum. However, there are also systems for monitoring how schools use that freedom. In this way, the need for flexibility is balanced by the need for quality assurance and some degree of consistency across schools.

3.2 Ways of organising the curriculum

In both the Portuguese and Catalan examples cited above, the curriculum is specified at national or state level in terms of broad learning objectives rather than detailed content. This has the important advantage of creating the flexibility for a more cross-curricular/ cross-content-areas form of curriculum organisation. It also makes it easier for teachers to find ways of meeting these broad objectives through learning experiences that are meaningful to their students. For instance:

- Basic skills such as communication or numeracy can be taught through history, geography, science or almost any other content area. All of these content areas provide opportunities for learning basic skills to a greater or lesser extent.
- Alternatively, they can be delivered through a classroom project which is not tied to any particular content area. This gives teachers considerable flexibility in designing the curriculum at school level. It also creates the potential for a curriculum which is related closely to students' interests and experience and does not demand that they be enthused by traditional academic subjects.

✓ In Caribbean schools, current curriculum changes in mathematics contain one clear message: mathematics should relate intimately and in distinctive ways to other subjects in the curriculum. Teachers are discovering that subjects such as biology, economics and sociology, for example, are much richer in mathematical content and concepts than had been supposed. Because students learn their mathematics in the context of these subjects, rather than simply as a subject in its own right, not only is their learning of mathematics reinforced by its constant use, but they put their maths skills to practical uses and therefore see them as being more meaningful than might otherwise be the case.

What is happening here in terms of mathematics happens elsewhere in terms of literacy, social studies and other content areas. This approach offers considerable scope for creative teachers to develop a curriculum which will meet the needs of their students and which will seem to be meaningful to them. However, some countries have found that the distinctive skills and knowledge of particular content areas can be lost if the curriculum is organised too much in terms of cross-curricular themes and projects. It is important, therefore, to keep a balance between the flexibility of cross-curricular organisation and the clarity of organisation in terms of separate content areas.

3.3 Adaptation and modification of curriculum

Inclusive curricula are constructed flexibly not only to allow for *school-level* adaptations and developments, but also to allow for adaptations and modifications to meet *individual* student's needs and teachers' styles of working:

✓ In Argentina, the regulations governing special needs education allow for individual adaptations. These are defined as:

"...the strategies and additional educational resources that are implemented by schools in order to facilitate the access and progress of students with special needs to the curriculum."

The regulations add the condition that, however the curriculum is adapted, it must nonetheless provide students with the same subject matter, depth and enrichment as that to which all other students have access.

The process of *adaptation* is different from *modification* of the curriculum because it takes place within the context of the curriculum which all other students access. It usually involves personalised teaching supported by relevant materials or teaching aids. Where the school has its own special/resource teachers or has access to peripatetic services, they will play a role in planning adaptations collaboratively and, perhaps, in delivering them. However, the main responsibility lies with the class teacher who has to deliver the bulk of the adapted curriculum.

Adaptation has to be monitored carefully. If it is used too liberally, it leads to separate programmes delivered in the same classroom. Modification involves going one step further than adaptation. It means changing the curriculum – adding or substituting courses or content to meet individual students' needs. Modifications are even more likely to lead to separate forms of provision. However, the dangers of this approach can be countered if

modification is used sparingly and is done in the context of national educational goals which apply to all students.

✓ Based on the definitions above, an example of the difference between an adaptation and a modification of the curriculum might be as follows:

To graduate from high school, students are required to complete two years of a second language. A number of students need *adaptations* of the curriculum. These adaptations vary and are based on each student's individual needs. They include: using large print textbooks and materials; taking any written components of the second language tests orally; completing all written projects orally; working three periods a week with a peer tutor; completing only the odd number of questions on worksheets; and having a peer note-taker.

A few students need *modifications* of the curriculum. Modifications require more changes of the curriculum than adaptations. Some students may need to take the two-year second language program over a period of four years – with various modifications to the course objectives and content. Other students may need to have the second language courses waived. Instead of the second language courses, these students may be required to take additional first language courses or they may substitute the second language requirement with additional elective courses.

A key issue for policy-makers is how they enable schools to make adaptations and modifications for individual students and how far they encourage the use of each. Highly flexible curricula are difficult to monitor and therefore governments tend to favour some degree of central prescription. Where this is the case, it is important that the curriculum is developed with the needs of the full range of students in mind. If it is designed for those who are the highest attainers or even for the majority of the population who have no particular difficulties, it will inevitably mean that some students will be unable to access it. As a result, they will either have to be taught separately or to receive inappropriate experiences.

In general terms, adaptations are easier and modifications less necessary where:

- the curriculum is specified centrally in terms of broad objectives rather than detailed content
- cross-curricular approaches are possible and
- there is scope for each school and teacher to develop their own approaches to delivering the curriculum.

Under these circumstances, *every* student is likely to receive a curriculum experience which is tailored to her/his needs but within the context of a common framework and the ordinary classroom. Meeting those needs, therefore, does not require students to be taught separately from their peers or to be identified as failures in order to follow an individual programme.

3.4 *Developing inclusive assessment, accreditation and progression*

If strategies for curriculum flexibility are to be effective, they have to be accompanied by similar strategies for allowing flexibility in assessment and accreditation (see also Topic 3 on assessment in inclusive systems). Such strategies are essential for ensuring that students progress through the curriculum and that their individual needs and characteristics are understood and accommodated. For instance, appropriate assessment enables:

- students who are talented and gifted to move at their natural learning pace
- students who progress more slowly than their peers to move at their own pace whilst still being part of the content of themes and lessons
- students experiencing specific learning problems to receive creative and effective support to maximise their success.

It is important to avoid or to dismantle assessment systems whose principal concern is simply whether the student has reached the necessary level for them to move on to the next grade. Countries have used a range of strategies to address this issue:

- *They break or weaken the link between assessment and progression.* This may involve making progression to the next grade depend only on age rather than attainment, or on limiting the number of times a particular student can be retained within a grade level. It may also involve organising progression not in terms of grades but in terms of 'cycles' of two to three years:

  ✓ In Bolivia, primary education is organised around cycles rather than grades. The primary phase lasts eight years, during which there are three cycles: the basic learning cycle, the essential learning cycle and the applied learning cycle. Within each cycle, teachers are encouraged to follow the natural learning patterns of individual students rather than to preserve a uniform pace.

  A similar system was introduced in some states and municipalities of Brazil from 1996 onwards. However, some believe that this has led to 'automatic approval' of students by teachers without rigorous assessment. They argue that it is not about creating an inclusive curriculum, but about lowering the apparent failure rate in the Brazilian education system in order to improve the country's standing in international comparisons. The problem seems to be that the change to cycles was undertaken in some places without much discussion of what was involved. It is now clear that it is a major change whose implications need to be though through carefully before it is introduced.

- *They relate assessment to the broad objectives on which the curriculum is based rather than to the mastery of specified content.* Since these objectives tend to be cross-curricular and indicate what the student should be able to *do* rather than what content s/he has learned, assessment can be much more flexible. It can take place as and when the student acquires particular competencies rather than when the teacher finishes teaching particular blocks of content. It can also take place in naturalistic settings (e.g. normal classroom activities), rather than through formal tests and examinations. This means that it can be designed and undertaken by teachers rather than depending on centrally-devised and – administered tests. Naturalistic assessment of competencies is also likely to favour students who do not do well at traditional tests or who

have gaps in their schooling which make it difficult for them to master large bodies of content-knowledge systematically.

✓ Until recently, South Africa had rigid curricula dominated by traditional forms of assessment and a grade system. It has now adopted 'Outcomes-Based Education' (OBE) where the specification of (often culturally-biased) content is replaced by the specification of 'essential' and 'specific' outcomes. These are accompanied by 'assessment criteria' and 'performance indicators' against which students' achievement of the outcomes can be assessed.

The previously examination-dominated curriculum has given way to one which now permits modular credit accumulation with frequent assessment. It also means that work-related competencies can be incorporated into the curriculum and that multiple pathways can be opened up into further education and training. This means that the school curriculum is linked more closely to the post-school world.

- *They develop flexible forms of accreditation.* Traditional forms of end-point assessment test the acquisition of bodies of knowledge and rely on pencil-and-paper examinations. They effectively exclude many students who do not have the skills necessary to do well in these assessments – though they may have other types of skill and knowledge. Many of these students would benefit from adaptations and/or modifications to the curriculum. Maintaining the traditional forms of accreditation means that a large numbers of students will continue to leave school with no form of accreditation and will be disadvantaged in the labour market and adult word. Flexible assessment procedures can lead naturally to flexible systems of accreditation. If assessment is competency-based and progression is not determined by attainment, then all students can be accredited for what they can do at the end of schooling. If the competencies specified for the school curriculum are work-related and link to competencies specified for further education and training, then students can progress from schooling to lifelong learning, regardless of their attainments.

✓ For some years, England has been grappling with the problem of large numbers of students achieving no accreditation at the end of their statutory schooling (at age 16) and failing to progress to further education and training. The solution has been to develop, alongside traditional academic qualifications, a set of vocational qualifications which are competence-based. Students can begin to work towards these qualifications while they are still at school, but they can also build on them in further education and training when they have left school. A recent proposal is for a common outcome for all young people at 19, to be called 'graduation'. This will combine traditional academic outcomes with vocational outcomes and common 'core' skills (communication, numeracy, etc.). Students will be able to pursue many pathways (including learning in the workplace) towards graduation.

In order to help students through these multiple pathways, a new service has been set up, known as the Connexions Service. This offers support to all students towards the end of their school careers, but focuses on those most likely to drop out of education. Personal advisers work with such students to help them make the transition at the age of 16 from statutory schooling to further education and training.

4 Enabling teachers and schools to work with inclusive curricula

4.1 The demands of inclusive curricula

The effectiveness of the curriculum depends in the long run on the skills and attitudes of classroom teachers. However, teachers may prefer to work with a traditional curriculum for a number of reasons:

- they may have little training, or have been trained in the 'frontal method' where they simply stand at the front of the class and pass on information
- they may have limited subject knowledge and feel more comfortable with a traditional curriculum which relies on the knowledge they have acquired through their initial training or which is contained in text books
- they may feel more confident with a traditional curriculum which requires the teacher to make fewer decisions about how to respond to the diversity of their students
- they may gain a real sense of professional satisfaction that their students are learning something tangible.

The sorts of inclusive curricula outlined here, however, make considerable demands on teachers:

- they have to become involved in curriculum development at local level and skilled in curriculum adaptation in their own classrooms
- they have to manage complex ranges of classroom activities
- they have to be skilled in planning and preparing to allow the participation of all students
- they have to know how to support their students' learning without simply giving them predetermined answers and
- they have to work outside traditional subject boundaries and in culturally-sensitive ways.

