

University of Vienna

Department of Education

Seminar: 190254 SE M3c Theoretical Concepts of Inclusive Education

WS 2012

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Inclusive Education in Ethiopia



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Vienna, 29th of November, 2012

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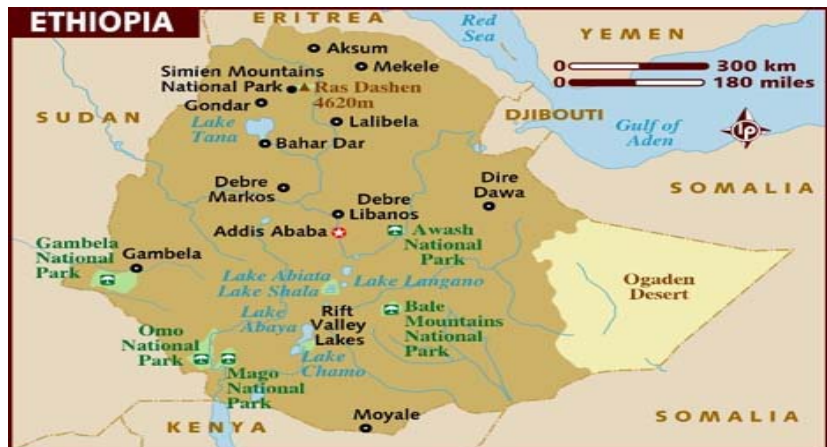
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Introduction

Dr. Belay Hagos Hailu came to Vienna to hold a guest lecture about inclusive education in Ethiopia. As a starting point he asked the class what they know about Ethiopia. There were only a few answers, which showed quite limited knowledge of the students. This led him to a short introduction of Ethiopia to give everyone a common knowledge base. After that Dr. Belay presented the practice of inclusive education in Ethiopia, the challenges they face and the effort they put into it. Now knowing the education system in Ethiopia, a discussion was started about the differences and similarities to Austria. To finish the guest lecture he called for a question and answer session about the presentation.

Ethiopia in general

Dr. Belay Hagos Hailu started giving a brief overview on Ethiopia. He told the students that it is located in the middle east of Africa and that it has borders to: Sudan, Eritrea, Somalia, Kenya and Djibouti. The population of



Ethiopia is about 74 million people with a balanced ratio between men and women and has a quite steady growth rate of 2,6%. The age distribution, however, shows that 45% of the inhabitants are younger than 15 years. From a religious point of view Christians (62,8%) are the majority, followed by the Muslims (33,9%) and a small percentage (3,2%) of others. In Ethiopia, over 80 ethnic groups are known but only 10 of them have more than 1 million people.

Education in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, the primary school enrollment (grade 1-8) is about 16.718.111. From those about 3,5% are children with disabilities. What's at the moment not so good is the efficiency. Only 49% of the enrolled children complete grade 8. So why is it like that? A lot of parents send their children to work. Others are orphans and have to deal with other problems, hindering them to attend school. Dr. Belay Hagos Hailu also mentioned that one teacher has about 50, sometimes even up to 70 children in his class. Those issues are addressed in two rights of the Ethiopian Constitution which should support children with special educational needs. The 1994 education and training policy aimed to provide education for all children. But a concern that for the children with disabilities the rights are the same still remained. As there is a UN Convention from 2006 in place, which describes the rights of persons with disabilities, Ethiopia decided to start implementing 14 inclusive education strategies. These strategies will be hopefully implemented till 2015.

Dr. Belay Hagos Hailu also presented the definition of inclusive education:

- have an education system that is open to all learners
- focus on fitting the education system to the needs of the learners
- emphasize that all children can learn
- diminish or even liberate the barriers to learning
- highlight the importance of team work in order to address needs of the learners
- promote inclusive and egalitarian society
- is based on the principal that education is a human right and leads to a more just an equal society

Having presented the main ideas behind the new strategy, Dr. Hagos started talking about the 14 strategies in more detail:

1. **Systemic responses:** to manage the system and to ensure accountability; to develop a progress indicator which collects relevant data through EMIS
2. **Holding education leaders responsible at all levels:** ensure that learners with special educational needs are included in the plans of the education leaders

