

World Bank Inclusive Education Initiatives in LAC

Background

In recent years the World Bank has played an important role in the field of inclusive development both internally and externally. Regional and thematic working groups within the Bank are reference points for learning about disability and development.

In the field of Education, the World Bank was part of the consortium of agencies and 155 countries that met in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 and issued a declaration with a challenging rallying cry – “Education for All.” The Jomtien Declaration addressed universalization of access and promotion of equity as essential goals for basic education. “Steps need to be taken to provide equal access to education to every category of disabled persons as an integral part of the education system”¹.

In that same year, the UNDP published its first Human Development Report, which recognized education as the foundation of development. Then, in 2000, the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals went further by also identifying exclusion from education as a cause of poverty.

So there is global consensus that education for all is a matter of rights that enhances human and economic development. The World Bank has recognized that unless children with disabilities are brought into the developmental mainstream it will be impossible to achieve Education for All. And unless teachers know how to ensure that all the students in their classes are learning, then many students will drop out of school or fail to learn while they are there.

New UN Treaty and World Bank activities

In August 2006, after five years of work, and with an unprecedented involvement of disabled people’s organizations, the draft International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (ICRPD) was adopted ad referendum by the UN Ad Hoc Committee, chaired by New Zealand’s Amb. Don MacKay.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan called the agreement “a historic achievement for the 650 million people with disabilities around the world” that have lacked adequate protection until now” adding that “this long overdue Convention will mark the beginning of a new era in which they will have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else.”

Although there is already an Inter-American convention prohibiting discrimination against persons with disabilities, and numerous non-binding international instruments addressing disability issues, the UN Convention will be the first

comprehensive international human rights convention on disability that provides for the protection of civil, political, social and economic rights.

The ICRPD's articles cover a number of key areas that are relevant to the work of the World Bank, including accessibility, personal mobility, health, education, employment, rehabilitation, participation in political life, equality and non-discrimination. It also recognizes the specific protections required by some of the more marginalized groups within the disability sector, namely women and children with disabilities.

A few examples of areas in which States Parties may require implementation assistance from the World Bank include:

- Implementation activities of developing countries, who emphasized the need for inclusive development policies and practices during the Convention negotiations process;
- Legislative and policy reform initiatives, banning discriminatory customs and practices (e.g. in education, health, labor market fields, etc.) and promoting alternative approaches that are inclusive of persons with disabilities; and
- Removal of barriers hindering access to, e.g. the environment, transport, public facilities and communication, and economic participation (e.g. equal access to financial services).

(see annex 1 for Article 24 on Education)

Inclusive Education Initiatives in LAC

Within the Education Sector in LCSHD, a significant work on inclusive education had been developed since 2002. This included: (a) the initiation of "status reports" on inclusive education at country level, (b) the first in a planned series of sub-regional seminars on inclusive education with clients, (c) steps to start incorporating inclusive education principles in project and programmatic lending operations, initially in Brazil and Uruguay.

This initiative was taken by the decision of Task Manager Ricardo Silveira, who hired a consultant specialized in disability and inclusive development issues to coordinate the activities and who supervised the whole process from 2003-2004. Due to the increased internal and external demand on technical assistance in the area, in July 2004, The LAC Vice-Presidency of the WB decided to extend the work being done and created a Disability & Inclusive Development Team (D&ID) to serve as focal point and to mainstream the issue in Region's operations and activities. The LAC D&ID Team's role lasted until June 2006, when it was discontinued for internal policy changes.

As a result of the commitment and the investment done by the Bank during the past 3-4 years, many activities, products and results were accomplished in

different disability-related areas: Health, Nutrition & Population; Education; Social Protection; Infrastructure & transportation; Social Development; Poverty Reduction; Statistics & Data Collection...