In some countries, ambitious curriculum reforms have run into difficulties because these demands were under-estimated. The South African reforms described above, for instance, have experienced considerable difficulties because many teachers in that country are under-trained, because the morale of the teaching force is low and because the resourcing of some schools cannot support the learning activities that are envisaged by the curriculum.

4.2 Support for teachers

To some extent, these issues can be addressed through effective teacher training and development (see Topic 2 of the Open File). It is sufficient to make three points here:

- Teachers need more than just subject knowledge. They also need to know how children learn, how to understand individual differences and how to match teaching to those differences.
- The management of the curriculum in an inclusive classroom is a major pedagogical and organisational challenge. Teachers need *practical* experience and knowledge together with ongoing support to help them embed effective techniques into their daily practice.

- Given finite resources, it will usually be impossible when a new curriculum is introduced to offer extended training to all teachers and therefore it is usually necessary to identify curriculum 'leaders'. These may be headteachers, or subject specialists or, as in the Portuguese example, teachers who are specialists in project work. Because of their leadership role, their training will focus not only on their own teaching methods, but on how they can work with their colleagues to help them to work with the new curriculum.

However, teachers will need other forms of support. Again, these are dealt with in detail in other topics of the Open File, but a number of points can be emphasised here:

- *Teachers can be supported through the establishment of resource centres close to schools* where they can meet to share information and experience, participate in professional development events and access or develop teaching materials. It is helpful if work at the resource centre is seen as an integral part of the teacher's duties and is funded accordingly. This may also involve the creation of a small fund to enable teachers to participate in training activities rather than expecting them to pay for all training themselves.
- *Teachers can be supported by the production of curriculum materials at national or local level.* Inclusive approaches may well be resource-intensive, but very few teachers have the time or resources to create all of their materials. In some countries (such as Chile, for instance) there has been an investment in materials at national level. These make the teacher's task easier, promote inclusive pedagogical styles and incorporate inclusive values. Carefully-designed materials can become agents of change within schools. However, materials *alone* will not bring about change and in Chile their introduction has been accompanied by professional development activities, including the opportunity for teachers to work together in deciding how to use the materials most effectively in their local circumstances.
- *Teachers can be supported by being introduced to techniques of curriculum adaptation and multi-layered teaching.* They need to know: how to make adaptations to curriculum materials and activities to meet particular student characteristics (such as disability or limited literacy, for instance); how to structure curriculum activities so that students at different levels of attainment can participate in them; and how to manage classrooms where multiple activities are going on at the same time.
- *Teachers can be supported by giving them access to colleagues who are already familiar with these techniques and/or by encouraging collaborative work at school level.* The school-based learning support teacher can have a particular role in curriculum development and support if s/he is not restricted to working with individual students.
- *The demands on teachers can be reduced by making the curriculum framework as simple as possible.* There is a danger of attempting to specify the curriculum in very great detail, with large numbers of competencies, complicated sets of cross-curricular themes, complex and frequent assessment procedures and so on. This was the case in England, where many teachers found the National Curriculum virtually unworkable. The solution has been to simplify the curriculum and increase the level of flexibility at school level.
- *Collaboration and joint planning can be encouraged amongst school staff.* Because of the importance of local curriculum adaptation and development, teachers need to have the opportunity to work together in the school and, possibly,

across schools in particular localities. In the Lisbon school described earlier, the management of the school initiated a series of regular meetings for teams of teachers to work on curriculum development, and supported these meetings by issuing a series of planning files and support papers.

There may be a particular role in collaborative work for special educators with an extended 'resource teacher' role, for peripatetic teachers and for school-based problem-solving teams. Instead of simply working on a case-by-case basis, these individuals and teams can become involved in curriculum development and adaptation. For instance, 'Methods and Resource' teachers in New Brunswick, Canada, use their detailed knowledge of individual student's needs to help their class-teacher colleagues plan programmes for the individual and to adapt the curriculum so that it is more appropriate for a diverse range of students.

Many of the strategies for collaborative work at school level are, of course, dealt with in more detail in UNESCO Teacher Education Resource Pack: Special Needs in the Classroom.

Implications and Questions

There is a danger of seeing the move to inclusive education as being simply about structural change in education systems. This danger is particularly strong for administrators and decision-makers who tend not to work with students on a daily basis. However, there are good reasons for arguing that the development of an inclusive curriculum is the most important pre-condition of inclusive education and that inflexible and content-heavy curricula are the major cause of segregation and exclusion.

In planning the move to inclusive education, therefore, users of the Open File might need to consider the following questions:

- **What aspects of the current curriculum are likely to promote exclusion? Is it, for instance, too inflexible to permit local and individual adaptation? Does it alienate certain social and cultural groups? Does it permit progression and accreditation for all students?**
- **What model of learning underpin the curriculum? How far does this contribute to inclusive education?**
- **What level of curriculum specification is necessary at national level, and how much discretion can be left to the local level?**
- **What balance is needed between the specification of content and the specification of objectives and outcomes. How far should the curriculum be organised horizontally (in terms of cross-curricular outcomes) as opposed to vertically (in terms of content areas)?**
- **What sorts of assessment and accreditation procedures are possible? How far can these remain flexible and in the hands**

of teachers? What accreditation can be offered to students whose attainments are low? How can a common accreditation framework be established which leads students from statutory schooling to further education and training?

- What steps can be taken to ensure that the curriculum is inclusive in its impact on diverse social and cultural groups in the country? How much can be left to local adaptation and how much does diversity need to be acknowledged in the design of the curriculum? In what language(s) is the curriculum to be delivered and what implications will this have for different linguistic groups in the country?
- How can schools and teachers be supported in implementing the curriculum? Are its demands manageable given the current state of the teacher workforce? What training is necessary and what arrangements are to be made to foster local development and collaborative planning?

7

TOPIC 7: Managing Finance to Support Inclusive Systems

KEY ISSUES

- All countries face difficulties in finding adequate funds for education. It is important, therefore, to find ways of meeting students' needs which do not always call for extra funds and other resources.
- It is important to establish partnerships between governments and other potential funding-providers.
- The separation of special and mainstream funding needs to be overcome and alternative methods for distributing funding have to be developed.
- It may be necessary to fund programmes for overcoming disadvantage and equalising opportunities.
- Funding-providers have to be aware of the strategic behaviour that schools and others display, and have to use it for more inclusive purposes.
- It may be necessary to set up monitoring systems to ensure that funding and other resources are used appropriately and effectively.
- Even though levels of funding differ from country to country, many of the challenges and many of the strategies are similar.

RATIONALE

The resources that are available for education vary enormously from country to country. In particular, very different levels of financial resources – of funds – are available. Some countries have not yet been able to address basic education for substantial portions of the population. Lack of funds is often the reason cited for this. The same reason is also sometimes cited to explain why some students cannot be educated in ordinary schools and have to be placed in segregated provision.

The challenge for countries is to find ways in which as many resources as possible can be brought to bear on the education system and to find ways of using those resources which does not segregate or exclude certain groups of students. This topic is about how countries have met this challenge.

EXAMPLES OF STRATEGIES

1 Resources, funds and difficulties: broadening the approach

All systems face a common problem in resourcing provision for learners who experience difficulties. However well-resourced the system may be overall, there is almost always a feeling that the resources are inadequate to meet learners' needs. This is because it is mistakenly assumed that:

- meeting needs *always* demands extra resources; and that
- these resources *always* demand extra funding.

As a result, there is constant upward pressure on budgets.

An important move which a number of countries have made is to broaden their approach to resourcing so that the links between resourcing, funding and learners' difficulties are altered. This can be done in a number of ways:

1.1 Non-funding-dependent responses to difficulty

At school and classroom level, these links can be altered by developing responses to learners' difficulties which are not dependent on additional funding. These include:

- collaborative work between students;
- parental involvement in the classroom; and
- teacher problem-solving and mutual support.

These all enhance the capacity of the ordinary school and classroom to respond to learner diversity. They demand changes in attitudes and practices rather than substantial

new funds. The UNESCO Teacher Education Resource Pack: Special Needs in the Classroom is designed to support schools in maximising such non-financial resources, but there are many other ways of achieving the same end:

✓ In Mumbai, India, the National Resource Centre for Inclusion – India (NRCII) has used school and college students under the National Social Service League for supporting inclusive education. The students are given extra marks for what is known as socially productive work. They go into mainstream schools and offer any extra inputs required as the schools include a greater diversity of students.

1.2 Investment in non-material resources

At local and national level, these responses can be supported by maximising the non-material resources which are available to schools. These include:

- the skill levels of teachers
- the quality of management
- the degree of community support for inclusion and
- the willingness of parents to become involved with schools.

These are all crucial resources for supporting inclusive education. However, they result from capacity-building and development rather than from the addition of new material resources. Although they may require *some* additional funding – for training events and so on – the investment will be considerably less than that required by the provision of new teachers, equipment and materials. Throughout the Open File, therefore, there are examples of how such non-material resources can be developed.

2 Establishing resourcing partnerships

Education systems can rarely provide all the resources they would wish to from state funds alone. It is essential, therefore, that national and local governments establish partnerships with other potential resource-providers. International donors and NGOs are obvious sources of additional resourcing. However, so are business and industry, who have a vested interest not only in establishing good-will in the country but also in helping to produce a well-educated workforce:

✓ Brazil has a series of programmes which are based on resourcing partnerships. *Programa Acorda, Brasil!* was launched in 1995 with a view to changing the passive attitude of Brazilian society in relation to public education. The programme urges companies, local governments, communities and citizens in general to work together in order to guarantee successful elementary school experience to all children and to combat failure. Partners include the Federation of Industries, governmental and private foundations and media associations and these contribute a range of resources including funds and technical aids.

The Brazilian example is of a national initiative with strong central government input. However, partnerships can also be established at local level, as this example from India illustrates:

> ✓ *Pratham* (a Hindi word for 'pioneer') is an NGO, established in Mumbai ten years ago for the purpose of achieving Education for All. This is a collaborative effort between the Mumbai Municipal Corporation and a group of volunteers. It has received financial support from UNICEF. This was initially used was to train teachers to support a pre-school initiative. Other needs-based components such as the provision of mid-day meals, extra coaching for students who faced difficulties in learning and incentives for girl students, were added later. To sustain the level of its activities, it soon became evident that further financial resources were necessary. A private commercial bank, ICICI, has collaborated with *Pratham* so that the NGO has been able to extend its services to 250 sites all over the city.