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3. **Awareness and acceptance of diversity:** program of awareness training that helps in making a paradigm shift and seeing barriers
4. **Strengthening teacher education:** special training for teachers
5. **Improving physical access to school:** ramps, lifts space for wheelchairs, classes on ground floor for children with physical disabilities
6. **Screening and assessment:** develop and educate teachers on preliminary screening assessment (later on also tool support)
7. **Supporting LWSEN and their teachers:** resource centres support both of them, supporter will support others
8. **Networking among relevant professionals and other stakeholders:** collaboration with other professionals and parents: Co-teaching, Consultation, Partnerships
9. **Allocating adequate resources:** financial resource for realising special needs education strategy available; money for this earmarked
10. **Taking special schools on the role of resource centres:** setting up cluster schools, cluster schools support other schools
11. **Adapted curriculum:** in schools there is a lessons plan but not everybody can understand it so it is better to use individual education plans
12. **Adapted teaching, employing evidence-based strategies:** develop skills of teachers to find evidence-based teaching strategies (e.g. co-operative group teaching, peer tutoring, supportive classroom climate, social skills training, self-regulated learning, memory strategies, assistive technology)
13. **Adapted Assessment:** not everyone can be assess the same way, diagnostic assessment, to check the strong and the weak side of learners
14. **Individual Transition Plans, Protocols and Procedures:** increase awareness of potential of people with disabilities

The Practice of Inclusive Education in Ethiopia

The organizational structures are set up, but the infrastructure is lagging behind. Organizational Structure is very important and includes inclusive education, which is on its **infant stage**, at the Ministry of Education (MoE). The MoE has a Directorate for Special Support and Inclusive Education, which includes Special Needs

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Education (SNE). In collaboration with MoE the government of Finland supported to build capacity of this SNE program. MoE has set up a national advisory group called National Council for Inclusive Education (NCIE). By 2015 they are targeting education for all, then they can complete the enrollment role.

As a practice the Ministry of Education has planned to

- Increase enrollment of LWSEN at all levels
- Increase the number of **teachers** trained for teaching children with special needs by 25% by 2015 by developing SEN/inclusive education training, offering in-service teachers and courses for pre-service teachers
- Improve **institutional capacity of schools** in addressing the academic and social needs of children with SEN

So what was **accomplished**?

- From 2007 to 2010 the Enrollment of LWSEN increased by 55%
- Developed screening tool for mathematics
 - A professor from Finland developed **BANUCA** = Basic Arithmetic and Numerical Calculations
- a guideline for **individual educational plan** and modification of the curriculum throughout the educational system was prepared
- various channels of mass media were used for raising **awareness** about SNE/inclusive education
- Many **special schools** have been empowered to be **resource centers** for inclusive classrooms.
- There were 144 special classes attached to ordinary schools in 2010. Because of this you can see the shift from integration to inclusive education.
- Assigned focal SNE/IE persons in many REBs
- 9 pilot resource centers have been established. By 2015 these resource centers will expand up to 500 -> in this nine resource centers itinerant teachers are deployed as a trial. These itinerant teachers are 'moving' teachers. They support regular teachers in 5, up to 7 satellite schools. These specialized teachers from special schools are used as a resource center.

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- Compulsory courses on IE implemented for all future teachers
- Institutional capacity of HEIs (High Education Institutes) & CTEs (colleges of teacher education) improved: five universities and five colleges

The ministry is interested in starting more programs

Challenges and Efforts

Challenges

3,5% of the children are children with disabilities, but this percentage doesn't include children at risk, then the percentage would be higher! There is a **limited access** to education for the most vulnerable children. The quality of support is not adequate.

Funding is another challenge, there is a considerable gap between available funds and anticipated cost of investments needed to maintain and improve quality. Still there is a **lack of awareness**. The capacity of the institutions to plan, manage and monitor the education system is weak. This has to be practiced at all levels of institutions.

In grade one you expect children at the age of seven, but in the classroom you will find children from eight to fifteen and even older ones (**overage classes**). Furthermore the drop-out rate is very high. Half of the children didn't finish, so **accomplishment** is another challenge. The reasons for leaving school are different, they reach from economic, to social and familiar reasons (boys are needed for field-work; girls have to marry etc.).

Four million of the children are orphans. They have lost one or even both of their parents or they had not had enough support from home. Professor Belay Hagos Hailu wrote a book about that issue. When the oldest child may care for the younger children, it is called child headed household. There are organisations, which support orphans so they can continue education. Some reasons why there are so many orphans are for instance war, diseases or conflicts.