Just to specifically focus on the area of Education, since 2003 LAC has been conducting sub-regional **workshops on “Inclusive Education: Diagnosis & Future Perspectives”** with governments, local NGOs, education community, and family members of people with disabilities. The Region’s work on **inclusive education** continued to expand its coverage to additional countries and sub-regions. The program included country studies and workshops in each of a series of LAC sub-regions (supported by Japanese and Canadian trust funds). This activity helped built knowledge on the status of Inclusive Education in the Region, and helped establish alliances and partnerships (including electronic networks) involving Bank staff, government, civil society and development agencies with the goal of promoting good practices in the field.

The program of sub-regional workshops, developed in coordination with the CMUs was held as follows: (1) Brazil (March 03); (2) Argentina and Southern Cone (March 04); (3) Central America (May 04); (4) Mexico (October 04); and (5) the Caribbean (April 05).

Among the outputs of the initiative, country and sub-regional studies were conducted in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica & Panamá, Brazil, México, St.Lucia, Argentina and overviews of South Cone and The Caribbean Region. Analytical Workshops Reports were also produced.

The latest product from this LAC series of activities is a Final Report of the studies and workshops on **“Inclusive Education: Diagnosis & Future Perspectives”** analyzing all of these pieces, identifying similarities and differences, weaknesses and strengths among countries and suggesting ways to go further in the Region, prepared at the end of FY06.

Other Resources available on Education

As part of the LAC Program on Inclusive Education, other materials were also produced from 2003-2006, and most of them are ready for dissemination:

A Teacher Training Kit - a module for use by in service teacher training, available in English and Spanish, which runs interactively, on a CD-ROM. This product can be included in any general teacher-training package or program and it aims to support the inclusion of children with disabilities in regular classrooms. This CD-ROM was designed to help teachers to be better equipped to teach a broad range of students in their classes and to help to create a culture in schools where all students feel welcome and valued. The materials were developed with students with disabilities in mind, but the classroom strategies are applicable to

all learners. The Bank believes that teachers who develop an understanding of a framework for inclusion, and of multiple intelligence, who develop skills in multi-level or differentiated instruction, who know how to encourage peer tutoring and cooperative learning, will make their classrooms more stimulating and more effective for all students.

A Resource kit - Best Practices on Inclusive Education in the Latin-America and The Caribbean Region: “Experiences, Tools and Resources on Inclusive Education”. has been prepared for use with clients and staff. This kit contains a paper report on the Uruguay Inclusive Education Fund (WB Project) and the Goiás Inclusive Education Mainstreaming Program, in Brazil (Government funded). Each paper was peer-reviewed inside and outside the Bank and are also available in hard copy. The reports include DVD formatted videos prepared for the kit. The studies and videos are available in Spanish, English and Portuguese. Besides, we have included a collection of resources on Inclusive Education in Spanish, summing up to 1000 documents and references. Funding for this activity was made possible by the Education Network, utilizing BNPP funds.

a **Cartoon booklets** on “Inclusive Education”- produced by Ziraldo, Brazilian famous cartoonist (Port/Eng/Spa); and a series of new Cartoon characters who have disabilities, that are now incorporated into the “**Turma da Monica**” famous production of also Brazilian Mauricio de Souza. Most of this materials are available for distribution in the Region.

Best Practices: “Inclusive Education: Contributions from an experience in Uruguay”- a book documenting the Uruguayan funding mechanism to promote Inclusive Education/MECAEP-UY (Eng/Spa).

LAC is also preparing a new **kit on “Schools and students as agents of social inclusion”**. This project aims at developing the leadership potential of schools (and their students) that are committed to the principles of education for all and who can become active promoters of socially inclusive development within their communities. Teachers and students will be trained and supported so they can contribute to inclusive education strategies through communication with their peers and families. Methodology and activities include understanding, expanding, documenting and disseminating inclusive practices in school and community life; and identification of and outreach to children who are excluded (or at risk of being excluded) from their schools or communities because of their personal, social or cultural characteristics/situations. The project is projected to start in FY06 in Brazil and Uruguay and FY07-08. The methodology is also to be tested in Mexico, Panama and Peru. (work still in progress)

One of the concrete results of disability mainstreaming in **operations** is the current WB Education project in Panama is building close to 300 schools in urban and rural areas and all the new construction will be made accessible, using

existing guidelines and standards based on Universal Design. The Bank is also working with other partners to use the same approach in all LAC client countries.