When partnerships are established, it is necessary to face the issue of who has control of the initiative. Many different arrangements are possible. However, it is important that the aims of whoever controls the initiative are inclusive and that education policy-makers have the final say in how the partnership works.

3 Merging funding streams

In many countries, there have been separate funding streams for mainstream education and for special needs education. Often, these streams have been managed at different levels of the system – the mainstream education stream at a lower (school or local) level and the special stream at a higher (local, state or national) level. The consequence is that there are administrative barriers between ordinary schools and access to the funds they need to support inclusive approaches. This is particularly the case where funds for specialised provision are directed exclusively to special settings and services. In these situations, learners can only access the special provision they need if they are removed from their ordinary school.

Inclusive systems, therefore, need a mechanism for channelling additional funds into ordinary schools. This may well be a two-step process:

3.1. Step 1: The transfer of funding between levels

The first step is to ensure that funds for special needs education are managed at the same level of the system as funds for mainstream education. This often means transferring funds and the responsibility for managing funds from national to local or school level. This can be achieved by allocating funds:

- to provincial or local level where they can be turned into resources (teachers, equipment, materials, services etc.) which can be allocated directly to schools
- directly to individual schools which can then make decisions about turning them into resources
- to clusters of schools (perhaps including special schools) which can then decide how to resource individual schools or how to set up joint provision.

✓ In Brazil, the *Programa de Manutenção e Desenvovimento do Ensino Fundamental* (Programme for the Maintenance and Development of Elementary Education) has devolved funding to all schools with more than 20 pupils and to special schools maintained by NGOs. The aim is to enable schools to purchase their own materials, maintain their own premises, train and qualify professionals, evaluate learning, and develop educational projects. It is anticipated that schools will find the most effective resource management strategies and become involved with their communities with the ultimate aim of improving the quality of teaching.

There are three factors which decision-makers have to take into account in determining the appropriate level at which to locate funds:

- If funds are handed down to a lower level, it is easier for schools to access the resources they need in order to make provision for their entire population. They do not need special procedures or referral to some other body in order to access funding.
- On the other hand, if funds are handed down to a lower level, it is harder to monitor and control their use centrally. Schools may not, in fact, use their available resources to become more inclusive, particularly if there are other pressures on them (such as the need to compete against other schools for new pupils).
- It is also difficult at lower levels to predict the incidence of particular types of student needs. If all the available funds are handed over to school level, individual schools may well not have adequate resources for responding to very exceptional needs when they arise.

Because there is some tension between these factors, countries frequently allocate funding to more than one level. They allocate some to individual schools, for instance, whilst retaining some at local or cluster level to anticipate exceptional demands.

✓ In New Brunswick, Canada, the province allocates block funding to school districts based on the numbers of students enrolled in schools. If CAN$350 is available per student for special needs education programmes, therefore, a district with 30 schools and 10,000 students receives CAN$3,500,000. Districts are free to use this funding as they see fit. They might, for instance, allocate 75% to provide support teachers and classroom assistants to schools on a per capita basis. A further 15% might be used to resource more heavily those schools where the levels of identified need are greatest. 10% might be held in reserve as a contingency.

This system of devolution is sufficiently flexible to respond to differing levels of need, but does not require costly referral procedures and assessments. It therefore frees up resources such as educational psychologists' time and makes them available to support inclusive provision.

3.2 Step 2: The distribution of funding

As the example above illustrates, it is necessary to decide not only to what level of the system funds are to be allocated, but also *how much* funding should be allocated to different units (schools, clusters, districts etc.) at each level. This is usually done in one of two ways:

Resourcing whole populations

Funds can be distributed in accordance with the characteristics of the populations which schools (or clusters or districts) are expected to serve. At its most basic, this may mean no more than distributing funds on a per capita basis. This is the simplest mechanism where it is reasonable to assume that different populations have broadly similar characteristics.

However, this is often not a reasonable assumption. For instance, the population of an urban district or school may be quite different from that of a rural one. In these cases, a formula has to be devised which takes into account these population differences. These might include academic attainment, identified levels of need, the socio-economic status of families and so on.

✓ In England, schools are directly funded by their Local Education Authorities (LEAs). LEAs receive a block grant from central government which takes into account the demographics of each area. They then pass on funding to individual schools (and, occasionally, to clusters) by means of a formula.

This formula includes some weighting to take into account the diversity of needs experienced by learners in different schools. In some cases, a measure of social deprivation in the community is used (for instance, the entitlement of students' families to various welfare benefits). In other cases, direct measures of learning barriers are used (for instance, the proportion of learners falling below particular levels on national tests, or an 'audit' of individuals in the school experiencing difficulty). In many cases, some mixture of indicators is used. Additionally, schools access peripatetic support services from their LEA and these, too, are often allocated by means of a formula. The use of these formulas mean that schools can access directly most of the resources they need to educate their students, without any need to use special procedures or refer students beyond the school.

The basis of this approach is that:

- funding is allocated to schools and districts by means of a formula which takes into account the characteristics of the population as a whole
- this funding is used by schools and districts as they see fit to make provision to meet their students' needs
- there is no necessity for complex identification and assesment procedures to identify the needs of individual students; schools may wish to use such procedures for educational purposes, but their funding does not depend on them.

There are some drawbacks in this approach, however:

- funding-providers at the centre cannot use this approach to target funds at individuals
- it is difficult for funding-providers to monitor how devolved funds are used
- it is also difficult for funding-providers to respond to exceptional needs which have not been accounted for in the funding formula.

Resourcing individuals

An alternative to funding provision for an entire population is to devolve funds on a case-by-case basis for identified individuals. This model does require individual assessment in order to determine how much funding should be allocated in each case. It therefore has a number of disadvantages:

- it is costly to administer
- it uses personnel who are skilled in assessment (e.g. educational psychologists) for administrative rather than educational purposes
- it involves labelling learners
- it encourages the identification of more and more individuals in order to access more resources
- it tends to produce forms of provision which are added onto rather than integrated with mainstream provision.

On the other hand, the model can be a very effective means of targeting funds, monitoring their use and responding to exceptional and unpredictable needs. Not surprisingly, therefore, some countries use a mixture of individual and population-level funding strategies. The result can be a very flexible and responsive system.

✓ A flexible funding strategy is currently being developed in New Zealand as part of the *Special Education 2000* policy. All schools receive a Special Education Grant (SEG) so that they can make provision for the 4-6% of students who are regarded as having 'moderate' special educational needs. The level of the SEG does not depend on individual assessment, but on the numbers of students on roll combined with a weighting to take account of the socio-economic status of school populations. Schools can use these funds flexibly and do not have to spend them on identified individuals.

Some 1% of students are identified individually as having 'high' or 'very high' needs. Descriptors of such needs are being developed which emphasise their support needs (particularly in terms of curriculum access) rather than categories of disability. The identification process involves educators, in collaboration with parents, completing an application form which is 'verified' by an independent panel. Resources are then allocated to individual students regardless of where they are placed. This means that parents have greater effective choice of school for their child. These funds can then be managed by an accredited school or cluster of schools, or by the national Specialist Education Service. The fundholder is responsible for purchasing the services needed by the student.

3.3 Targeted versus universal funding

Whatever system of funding-distribution is adopted, administrators and decision-makers also have to decide whether the available funds should be distributed across all schools and classrooms or whether they should be concentrated in a limited number of sites. Many countries have specifically-designated schools and classes which are additionally funded (or receive additional non-financial resources) so that they can accommodate learners with particular sorts of disability or difficulty.

Such targeted systems concentrate available resources so that high-quality provision can be made. They may be particularly useful in making provision for students with

low-incidence but resource-intensive needs. However, such concentration means that students may well have to leave the ordinary classroom or their local school and community in order to access the resources they need. This has a number of disadvantages:

- it creates a greater risk of alienating students from their communities
- it is inappropriate where there are other students with similar needs in most schools and it would be possible to create provision for these students in their local school
- it is inappropriate in sparsely-populated areas where students might have to travel considerable distances to a specially-resourced school and
- in countries where funding and other resources are limited, a system of special schools or special classes will not be able to reach more than a fraction of children who need extra support.

4 Programmes for the equalisation of opportunities

The strategies discussed so far are aimed at giving schools adequate financial and other resources to enable them to provide good quality education for all students, regardless of their difficulties and characteristics. However, a different set of strategies is needed if the aim is not simply to accommodate a diverse range of students, but actually to redress some of the disadvantages which particular groups experience.

Many countries have developed programmes which overcome social disadvantage by targeting funding and other resources in order to equalise opportunities. Typically, these programmes target additional funds into areas characterised by social and economic need.

✓ In Chile, the *Programme of the 900 Schools* (P-900) was an emergency response to the low levels of attainment in primary schools in the poorest urban and rural areas. Schools were provided with additional teaching resources and infrastructure; learning workshops in the core subjects were set up for children experiencing failure; and in-service training workshops were set up to improve the quality of teaching.

A subsequent programme, MECE, funded partly by a loan from the World Bank, has aimed at improving the quality of both primary and secondary education. It has done this partly by providing additional resources and training and partly by inviting schools to develop their own curriculum projects to meet the needs of their communities. Initially, all schools could make bids to the programme on an equal basis, but latterly there has been positive discrimination in favour of bids from schools that are 'high risk' in terms of similar criteria to those applied in P-900.

The international experience with such programmes leads to three conclusions:

- Programmes of equalisation of opportunities can be effective ways of targeting financial and other resources at schools serving disadvantaged *areas* and *groups*, However, there needs to be other strategies for targeting disadvantaged *individuals* who do not attend such schools.
- Programmes deliver *resources*, but there has to be a means of turning these resources into high-quality educational *provision* if they are not simply to be

dissipated. (The system of bidding for curriculum projects in MECE is one such mechanism).

- Programmes of equalisation of opportunities are not likely to have a marked impact on gross social inequalities unless they are accompanied by wider social strategies for redress.

5 Working with strategic behaviour

'Strategic behaviour' is a term used to characterise the tendency of actors in an education system (schools, families, local administrations and so on) to maximise what they see as their own advantage and to minimise what they see as threats to themselves. In particular, schools, families and others tend to act so as to maximise the funds and other resources available to them. Resourcing systems have to encourage strategic behaviour which is in line with inclusive aims and discourage strategic behaviour which undermines inclusion.

There are many examples of strategic behaviour working against the aims of inclusive education:

- In systems where identifying students as having 'special needs' releases additional funds, both ordinary schools and families tend to argue for increased identification.
- In systems where additional resources are available only or mainly in special schools, there tend to be high rates of referral to such schools.
- In countries where the incentives for schools to be inclusive are weak, schools tend to seek ways of rejecting students who are likely to be 'hard-to-teach' – because, for instance, their behaviour is difficult to manage.
- In countries where schools are encouraged to compete against each other and/or where the greatest rewards go to schools with the highest-attaining students, schools tend to seek ways of rejecting students whose attainments are low or who will otherwise damage the school's reputation.