The classes in Ethiopia are very large, so that's another problem. There is a **lack of space and trained teachers**, they don't know or they are not taught how to handle the large classes in an adequate way. The teachers have poor skills so they need training support. They might refer if they have knowledge. For instance there are two to three autism centers, where they have specialized teachers, which can give their

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knowledge to others, but that's another problem, because in Ethiopia they have insufficient trained support staff.

Due to **negative attitudes** parents may not be willing bringing their children to school. Another challenge is the **lack of data on LWSEN**. There is a lack of deaf sign language interpreters (they don't have an adequate number of sign language interpreters), materials, transport arrangements and there are inaccessible and unsafe built environments.

Once the children graduate, they don't really know how to assign them. The graduates from special education courses may not be referred to the right task, they are inappropriately utilised. Furthermore they lack practical skills. The leadership skills are varying at regional and other levels.

The budget and funding for LWSEN is limited and the commitments are not being achieved. The lines of accountability are not clear.

Efforts to address the gap

The first attempt is raising awareness using different media and making campaigns addressed to teachers, school administrators, education leaders and community members (over 9000 reached). All teachers have to take one course on Inclusive Education. In five universities capacity was built. As a full department (BA, MA, PhD) it was built at the AAU. Furthermore in the Linguistic Department at this university (BA in Sign Language & Deaf Culture) capacity was built, at the Bahir Dar, Gondar, Haramaya University (BA) and finally at the Dilla University (BA and MA programs).

Five Colleges of Teacher Education (CTE) started training educators in special needs at the diploma level: Adwa CTE, Debrebirhan CTE, Kotebe CTE, Sebeta CTE and Hosanna CTE. As a conclusion there can be said that there have been made some efforts, but there is still a lot of work to do.

Discussion, Questions and Comparison to Austria

There are 31 universities in Ethiopia. Most of them are funded about 10 years ago. There you can see the radical development of the universities. The oldest one, the

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University of Addis Abeba, is just about 60 years old. In comparison to that the oldest university in Austria, the University of Vienna, was founded in 1365.

Referring to inclusive education in Ethiopia, there is no system for children with learning disabilities.

The classes in Ethiopia are much bigger than in Austria. On average there are 51 pupils (so there can even be much more children in one class, up to 70!) in the classroom, in Austria there are about 25-30.

In Ethiopia a lot of children lost both of their parents, so it is hard to learn for them. They don't have support from home. Some of the kids are not well fed. So these are target groups. Generally any person who has a challenge in getting education is targeted. Furthermore a lot of families hide their children because of stigma, they don't want to expose their children. But the enrollment has increased thanks to CBR-programs.

Another part of the discussion was the theme of the sign language interpreters. We talked about that they also have to be paid, but there is only a certain amount of money that can be used for such services at the university.

An interesting point Dr. Belay Hagos talked about was the traditional inclusiveness in education by priests. The church accommodates persons with visual impairments and even moves problems, they employ them in church. On the other side there is also discrimination, as we see by the example of the families hiding their children at home because of stigma, but there also exists this traditional inclusiveness. We have to see both sides.

Generally the state of Ethiopia is in a good direction to practice inclusive education with the policies.

Other issues we discussed in the groups were:

- Can children repeat a class and if so, how often? – The reaction of the schools varies. If a child repeats grade A three times it doesn't get the chance to progress. There are different strategies
 - Encourage children to continue to finish the grade (->automatic promotion)

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The problem is that some children who are encouraged to finish the grade can't even identify the letters at the end of grade 4.

- Encourage them to repeat
- Teachers in Austria should also be obligated to do a course in IE at least at the compulsory school level.
- The students thought that there is a problem in implementing those individual education plans as there is a high number of children in one classroom.
- Dr. Belay Hagos Hailu also stated that the theoretical background is quite developed in Ethiopia but the doing takes time. Besides that there is also the problem of the poor income of teachers. The payment is that low that it is hard to live with their salaries.

Besides that the profession of the teachers looks back to a tradition of high respect. That is sustained in some parts. The respect is attached to naming, for instance: Teacher Tedy. The profession hasn't been sustained by the system.

- We discussed that the teachers in Austria should also be obligated to do a course in IE in compulsory schools
- Where does the money come from to follow these 14 strategies?
Government and sponsors
- Why are there so many dropouts?
There are 4 million orphans in Ethiopia, they have problems to go to school; community based rehabilitation (cbr) strategies should provide support
- Is there any tutoring at home?
No, cause many adults cannot read or write
- Since when has Ethiopia state trained teachers?
Since about 60 years, before the priests were teachers