Follow Up

To take the “**Inclusive Education: Diagnosis & Future Perspectives**” Program into a closing, a regional 3-hour session will be held in Mexico, Acapulco, on November 9, 2006, as part as the Inclusion International’s XIV World Congress “*Building an inclusive future: a challenge for globalization*”. The session aims to present the results of the country studies, and to pull together concrete outcomes from this 3-year process in LAC.

It is expected that, during the meeting, participants representing national Ministries of Education from the LAC countries, NGOs and experts from UNESCO, UNICEF, OECD, IDB and WB, prepare recommendations that can be taken into consideration by policy makers and funding agencies, on the promotion and implementation of Inclusive Education practices in the Region.

Raisa Venalainen, the new focal point on Education for All of the WB is confirmed to be in Acapulco for the session, as well as Ricardo Silveira, responsible for WB Education Projects in Mexico and for the LAC initiative on Inclusive Education. The WB local partner is the Mexico Government, Maricarmen Escandon, will also join the session.

Taking into consideration that LAC National Secretariats of Education may be in Acapulco and may attend the WB session, it is expected that the group can agree on basic regional principles and common indicators to promote Inclusive Education practices and to evaluate it within the regular monitoring and evaluation existing measurement mechanisms.

The Final Report paper on the LAC initiative, prepared for the WB by Consultant Ismael Garcia, is to be presented in Acapulco and to serve as the basis for the session’s discussions and conclusions.

¹ http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/ed_for_all/background/jomtien_declaration.shtml

ANNEX 1 – UN Disability Convention and Education

Article 24 on the ICRPD, covers the Education theme. When signed and implemented, UN country-members, many of which are also WB clients, specially the ones of the South, will have to follow this new binding treaty that affirms that:

Article 24 – Education

1. States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to education. With a view to realizing this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, States Parties shall ensure an inclusive, education system at all levels, and life-long learning, directed to:

- (a) The full development of the human potential and sense of dignity and self worth, and the strengthening of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and human diversity;
- (b) The development by persons with disabilities of their personality, talents and creativity, as well as their mental and physical abilities, to their fullest potential;
- (c) Enabling persons with disabilities to participate effectively in a free society.

2. In realizing this right, States Parties shall ensure:

- (a) That persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability, and that children with disabilities are not excluded from free and compulsory primary and secondary education on the basis of disability;
- (b) That persons with disabilities can access an inclusive, quality, free primary and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live;
- (c) Reasonable accommodation of the individual's requirements;
- (d) That persons with disabilities receive the support required, within the general education system, to facilitate their effective education;
- (d) bis That effective individualized support measures are provided in environments that maximize academic and social development, consistent with the goal of full inclusion.

3. States Parties shall enable persons with disabilities to learn life and social development skills to facilitate their full and equal participation in education and as members of the community. To this end, States Parties shall take appropriate measures, including:

(a) Facilitating the learning of Braille, alternative script, augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication, orientation and mobility skills, and facilitating peer support and mentoring;

(b) Facilitating the learning of sign language and the promotion of the linguistic identity of the deaf community;

(c) Ensuring that the education of persons, and in particular children, who are blind, deaf and deafblind, is delivered in the most appropriate languages and modes and means of communication for the individual, and in environments which maximize academic and social development.

4. In order to help ensure the realization of this right, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to employ teachers, including those with disabilities, who are qualified in sign language and Braille, and to train professionals and staff who work at all levels of education. Such training shall incorporate disability awareness and the use of appropriate augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication, educational techniques and materials to support persons with disabilities.

5. States Parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities are able to access general tertiary education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning without discrimination and on an equal basis with others. To this end, States Parties shall ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided to persons with disabilities.