One example of how funding systems can unwittingly have perverse consequences comes from India:

> ✓ Within the federal structure in India, grant-seeking special schools are funded by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, whereas grant-seeking inclusive schools are funded by the Ministry of Education. There is a dichotomy of purpose. Since state funding for special schools is not conditional on their working towards inclusion, there is no incentive for them to support the development of inclusive practices.
>
> One possible solution would be to fund them for outreach work. Another would be to withhold funding if they did not engage in outreach. Since this would have the effect of cutting their funding sources, they would be compelled to address the issue of inclusion if they were to continue to get funding from the state.

As this example illustrates, resourcing systems can be re-designed so that strategic behaviour works to support inclusive education. For instance:

- Where funds and other resources are already handed down to schools to enable them to meet a wide range of needs, there is no incentive for them to label students as having 'special needs' or to engage in unnecessary identification and assessment procedures.
- Where special schools receive additional funding for outreach work in ordinary schools, they are likely to become agents of inclusive education.
- Where schools suffer financial penalties for rejecting students perceived as "problematic", or receive financial (or other) rewards for supporting them, they are likely to behave in more inclusive ways.
- Where parents can see that their children receive adequate resources and provision in ordinary schools, they are unlikely to push for segregated provision.

Working within these principles, administrators and decision-makers can use resourcing systems actively to promote inclusive practices. For instance, simply by changing from one funding system to another, incentives can be built into the system for schools to behave in more inclusive ways:

✓ The Netherlands has historically had one of the most segregated special needs education systems in Europe. Because the resources for meeting children's needs were located largely in special schools, there has been an inbuilt incentive for families and mainstream educators to want to see students placed in segregated settings.

To counteract this, the *Weer samen naar school* (Together to school again) project has established clusters of ordinary and special schools. Each cluster is resourced directly, is autonomous in the use of its own resources and is responsible for the education of up to 10000 students, including those with 'special needs'. Because funding now comes to the cluster, it is not necessary to place students in special schools in order for them to receive additional resources. Indeed, there is an incentive for ordinary schools to retain students because they can thereby access additional resources to make provision for those students.

6 Monitoring and accountability

The inevitability of strategic behaviour means that administrators and decision-makers cannot assume that schools and local administrations will always act in the interests of the most vulnerable students. They may instead follow other priorities. In particular, funds and other resources handed down to the school or local administration may not be used wisely – or, indeed, at all – to make provision for such students if they are not monitored carefully.

By and large, countries tend not to have well-developed systems for monitoring how schools and local administrations use funds which are intended to support vulnerable students. However, many countries have inspection systems which could be strengthened for this purpose. Some also have systems for monitoring the provision that is made for students with the greatest special needs.

A number of strategies are available to funding-providers who wish to set up more powerful monitoring systems:

- they can specify the *sort of provision* which schools and local administrations are expected to make with their funding and inspect the quality of that provision
- they can leave schools and local administrations free to use their funding as they wish, but hold them accountable for the *learning outcomes* of particular groups of students
- they can specify that a *particular proportion of funding* is to be spent on particular groups of students, and then check that it has in fact been spent in this way.

It is possible to make funding dependent (in part, at least) on these accountability criteria being satisfied.

✓ England has a number of monitoring systems in place. *At an individual level,* the provision made by schools for students with the highest levels of 'special need' and the outcomes from that provision are reviewed annually by the local education authority (LEA) which allocates funds and other resources. *At an institutional level,* all schools are inspected regularly and the inspection reviews, amongst other things, the quality of provision for students with special needs.

Some LEAs are now strengthening these systems by requiring schools to show:

- how they use additional resources allocated to them make provision for students with special needs
- that students make good progress in their learning as a result of the way any additional resourcing is used.

In some cases, LEAs encourage schools to work together to look at the different ways in which they use their funding and decide which are more effective. Schools can then use this information to plan their own development and improve the quality of their own provision.

In setting up monitoring systems, funding-providers have to be careful not to create perverse incentives for the creation of 'special' provision. Schools and local administrations may feel it is easier to account for their funding if they use it to set up separate forms of provision. For this reason, monitoring systems have to be introduced in the context of inclusive principles. It may also help if the emphasis in monitoring is on student outcomes and the quality of provision, rather than simply on showing that funds have been spent on particular groups of students.

IMPLICATIONS AND QUESTIONS

The immediate challenges facing different countries in their resourcing of inclusive provision are superficially very different. Some countries have high levels of resource and are concerned with establishing sophisticated systems for allocation and monitoring. Other countries have far lower levels of resource and have to be concerned with finding adequate resources for ordinary schools simply to be able to offer a basic education to a diverse range of students.

However, essentially, the issues for all countries are the same. Even well-resourced countries will find it difficult to sustain inclusion if parents and schools do not feel that

the available resources are adequate. Similarly, even countries with very limited resources will have to address the issue of how to distribute those resources most effectively. All administrators and decision-makers, therefore, may find it useful to consider the following questions:

- **What can be done to promote inclusive approaches without the need for additional resources? In particular, how can responses to learners' challenges be developed which are not resource-dependent and how can non-material resources such as skills and attitudes be enhanced?**
- **What potential providers of resources can be identified other than the state? How can partnerships be established with these providers?**
- **What barriers exist between the systems for resourcing mainstream and special needs education and how can they be brought closer together?**
- **How can resources be devolved down the education system so that they become readily accessible to schools without recourse to special procedures and outward referral? What is the appropriate level of devolution for this country?**
- **How can resources be distributed so that schools and local administrations serving different populations have adequate resources for meeting local needs? Is it best to resource populations, individuals, or some combination of the two?**
- **How far do recurrent resourcing systems need to be supplemented by programmes for the equalisation of opportunities? How can these be focused on enhancing provision rather than simply distributing additional resources and how can they be linked to wider programmes of social redress?**
- **How can strategic behaviour be managed and how can it be used to support inclusive practices?**
- **How are schools and local administrations to be made accountable for their use of resources?**

8

TOPIC 8: Managing Transitions through Education

KEY ISSUES

- All students should be able to make smooth progress into, through and out of the formal education system. Any barriers at key transition points should be identified and removed.
- The first transition is between home and school. Smooth transitions at this point may depend on early intervention, family involvement and inter-agency collaboration.
- Transitions within statutory schooling demand the removal of structural barriers such as rigid assessment procedures and grade retention.
- Transition from school to the post-school world may demand strategies for widening access to further and higher education, the careful use of vocationally-oriented curricula, and supported employment and workplace learning.
- Smooth transitions at all stages are likely to require good procedures for transferring information and for planning at an early point what should happen at the next stage.

RATIONALE

A high-quality education system requires a smooth transition for all students across different phases of education. Ideally, all students, regardless of their differences, difficulties or disabilities, should be able to enter the education system as young children, progress through its phases and emerge into a meaningful and useful adult life.

This means that any barriers that exist at key transition points have to be identified and removed or reduced. These key points are: the transition from home to school; the transition between phases or cycles of schooling; and the transition between schooling, lifelong learning and the world of work. Addressing these barriers, moreover, is one way in which inclusive education can be 'spread' throughout the *whole* education system.

This topic is about the ways in which countries have sought to create smooth transition processes.

EXAMPLES OF STRATEGIES

1 Transition from home to school

The first transition that children face is when they reach the age for pre-school or school. This is a crucial stage and one which needs to be handled well. In some cases, this may involve offering support to the child, the family and the school so that the child experiences a smooth transition into the formal education system.

The key supports which need to be in place are:

1.1 Early identification and intervention

Identification of children who might experience difficulties in their learning is not an end in itself. It has to lead to interventions which promote the maximum learning and social development in the child prior to their entry into formal schooling. These interventions can take place in the home, in pre-schools (kindergartens) or in some mixture of these. The importance of early intervention leads many countries to regard pre-school as an integral part of the education system. This often involves a partnership between the state and voluntary or private sector providers.

✓ In *Brazil,* the National Law of Directives and Basis of Education of 1996 made pre-school part of basic education. The actions being taken are aimed at expanding the network of schools and increasing the involvement of communities and families. In the case of children with disabilities, there are stimulation programmes for babies and children up to 3 years old, offered by NGOs and financed by the Ministry of Education.

In most provinces of *Canada,* health and social services departments have promoted early intervention programmes which may be operated

publicly or privately. Early intervention workers support the development of children and work with parents to stimulate language development, provide good nutrition, and learn effective and non-punitive behaviour management techniques. They also often provide day care and respite opportunities which allow children to become familiar with other children in a social setting.

A new approach has been developed in *India* introducing inclusive education within the community and called the Community-Based Initiative in Inclusive Education. Located in Dharavi, Mumbai, in the largest slum in Asia, small pre-school nurseries have been set up in the slums and community teachers have been trained in an inclusive approach to education. At present, the project caters for 688 children, including 77 disabled children, identified by community workers using a 10-point questionnaire developed by the World Health Organisation. Because of a positive gender strategy, there are more girls than boys on roll. The aim is to develop a sustainable model of intervention for high-risk category children in the 1-6 age group which demonstrates inclusive education within the community. The broader aim is to demonstrate Education For All. Canadian development funds (CIDA) have supported the project. The local nurseries or the *Anganwadis* are run in two shifts.

The initiative also aims at influencing the government's largest pre-school service – the Integrated Child Development Services – which reaches out to the rural and the urban poor, but presently excludes disabled children from the ambit of its services. Community teachers and helpers have been drawn in from the neighbourhood and local community strategies developed in educating the children within their cultural milieu.

In partnership with Institute of Child Health, UK, courses addressing pedagogy in the community are being set up. The courses are community-based and embody the principles of inclusive education. They are the first courses of their kind building inclusive education practices into the traditional CBR approach, and it is hoped that they will be able to draw a wider group of community workers from the Asia-Pacific region.

1.2 Family involvement

As these examples illustrate, parental, family and wider community involvement is crucial to early intervention (see also Topic 5 on family and community involvement). This is for four reasons:

- Families (particularly parents) have the most extended contact with children in the early years and are their more effective educators.
- Families might need to be supported when it comes to seeing and valuing the strengths of their child.
- Families need to be encouraged to see the importance of pre-school education. In some situations, families either do not understand that their child might need particular interventions or are understandably over-protective of the child. A priority may be to reassure families that their child will benefit from experiencing new social situations and will not be at risk if they relax their protection.
- The support of families secured at this early stage will prove a valuable resource throughout the child's education.

