MOOCs4D: Potential at the Bottom of the Pyramid

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Expanding inclusion:

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Presentation Overview

- About exclusion
- Non-negotiables of inclusion
- Why current strategies are insufficient
- What can be done…
- Bridges to the Future Initiative-SA case study
- Conclusions
SA rural setting
About exclusion

- Exclusion is one of the greatest problems facing the world today: Such a society is neither efficient nor safe

- Today there are still 113 million primary school age children not attending school;

- 90% of them live in low and lower middle income countries;

- Over 80 million of these children are in Africa, particularly south of Sahara;

- Of those who enroll in primary school, large numbers drop out before completing their primary education
Non-negotiables of Inclusive Education

- Inclusive education is a human rights issue, as pronounced in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1949;

- Discrimination is largely on the grounds of disability, ethnicity, religion, language, gender, capabilities and so on;

- Inclusivity also brings about personal development, and help towards building relationships amongst individuals, groups and nations
Why current strategies are insufficient

- They do not meet needs of marginalized children and youth;
- Most programmes function outside the mainstream: special programmes, specialized institutions, and specialist educators;
- Most approaches result in exclusion and marginalization: ‘second rate’ educational opportunities and programmes that do not allow possibilities for continued studies;
- Most exclusions are based on excuses from elitist groups.
What can be done…

- At systemic level
  - Curriculum should meet needs of a wide range of different learners, including poor rural areas.
  - Language in education policies in particular should accommodate all categories of learners;
  - Teaching and learning should take place through a language which is the first language of learners. There is plenty research on this claim.
  - In order to attract and retain children from marginalized and excluded groups, education systems should respond flexibly, must be inclusive;
What can be done…

- At school level:
  - Schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or other conditions;
  - Teachers should be trained and supported on how to deal with 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.
  - Within centres of learning, steps must be taken to improve and enable physical access and learning environment;
Bridges to the Future Initiative- case study

- Addresses the digital divide of education and technology, rural and urban communities; used PCs, and now Tablets

- Emphasis is on learning through local languages as main implementation languages;

- Affirms marginalized communities;

- Enhances and leverages ICTs to improve literacy and e-literacy (or technological literacy);

- Building reading competencies:
Conclusion

- Education is likely to expand if concerted efforts to promote mainstream approaches are made at the national level;

- Inclusion can be linked to the overall reform of the education system;

- Inclusive education should be a way of looking into educational development, and responding to the diversity of learners’ needs;

- Inclusion should be linked to fundamental democratic reforms;

- Rural and children too deserve equal attention from all of us.