Families themselves may need support if they are struggling against their own disadvantages or are bringing up a child with marked disabilities in isolation. It is unlikely that the child will make a smooth transition to school if the family is facing apparently insuperable difficulties.

✓ An early intervention team in *Portugal* had to deal with the case of a lone mother who had a child with severe cerebral palsy. The mother felt overwhelmed by her financial difficulties and by the lack of any kind of support. She had very low self-esteem and felt unable to face the difficulties confronting her. A social fund was arranged for this mother and she was enrolled in vocational training and helped to find a job. This has helped her focus her attention on her disabled daughter and on enrolling her in a pre-school setting.

In *Costa Rica* a system of Community Homes has been established which offer day-care for the children of working parents who live below the poverty line. The homes are run by 'community mothers' who are drawn from the local community and often have low levels of education. However, they are offered a training programme which deals, amongst other things, with the issues around children with disabilities. They in turn are able to pass on their knowledge to parents in the community.

In *Mexico* a range of programmes is being implemented:

- re-orientation of the services of the Centres for Infant Development (CENDI) so that they are easier for children with disabilities to access
- permanent training and advisory support for the staff of the CENDI from the Special Education Division of the Secretary of Public Education
- orientation for parents given by the CENDI
- assessment of children's potential for progressing to mainstream basic education supported by personnel from NGOs
- co-operation with specialised organisations in the early detection of disabilities in children of families from rural and native areas, so that they can be directed towards appropriate services.

Each of these strategies constitutes a different response to involving families and each is appropriate to the context in which it is set. The Portuguese and Mexican examples rely on the presence of teams and centres. The Costa Rican example relies much more on giving skills to community members themselves. However, what unites them is that families are closely involved in the responses that are made to their children's needs. Above all, families are the focus of support just as much as the child.

1.3 Inter-agency collaboration

Early intervention and the facilitation of links between home and school usually requires an inter-agency approach (see also Topic 4 on organising support). The early identification of children with disabilities, for instance, is usually a matter for medical workers, just as the identification of children living under social and economic disadvantages is a matter for social work professionals. Interventions, too, often call for skills from a range of disciplines. Some countries, therefore, have set up multi-disciplinary early intervention teams

which can address all the issues around the early development of children in a holistic manner:

✓ In Coimbra County, Portugal, a paediatric hospital set up, in the 1970s, a Child Guidance Centre staffed by a multi-disciplinary team and working with children with disabilities or at risk, and with their families. The programme (the 'CEIP') has now spread throughout the County.

The CEIP is inclusive in its approach, emphasising the right of all children to participate in mainstream settings. It also emphasises the role of the family and community and concentrates on the strengths the family can contribute, rather than on its weaknesses. The professionals in the CEIP belong to existing state or non-governmental services. They are released by those services to work on the project for part of their week and meet with each other at regular intervals.

There is a central co-ordinating team drawn from health, social services and education which supervises, co-ordinates and develops the work of local intervention teams at municipality level. These local teams comprise staff of the local health centre, pre-school teachers and other professionals – social workers, psychologists, therapists – from state services or NGOs. The team works directly with children and families, though in rural areas family members, neighbours or other volunteers are supported by team members.

Children are referred to the teams by pre-schools, health workers, social workers, priests or other individuals. A case-worker is then appointed to work with the child, the family and relevant professionals. The case-worker is supported by other team members at local or central level and the team can refer to other specialists if necessary.

An important feature of this approach is the designation of a single case-worker as the main point of contact between the family and the services. The experience of families is often that they have to deal with a large number of uncoordinated professional interventions and/or that they are left to find their own way through the services that are available. A case-worker who can co-ordinate these interventions is therefore an important support. This professional can also act as an advocate for child and family to other professionals and, in particular, can help smooth the transition to schooling.

1.4 Transfer of information

A crucial aspect of successful transition in the early years is the transfer of information from home to school (see also Topic 3 on assessment). This is partly about ensuring that the school is made aware of the child's characteristics and needs and that the family is able to pass on what it knows about the child. However, it is also about undertaking a proper transition programme that prepares child, family and teachers for the start of schooling.

✓ In many provinces of Canada, early intervention workers arrange meetings just before school entrance age between themselves, parents and teachers. These meetings make it possible to share information about the child and her/his particular needs. Often, the elementary school teachers visit the child's home and/or pre-school to observe the child's interaction with peers. The parents and child are invited to come to the school for a few visits

to the class the child will enter and to explore the school in order to put the child at ease.

These visits and information-sharing sessions also allow the school time to ensure that human and material resources are available at the school when the child arrives. This is particularly important if special equipment or physical adaptations are needed. They allow time, if necessary, for additional staff to be hired and for staff training to take place.

2 Transitions within schooling

In most countries, there are transitions to be negotiated within schooling – between elementary and secondary schooling, for instance, or between public and private schooling. Moreover, some students make (sometimes frequent) changes of school within the phases or cycles of schooling. The development of an inclusive system demands that these transitions take place as smoothly as possible so that the learner's experience of schooling is one of consistency and unbroken development. This calls for a number of actions:

2.1 Removal of structural barriers

Some of the barriers to transition experienced by students arise from the structure of the education system. Although these are dealt with in detail elsewhere in the Open File (see particularly Topics 3 and 6), two of them are particularly important:

- *Rigidity of curriculum, assessment and classroom practice.* It is not unusual for the curriculum, the ways in which it is assessed and the style of teaching through which it is delivered to become increasingly rigid as students progress through the education system. In particular, there is often a marked break between elementary and secondary education, which is sometimes compounded by the need to change schools. Countries need to look at the ways in which such features create barriers to inclusion and consider how these can be reduced or removed.
- *Grade retention.* A problem in some systems is that progress is grade – rather than age-related. Students experiencing difficulties are retained at an earlier phase, even though they are old enough to transfer. Sometimes families are happy with such a move since they feel their child will be more 'protected' in the familiar environment. However, the system can lead to over-age students in classes who become disaffected, experience a sense of failure, and are prevented from developing normal social relationships with their age-peers. In some cases, retention is the root cause of drop-out from school. The obvious solution is to move from a grade- to an age-related system of transfer. However, even where this is not possible, limits can be set by legislation to the length of time a student can be retained and families can be encouraged to see the value of age-related transfer.

In some situations, it will be appropriate to find some other alternative which avoids the rigidity of grade systems. In the example below, the problem of different levels of attainment amongst students of the same age is compounded by the fact that children miss school in order to help their families in their work. All such alternatives, however, depend on the ordinary classroom being organised to provide flexible and individually-oriented learning:

✓ The Escuela Nueva in Colombia is designed to respond to the need for complete and good primary education in all areas. This "New School" system of primary education integrates curricular, community, administrative-financial, and training strategies to improve the effectiveness of schools. The system provides active instruction and a stronger relationship between schools and the community.

Above all, the system offers a *flexible* promotion mechanism adapted to the characteristics of each child. Flexible promotion allows students to advance from one grade or level to another at their own pace. In addition, children can leave school temporarily to help their parents in their work without jeopardising the chance of returning to school and continuing their education.

The Escuela Nueva system has resulted in a critical mass of students, teachers, supervisors, researchers, administrators, representatives of government and non-governmental agencies, and even local community members who are eager to work for educational and social change. It has proved its viability over the years. However, the greatest difficulty has been in integrating this innovation into the hierarchical bureaucracy where it is vulnerable to political manipulation and change.

A more controversial alternative is to retain the grade system, but to target students at risk of retention and undertake intensive interventions which restore them to grade level:

✓ In Brazil, the Ministry of Education initiated in 1996 a priority action – the *accelerated learning programme.* This was targeted at students at risk of retention in 1st to 4th grades, with the following objectives:

- to offer students an opportunity to overcome their learning difficulties, reach higher grades and restore their self-esteem
- to re-establish the flow through the education system, opening up more places in the early elementary grades
- to improve the quality of teaching
- to reduce the costs of the education system, making better use of human resources
- to encourage those that have 'dropped out' of school to return.

The programme is project-based, inviting proposals for projects and for additional funding for teacher training and the purchase of materials.

Such schemes are controversial because they carry with them a number of dangers:

- they may provide students with intensive but unimaginative teaching, perhaps in semi-segregated settings
- they do nothing to deal with any fundamental problems in curriculum and pedagogy which lead to student failure in the first place
- they are only likely to be effective with students who do not have marked intellectual or other impairments and who can be expected to progress well given intensive teaching.

It is probably best to say that such 'acceleration' approaches should only be considered as supplements to a system that *already* has an inclusive curriculum, pedagogy and so on. If they are used in a short-term and carefully-targeted way, they may then be important

strategies for groups experiencing social and economic disadvantages and/or those who might otherwise become disaffected from the education system.

2.2 Smoothing the transfer process

Where students transfer between schools, it is important that there are well-established mechanisms for transferring information and for making the necessary preparations in the receiving school. Essentially, the process is the same as that described above for entry into school and Canada again provides a clear example of how it can be managed:

> ✓ Transition between elementary and middle school and between middle and high school is fairly standard across Canada in those areas where inclusive education is the norm. Staff members from one building visit the staff members from the receiving school for what is often called an 'articulation meeting'. General information about the student is shared as well as information about any specific needs the student may have, the student's learning style and his/her interests and talents. Often the student will visit the new school for a day in order to get a sense of the staff and students and to get a flavour of how the day goes at the new school. Some high schools have invited students and their parents to an informal orientation day to make the transition easier. Students with disabilities are not treated differently from their classmates in this process.

These transfers can also be eased where there is:

- a common system of assessment and record-keeping so that information can be transferred in a standard form which is meaningful to both schools involved and
- a designated individual (such as a learning support teacher) or team in both schools (but particularly in the receiving school) whose responsibility it is to ensure that information is transferred, appropriate preparations are made in the receiving school and the student's education programme continues with as much consistency as possible.

3 Transitions between school and the post-school world

Transitions within statutory schooling are considerably easier to plan than transitions between statutory schooling and the world of further and higher education and employment. Even more so than within statutory schooling, there are structural barriers which make the transition process difficult and which may require major reform before they can finally be removed:

- *Separate funding, administrative and legislative systems in primary, secondary and tertiary education.* In many countries, different phases of education fall under different administrative structures, with the consequence that transitions across the boundary between phases become complex. In particular, the systems for identifying, categorising, funding and meeting special needs might

be different and students who receive support in one phase may not do so under the other. These problems tend to be especially marked at the boundary between secondary and tertiary education.

- *The impact of selection.* Further and higher education are almost always selective. Those groups which experience educational disadvantages (e.g. those with disabilities or from marginalised groups) may be refused places in disproportionate numbers. Moreover, further and higher education provision may be patchy and/or demand fees which disadvantaged young people cannot afford.
- *The transfer from childhood to adult services.* In education, and also in health and social work, services for adults may be organised differently from services for children. Young people who have received support as children may loose that support or have to renegotiate it as young adults.
- *The impact of selection in the labour market.* Young people who have experienced educational disadvantages, whose attainments are low and/or who have disabilities may also have difficulty in finding employment – particularly high-level employment with training.

In the face of these structural barriers, transition is highly problematic in many countries. The actions below, however, include both those which address structural barriers directly and those which help to smooth transition within existing structures.

3.1 Widening access and participation

In some countries, the structural barriers have been partly removed by an expansion of further and higher education which has provided access to individuals and groups who would previously have been excluded. This expansion may have been accompanied by one or more of the following features:

- legislation to guarantee access to previously excluded groups (e.g. disabled young people)
- financial support for students from poor or otherwise disadvantaged families
- financial incentives for institutions to recruit disadvantaged students
- an expansion, not simply of places, but also of pathways into tertiary education by, for instance, the creation of more vocational courses, the acceptance of prior learning and experience as entry qualifications alongside more formal qualifications, the delivery of degree-level courses partly in local community-based colleges, or the use of distance learning.

✓ In *Brazil,* the Ministry of Education has attempted to widen access to higher education by requiring institutions to make changes to their entry examination for students with disabilities and setting out the range of physical, academic and social adaptations to their provision that is expected.

In *Ethiopia,* Addis Ababa University has a long-standing tradition of admitting blind students and providing special assistance through the Dean of Students' Office. There is a braille unit in the main library which provides services to blind students and the staff of the library have been very supportive in arranging volunteer readers and making braille transcriptions of texts. Currently, there are over 160 blind students at the university.

In *England,* there has been a significant expansion of further and higher education in recent years, driven by legislation and government direction. A

new system of vocational qualifications has been devised which are equivalent to more traditional academic qualifications. There is a system for funding students with disabilities in further education and both further and higher education are covered by disability legislation which requires them to take steps to provide access. Higher education institutions receive additional funding for establishing partnerships with schools in disadvantaged areas and recruiting students from those areas. Recent reports propose the targeting of disadvantaged young people by introducing an Education Maintenance Allowance to support them in education and training and by setting up a support service providing personal advisers to work with them over the transition period. The ultimate target for young people will be a nationally-recognized 'graduation' at age 19 which can be achieved by full- and part-time training as well as by study in schools and colleges.

In *Australia,* all 16-18 year olds who are studying full-time, are on a training programme or are looking for a job are entitled to a Youth Allowance. This covers their basic living costs and can be supplemented by travel and rent allowances and additional allowances for those living in remote areas. This single allowance tries to avoid the situation where young people have to find their own way through a maze of benefits depending on the pathways they are following through education, training and employment.

3.2 The vocational curriculum

Vocational education is an essential strand in the education of all students. For some students, it only becomes dominant in their education after they have completed schooling and have spent some time in further or higher education. For others, a vocational orientation to the curriculum *during* compulsory schooling may ease transition to post-compulsory training and/or into the labour market. It may also be a way of re-engaging students who have become disaffected with academically-oriented schooling.

Vocational education for such students tends to be delivered:

- by developing a vocational curriculum in the school
- by placing students for some or all of the time in vocationally-oriented education institutions (technical schools or further education colleges)
- by providing students with experience and training in the workplace or
- by some mixture of these.

✓ The School of Agriculture in Uberlândia, Minas Gerais, Southeast Brazil, has set up, in partnership with NGOs, a vocational programme for street boys and girls between the ages of 14 and 19. The students learn horticulture, industrial agriculture and computing. The National Commerce Service (SENAC) in Porto Alegre, Southern Brazil involves students on commerce courses in delivering courses and workshops four times a year in daycare centres, schools, hospitals and asylums. The Frei Caneca Project, developed by the Federal Technical School of Pernambuco, Northeast Brazil, offers children and adolescents practical training in 60 vocational courses.

A further example of a vocational approach comes from *diversification programmes* offered to older students in Spain. The main objective of these programmes is to provide maximum opportunities for students to fulfil their compulsory education. They are designed for students who:

- are 16 year-old or more
- have generalised learning difficulties
- have expectations of getting the graduation degree and
- agree to enter these programmes.

The programmes are elaborated by educational centres and they take into consideration the context and the student's needs. They aim to achieve the objectives of secondary education through a distinctive methodology and different curriculum contents and/or areas. In particular:

- they include three of four areas from the Second Cycle of the Regular Curriculum with any necessary curricular adaptations
- there are Specific Programme Areas, chosen by each educational centre, which occupy 10-12 hours a week; centres can choose between the Socio-Linguistic Area and the Scientific-Technological Area
- there are two hours a week for counselling and
- there are optional subjects for 3 hours a week: at least two of these subjects must provide professional training.

To support students, each centre of secondary education has teachers specialised in the field of socio-linguistics, science and technology and/or pedagogical support.

Students aged 16-21 who have already left compulsory secondary education without graduating are offered *Social Guarantee Programmes.*

These are made up of:

- Specific Professional Training Area (15-18 hours)
- Vocational Training and Orientation Area (2-3 hours)
- Basic Training Area (6-9 hours)
- Complementary Activities (2-3 hours)
- Tutorial (1-2 hours)

These programs can last between 6 months (720 hours) and two academic years (1800 hours).

Such programmes link school to the labour market and to further training opportunities for students whose academic attainments are not high. They also offer a further alternative for overcoming the rigidity of grade systems by moving students into more appropriate and motivating curricula rather than expecting them to repeat yet again the standard grade curriculum at which they have already been unsuccessful.

There is a danger with these programmes if they are not managed properly: they may create segregated groups of students who are offered a curriculum which is seen as inferior and who rapidly become disaffected from learning. These programmes are at their best, therefore, where they are seen, not as an *alternative* to mainstream education, but as a different way of accessing education. Where more traditional approaches have been unsuccessful, they offer a different way of continuing the student's progression through education and training and into employment. They offer students, therefore, a *second chance* at education:

✓ The European Union has supported member states in setting up 'second chance' schools in a number of major cities. These provide education and training for young people who have completed compulsory schooling with few formal qualifications and with limited skills. They adopt an individualised approach, based on a contract between the young person and the school, and try to find innovative ways of meeting young people's learning needs with an emphasis on the use of information and communications technology. They involve a range of agencies in working with young people and establish partnerships with local employers and administrations. Their aim is to provide young people with the learning, vocational and social skills they will need in order to progress into the labour market or into 'mainstream' training alongside their peers.

3.3 *Supported employment and workplace learning*

Although employment issues are strictly speaking beyond the scope of the Open File, transition from schooling to the labour market is eased if young people can access forms of employment in which they can continue to receive training and, where necessary, support. This may mean, for instance, placing disabled workers in 'sheltered' workplaces. These carry the great danger of segregating people and failing to train them in up-to-date skills. However, there are alternatives. In some countries 'mainstream' employers are required to employ quotas of workers with disabilities and may receive financial incentives to do so. It may also mean employing 'job coaches' – individuals who can provide direct support in the workplace – or ensuring that other workers have access to awareness-raising or training in how to support workers with disabilities.

Work-based training is helpful if leaving the formal education system does not mean the end of learning opportunities – particularly for those for whom formal schooling has been an unsuccessful or truncated experience. Whilst issues of lifelong learning also lie beyond the scope of the Open File, it is clear that a more inclusive system will offer multiple opportunities for young people and adults to continue to learn after they have left school or college.

3.4 *Transition planning*

The planning of the transition process is just as important at the end of statutory schooling as it is earlier in the student's career. The following features of transition planning seem to be particularly important:

- *An early start.* A formal planning process needs to be initiated well before the learner leaves statutory schooling so that the necessary advice can be sought and the necessary preparations made. In a number of countries (e.g. Canada, England, Portugal), transition planning begins at least two years before the end of statutory schooling.
- *A team approach.* Planning is typically undertaken by a team, comprising some or all of school teachers, health and social work professionals, employment specialists, specialists from further and higher education and representatives of NGOs. The precise make-up of the team depends on the needs of the individual and their likely pathway into the adult world, but the key 'gatekeepers' of that pathway must be represented. In some cases, team members may need to carry

out formal assessments of the young person's needs to inform decision-making and ensure s/he receives the appropriate adult services.

- *Student and parental involvement.* Countries with well-developed transition processes recognise that decisions must not simply be taken by professionals and imposed on young people. The involvement of families and of young people themselves in making decisions is essential.
- *A transition plan.* Many countries find it helpful to insist on the production of a formal transition plan. This ensures that planning actually takes place, offers guarantees to the young person and to their family, informs agencies of their responsibilities and enables administrators to check on the quality of the planning process and respond to any resource needs.
- *A transition manager.* It is often thought useful to designate a single professional as the transition manager, responsible for co-ordinating the planning process and ensuring its implementation. This individual can also act as mentor and advocate for the young person, helping them to find their way through the maze of adult services.

3.5 Training and development needs

Few if any countries are satisfied that the processes of transition from schooling to the adult world are effective for young people with disabilities and other difficulties. There seems to be a widespread need both for coherent services and for training and awareness-raising. One important recent development is the involvement of young people and adults in planning services and in contributing to awareness-raising events. Likewise, in some countries, careful attempts have been made to identify marginalised young people who have previously been hard to reach and to elicit their views on the provision that is made for them.

IMPLICATIONS AND QUESTIONS

If education systems are to become more inclusive, transitions have to be managed so that *all* learners progress smoothly to the next stage and are able to take up all the opportunities that are on offer. This only happens if transition *between* institutions and phases is seen as a process that needs managing in its own right and that is just as important as the organisation of provision *within* institutions and phases. This implies that, where they are needed, there should be clearly defined procedures, involving multi-disciplinary teams, co-ordinated by explicit plans and led by designated personnel. The transfer of information from one phase to another is crucial, but so too is the use of that information to bring about the necessary changes in the receiving phase.

In the desire to initiate inclusive forms of provision within particular institutions and phases, it is easy to overlook the importance of transition. However, used properly the planning of transition can be an important means of disseminating inclusive practices throughout an education system, without recourse to sudden change or widespread confrontation with vested interests. Administrators and decision-makers, therefore, may wish to use the following questions in reviewing the current state of the systems within which they work:

- What systems are in place to facilitate transition from home to school? How do they involve representatives of schools, state agencies, NGOs and others working with young children? In particular, how do they enlist the support and draw upon the knowledge of families?
- What structural barriers within the schooling system hinder transition from phase to phase and institution to institution? How can these be removed?
- What transfer procedures are needed by way of meetings, shared record-keeping and assessment and a designated individual to lead transition?
- What structural barriers hinder transition from school to the post-school world? How can these be reduced?
- What part in transition can be played by widening access and transition, a vocational curriculum, and supported employment and workplace learning?
- What formal transition procedures can be established by means of inter-disciplinary meetings, transition plans and a designated individual to lead transition? What role should young people and their parents play in these procedures?

9

TOPIC 9: Initiating and Sustaining Change in Schools

KEY ISSUES

- The development of inclusive education is only possible if schools themselves are committed to becoming more inclusive. The involvement of schools in inclusion projects is a powerful way of translating national policy into the realities of practice.
- Projects can build on schools' own initiatives or can be central initiatives to which schools are recruited.
- Although projects work differently, common conditions for success include clear responsibilities, effective support for schools, mechanisms for developing practice and a good dissemination process. However, projects ultimately have to be extended to non-ideal circumstances.
- Projects need strategies which help schools change their cultures and practices. These include enabling teachers to examine their practices and engage in problem-solving.
- School networks and partnerships are means of offering support to schools. These include partnerships between special and mainstream schools.
- Projects need to avoid common mistakes such as reinforcing heavily individualised approaches or a reliance on external specialists.

RATIONALE

The implementation of more inclusive systems of education is possible only if schools themselves are committed to becoming more inclusive. The development of national policies on inclusion, local support systems, appropriate forms of curriculum and assessment and so on are important enabling mechanisms as far as inclusive education is concerned. However, they are doomed to failure if schools remain hostile, or if they fail to develop effective inclusive practices. On the other hand, there are many cases where examples of inclusive practices appear at school level long before any formal national commitment to inclusion. In these cases, schools can be the motors of development in the system as a whole.

Few schools would disagree with inclusion as a *principle*. However, many have reservations about the *practice* of inclusive education and even those which attempt to become more inclusive may find themselves lacking adequate support. The issue for administrators and decision-makers, therefore, is how best to work with schools in order to build on their experiences, overcome any uncertainties they may have and enable them to develop more effective inclusive practices. This topic deals with these issues.

EXAMPLES OF STRATEGIES

1 Selecting schools to work with

The commonest strategy in promoting inclusive education is to initiate an inclusion 'project' in which one or more schools are supported in developing more inclusive practices. An important question for administrators and decision-makers is which schools to involve in such projects. This question has two parts:

- Should projects be initiated from the top (i.e. national or local government level) or from the bottom (i.e. school level)?
- When schools are encouraged to become involved in such projects, should these be the 'best' schools (i.e. those which are already most pro-inclusion or most effective with their existing student body) or the 'worst' schools (i.e. those most in need of development)?

International experience suggests that there is no single answer to these questions. Change at school level can be initiated in many ways:

1.1 School-based initiatives

School based approaches involve building on initiatives taken by schools themselves. In order for these approaches to be effective, a number of conditions must apply:

- there needs to be a national and/or local context in which innovation is permitted and, where possible, encouraged

- schools need to be offered practical support for their initiatives, even where such initiatives cut across established practices and procedures at higher levels of the system
- the lessons learned by innovating schools need to be disseminated to other schools and those schools need to be offered encouragement to become more inclusive in turn and
- the practices developed by innovating schools need to be formalised into structures and, where necessary, legislation so that the gains are generalised.

1.2 System-based initiatives

The effort towards achieving the goal of Education for All provides governments with the opportunity to implement systemic changes. In some countries, greater inclusion has been part of a wider set of initiatives for improving the quality of education for all learners. These initiatives have been channelled through specific agendas from government level to schools.

In these cases, the issue is not how to build upon initiatives originated in schools, but how to ensure that schools become fully committed to initiatives taken at national level. The experience of Portugal provides a useful example of how this issue can be tackled:

✓ The Inclusive Schools Project was a teacher training project implemented in Portugal during two school years (1996-1998) and based on the UNESCO Teacher Education Resource Pack: Special Needs in the Classroom. Two resource persons from the Institute of Educational Innovation (IIE: *Instituto de Inovação Educacional*) co-ordinated the Inclusive Schools Project at a national level. The IIE is a department of the Ministry of Education aiming to "promote, support, disseminate and study innovations with the view to creating quality education for all".

One of the characteristics of this innovation project was the establishment of co-operation protocols between the IIE and five teacher-training colleges in different regions of Portugal. Five local teams of trainers – the 'action groups' – were organised to co-ordinate the project in schools they selected. Originally each local team was set up with five elements, including a team co-ordinator from the training school and one member designated by each Local Education Authority (Direcção Regional de Educação). This project structure allowed teacher training colleges to work closely with schools and act as regional resource centres for the dissemination of inclusive practices.

This example illustrates some key conditions that are important for the effective implementation of national policy:

- The implementation process is the clear responsibility of a particular government department or agency. In this way, government creates a bridge between the *formulation* of policy at the centre and its *implementation* by schools.
- A network of support is created around schools. The government enlists the support of agencies (in this case, teacher training institutions) which can work with schools on a sustained basis.
- Local administrations and the schools themselves are involved in the management of the project so that there is a strong element of local ownership.

- There is a clear mechanism for supporting the development of practice in the schools. In this case, it is the UNESCO Pack – though this will not always be appropriate or necessary. What matters is that inclusive education is not left simply as a general principle which schools have to find their own way to implement in practice.
- There is a clear mechanism for the dissemination of the project's findings.

Frequently, projects will be undertaken collaboratively between national or local administrations and external organisations, as in this example from South America:

✓ The project 'Integration of disabled children into regular schools in Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador', was sponsored jointly by DANIDA and developed with the technical assistance of UNESCO Santiago. It was set within the framework of a larger UNESCO project, 'Towards an Education for All', which aims at "fostering universal access to primary education, especially in those countries less developed in this aspect", and promotes "the mainstreaming of children with special needs", through orientation and planning seminars, technical support and the exchange of specialised knowledge. It is also related to other regional initiatives promoted by UNESCO Santiago, such as a teacher-training programme 'Special Needs in the Classroom'.

The project was developed in two stages: the first started as a national project in Peru in 1993, and the second in which the Peruvian experience was consolidated and extended to Ecuador and Bolivia from 1996 to 2000. Its objectives were to transform the way the teacher approaches his/her class, from the traditional approach to one centred on the particular needs of each student; to promote an adequate use of resources; analyse factors that enhance inclusion; and to disseminate the experience to other communities in the country.

The first phase required the development of a pilot project on the mainstreaming of students with disabilities in selected schools, together with information and awareness-raising campaigns with all stakeholders. It consisted of teacher training, specialist support for the classroom teacher and materials and equipment for those classrooms that were selected for the project in four geographic areas of Peru: Lima/Callao, Ica, Cajamarca and Arequipa. The selection was done through the General Directorate for Initial and Special Education of the Ministry of Education.

The second phase focuses on the consolidation of the experience in Peru, and on the expansion of the project to Ecuador and Bolivia. It includes activities such as teacher training, specialised support for classroom teachers, teacher supervision and the distribution of materials for the selected classrooms. In both countries there is a small scale pilot project focusing on the entire community, including one special and two ordinary schools.

The key factors in this example seem to be:

- There is a clear sequence of stages. In particular, schools are not expected to become more inclusive without adequate preparation and support. Similarly, the project is not extended until a pilot phase has demonstrated its viability.
- As in the Portuguese example, schools are locked into a network of external specialist support. This support does not end with preparatory training; teachers can turn to specialists for help *throughout* the implementation process. Moreover, support is directed at teachers as well as at students.

- Families and the wider community are involved from an early stage. The project realises that schools do not operate in a vacuum and that the attitudes of the communities they serve can be crucial in determining the extent to which they embrace inclusive practices.
- There is a clear dissemination phase in which the project's findings are made available to a wider audience.

1.3 Working with more and less effective schools

Many inclusion projects work with selected schools rather than with all the schools in a particular area or district. Most countries feel that it is important to start with schools where the project is likely to be successful. It is easy to make mistakes in the selection of schools, but experience suggests that it is helpful to look for some or all of the following characteristics:

- senior members of staff support the project, are able to offer effective leadership of the school and are able to offer effective supervision of the teaching staff
- the local administration responsible for the school also supports the project
- the teaching staff is relatively stable so that lessons from the project can be learned over time
- there are good staff relations so that teachers are likely to be willing to collaborate with each other
- the school is able and willing to commit substantial amounts of time to the project, in the form of participation in training or collaborative activities and
- there is a willingness to reflect on practice and an openness to new ideas.

These are not the only factors to consider. For instance, a high level of community support may be a factor, as may the absence of serious pressures on schools (e.g. from under-resourcing or a particularly difficult social environment). Moreover, it is important not to over-emphasise the need for ideal conditions in which to initiate a project. There are two main reasons for this:

- However ideal the conditions may be in which a project is initiated, it will, in order for it to be counted as successful, have to be extended into less-than-ideal conditions. Limited inclusion projects may create individual schools that are more inclusive, but they do not create inclusive education *systems*. These only appear when even the least effective and most reluctant schools become involved.
- Schools are not monolithic institutions. Even where senior staff are committed to a project, some of the teachers may not be. Even where most conditions are favourable, there will be some barriers to inclusive education.

It is important, therefore, to plan all projects on the assumption that they will encounter difficulties and that they will ultimately have to be implemented in less-than-favourable circumstances. This means that projects have to be designed with a view to changing schools gradually so that they become more inclusion-oriented. How this can be done is addressed in the next section.

2 Changing schools

Where school culture has been established with little awareness of the principles of participation, collaboration and inclusion, developing more inclusive practices may challenge existing values, assumptions and practices, and cause disruption. If key figures in the school are committed to becoming more inclusive, this turbulence may be reduced with careful management and new cultures and practices may emerge more easily. However, projects have to take into account that, even in these circumstances, becoming more inclusive is a long-term process of readjustment and that schools need on-going support throughout this process.

Projects need to have specific strategies for helping schools to adjust their practices. The experience of a range of inclusion projects in the South American and Caribbean Region has identified a number of such strategies:

✓ Effective inclusion projects in this region have used the following strategies

- *Encouraging teachers to observe students as learners.* This helps teachers move from seeing only the 'disability' or the 'difference' towards understanding specific ways in which a particular student can be taught effectively.
- *Encouraging the critical analysis of practice.* Teachers can be supported (and can support each other) in examining their current practice critically in the light of what they have learned about their students.
- *Providing teachers with practical information and ideas.* This typically involves a shift in the role of support services from teaching individual students towards supporting the work of mainstream educators.
- *Giving teachers greater autonomy.* Enabling teachers to make more decisions about how to teach, what resources to use and so on allows them to develop the range of strategies at their disposal for responding to student diversity.
- *Widening the focus from some to all students.* So long as teachers see inclusive education as about only some 'included' or 'integrated' students, they will feel the need for a trade off between these students' needs and those of all other students. They can, therefore, be encouraged to see inclusion as about enhancing the quality of education for all students.
- *Working with parents.* Schools are rightly sensitive to the reactions of parents and therefore the development of inclusive practices in the school needs to be accompanied by sustained work with parents and families outside the school.

A number of these strategies can be seen at work in the projects reported above. The Portuguese inclusion project, in particular, was fully evaluated in order to learn as many lessons as possible from its experiences. The evaluation identified some other strategies which proved crucial to its ability to change schools:

✓ In the Portuguese experience, the success of the inclusion project depended on:

- *Working with the school as a whole and implementing changes systematically throughout the school.* This meant working with curriculum management, students, families, community, organisational practices, teachers and evaluation simultaneously and understanding how these elements interacted with each other. It was important not to see inclusive education as *simply* about minor modifications in practice for a few students.
- *Using a wide range of initiatives to generate change in the school.* New legislation on school autonomy and management and a government ruling on curricular flexibility were particularly important. Generally, the inclusion project was related to both external and within-school initiatives so as to build on the changes they initiated. This avoided inclusive education being seen as a disconnected additional burden imposed on schools.
- *Working with the school in the long term.* Training and awareness-raising at the start of the project were important, but not sufficient in themselves. Schools needed long-term support to ensure that the project was embedded. This meant, in particular, involving local training centres in long-term, context-based training programmes for teachers, head teachers and other education professionals. It also meant involving local administrations in offering long-term support.
- *Encouraging teacher collaboration.* Collaborative problem-solving (in this case, facilitated by the UNESCO Teacher Education Resource Pack) is an important way of enhancing teachers' skills and creating a motor for change in the school which can outlast the project itself. The commitment of time to reflection and collaborative problem-solving turned out to be a key factor in the success of the project in different schools.

Putting these experiences together, some fundamental principles can be identified for bringing about changes towards inclusive education in schools:

- Teachers need to be enabled to examine their current practices critically in the light of a detailed understanding of students' needs. They need to do this in a context of mutual support and collaborative problem-solving. This can sometimes lead to fruitful action-research processes.
- Teachers need to be enabled to solve their own problems, but they also need to be able to turn to specialists for information and advice. Those specialists need to be working closely with the school and to work directly with staff.
- Changes in teachers' practice need to be part of more widespread changes in curriculum management and organisation so that changed practice is supported by these other factors. As far as possible, the move towards inclusion needs to be seen as part of other external and internal initiatives in which the schools are engaged.
- The wider school community, including the local administration, needs to be supportive of the change.
- The change process needs to be seen as one that is long-term and requires on-going support. This support should aim to encourage the school to reflect upon the problems that will inevitably emerge, looking forward for solutions.

3 School networks and partnerships

Frequently, inclusive education projects involve schools either working entirely alone or working with a central project team. Whilst much good work can be done in this way, it neglects the extent to which schools can offer support to *each other* by working in collaborative networks. Where schools work together, they can:

- share experiences and expertise
- develop joint policy and practices
- replace competition and self-interest with a shared investment in the network
- develop expertise and specialist provision which becomes a resource for the network as a whole and
- create economies of scale which enable them to respond more easily to a greater diversity of student need.

✓ The Netherlands has traditionally had a highly segregated education system and special education grew rapidly in the 1980s and 1990s. In order to develop a higher level of inclusive practice, the government in recent years has introduced the 'Together to School Again' project which promotes the establishment of 'clusters' of ordinary (primary) and special schools. Each cluster is responsible for around 2000 students with and without special needs and has funding to meet these students' needs. Each cluster has to decide whether to use this funding to place its students in the cluster special school or to maintain them in the ordinary schools. The expectation is that schools will begin to share expertise and resources across the cluster and that ordinary schools will increasingly wish to retain students (and therefore funding) rather than pursuing the old policy of special school placement.

In this example, the establishment of networks of schools has created a context in which greater inclusion is more likely. Networks have been given the funding, expertise and flexibility to develop more inclusive practices. However, creating an enabling context is, of course, no guarantee in itself of more inclusive practices unless it is supported by some central pressure to reduce segregation and/or some appropriate professional and organisational development work.

The example from the Netherlands illustrates a particular form of collaboration which can prove very useful in the early stages of the move towards inclusive education. Countries at this stage tend to have dual systems of special and mainstream education. So long as these remain separate, ordinary schools find it difficult to develop the expertise to respond to student diversity and it is a relatively simple matter for them to place students in special schools.

One way forward is to develop projects which involve special and ordinary schools working together. This encourages the development of shared expertise and can help to de-mystify special education. Mainstream school teachers can become more familiar with special education techniques and with students who are placed in special schools. In turn, special educators can learn about mainstream schooling and can begin to adapt their skills to a different context.

✓ In Catalunya, Spain, an experience of co-operation between a mainstream and a special school started in the school year of 1989-1990. The first participants in the experience were the youngest students (5 years old) in both schools. They shared playtime during the morning. After this first contact, teachers introduced more activities and students of all ages. The experience has continued until the present. Students of both schools share most activities and all students, including those in early-years and primary education, take part in them equally. The co-operation between both schools includes sharing areas about the curriculum. This has allowed teachers to think together about attitudes to diversity. They have come to believe that responses to diversity must be based upon an inclusive education framework by developing a 'School for All'. In their view, to give access to learning for *all* students requires organisational and methodological changes.

Working together in special-ordinary school collaborations is a great challenge for teachers. As this example indicates, the implications go beyond simply sharing the physical environment or developing a co-ordinated team. Collaboration implies working on building up strengths and identifying common goals. A number of factors were found to be helpful in this respect by the Catalunya project:

- the commitment of senior managers and their ability to remain positive about the project, despite the inevitable difficulties that will occur
- efficient organisation which limits the number of meetings and other administrative burdens on participants
- physical proximity between the participating schools
- an open acceptance that collaboration can seem threatening to both special and mainstream educators, and a willingness to discuss this issue fully
- the early involvement of families and a willingness to listen to their views and concerns
- the involvement of all adults in the participating schools, including non-teaching staff
- the participation of a facilitator from outside the participating schools (this might, for instance, be an educational psychologist or other member of a local support team) and
- planning and evaluation activities built in throughout the project.

4 Some common mistakes

Working with schools in the development of inclusive education is a complex business. Although it is often successful, sometimes mistakes are made. Listing some of the commonest ones may make it possible for others to avoid them:

- Project workers are often keen to offer practical advice and strategies to teachers. It is easy for these to focus too heavily on individualised approaches to planning and teaching. Teachers may welcome these initially, but they may prove unmanageable in large classes and in any case may isolate the student from their peers and from the curriculum.

- Any change is likely to involve teachers in additional stress and effort. Sometimes, these factors are overlooked and teachers find themselves overloaded, with the consequence that they reject the proposed change.
- Where the project is about including students with disabilities and difficulties into mainstream schools, project workers may be tempted to place them in inappropriate grades when it would be better to work with the school and teacher on developing more flexible teaching approaches.
- Conditions have to be created for schools and teachers involved in projects which make it likely that the project will succeed. Sometimes additional funding is available to schools or additional payments to teachers. However, this may mean that the project develops in conditions which are not typical of those in the rest of the country or district. Its lessons may be difficult to transfer and other teachers and schools may reject it unless they too are offered inducements.
- Projects sometimes make specialists available to schools and teachers. If this is not handled sensitively, it may create an over-reliance on these specialists and the project may even collapse when additional specialist input is no longer available. Specialists have a role, but it needs to be focused on building capacity in mainstream schools and teachers, not on deskilling them by taking responsibility away from them.

IMPLICATIONS AND QUESTIONS

In this topic, we have focused on the school as the site for change towards inclusive education. In particular, we have identified ways in which schools can be involved in inclusion projects. As always in the Open File, it is important not to see the possibilities presented here in isolation. Much school development towards inclusive practices takes place outside specific inclusion projects and, in any case, projects alone are never likely to create a fully inclusive education system. Administrators and decision-makers, therefore, have to consider all the other 'levers' that they can pull within the system to move it in a more inclusive direction.

Nonetheless, the direct involvement of schools in projects is a powerful way of translating the rhetoric of policies and the opportunities offered by restructured education systems into the realities of practice. Projects, moreover, can be particularly powerful in demonstrating to the rest of the education system that inclusive education is something which is possible here and now.

In order to maximise the impact of direct school involvement, administrators and decision-makers might wish to consider the following questions:

- What opportunities are there for building on schools' own initiatives in order to create inclusion projects that grow from the experiences of schools themselves?
- Where projects are initiated outside schools, is it better for them to work with more or less effective schools? How are these schools to be identified?
- Whether schools are more or less effective, what support are they to be offered to overcome the difficulties they will inevitably encounter? In particular, can support be offered long-term, can families and the community be involved, can a focus on the *whole* school be maintained and can teachers be helped to examine the detail of their own practice?
- What opportunities are there for promoting collaborative projects between schools? Where school networks are established, what other forms of incentive and support can be offered to ensure that they move in the direction of greater inclusion?
- What opportunities are there for collaboration between special and mainstream schools? How can teachers be supported in facing the threats which such collaboration may pose for them?
- What are the opportunities currently available in the system to promote educational change (reforms, major transformations or interventions programmes, legislation promoting more inclusive practices)? How can these opportunities be used to engage schools and teachers to promote access and entitlement for all learners?

References, Sources and Web Sites

This is by no means a complete catalogue of sources on inclusive education. It is simply a list of those that are referred to in the Open File or have proved useful in its preparation. No endorsement of any particular source is intended by its listing here.

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- Enabling Education Network (EENET)
  http://www.eenet.org.uk
- European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education
  http://www.european-agency.org/
- European Union second chance schools:
  http://www.e2c-europe.org
- International Labour Organisation (ILO)
  http://www.ilo.org
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
  http://www.oecd.org/els/education/
- UNESCO
  http://www.unesco.org/education
- UNESCO/Inclusive Education
  http://www.unesco.org/education/sne
- UNICEF
  http://www.unicef.org
- World Bank
  http://www.worldbank.org/
- World Health Organisation (WHO)
  http://www.who.int/home-page/

Many national governments have web sites which provide information on their inclusive education policies. An easy way to access government sites is via

'Governments on the Web'
http://www.gksoft.com/govt/en/