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MAKING EDUCATION FOR ALL INCLUSIVE IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

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ABSTRACT: *The education for all (EFA) agenda is targeted at achieving inclusive education across regions of the world including developing countries (DCs). The policy is nonetheless not inclusive in the actual sense of the concept. Emphasis of the EFA on ensuring parity in the ways male and female pupils access education in formal settings restricts the policy from becoming genuinely inclusive. Inclusive education as to be a core philosophy to moving the provisions of EFA forward encourages changes to existing local cultures that disadvantage some children and young people within education systems in DCs. It begins with the belief that education is the basic human right of all and the foundation for a more just society. Thus, inclusive education draws on the idea of social inclusion to redefine the provisions of the EFA in order to ensure that education is sincerely for 'all' and not nearly for all in DCs.*

KEYWORDS: EFA, Inclusion, DCs, Pupils, Rural Areas

INTRODUCTION

Underlying the United Nations declaration of education for all (EFA) (United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organisation - UNESCO, 1990) is the idea of inclusion. EFA is however not inclusive as contained in the Salamanca Statement on inclusive education (UNESCO, 1994) due to emphasis of the policy on parity in access. The field of inclusive education acknowledges that there is diversity among people in all societies, including developing countries (DCs) and implementation of education has to take cognizance of the wide diversity of the characteristics and needs of these people. Recent international thinking within the inclusive education community such as UNESCO (1994), Kisanji (1998), Mittler (2000), Riehl (2000), Dyson & Millward (2000) Eleweke & Rodda, (2002), Farrell (2003), Peters (2004), Ainscow (2005), Dei (2005) and Ajuwon (2008) view available provisions within education systems that support EFA as inadequately serving the needs of a diverse population within societies across the world. For instance, people who have different characteristics as well as those residing in difficult circumstances in different societies tend to be marginalised and excluded in education.

These eminent sources draw attention to the concern that existing education policies and practices within the EFA have inherent disadvantages against some of these people, including people with disabilities and much of the disadvantages occur in contrast to the inclusive philosophy in developing regions of the world (UNESCO, 1994; Kisanji, 1998; Eleweke & Rodda, 2002; Dei, 2005; Ajuwon, 2008; UNESCO, 2015). Consequently, inclusion assumed a rights-based approach to ensure equality in education. The notion of inclusion, as to be a strategy to provide education for all in the future (UNESCO, 2008), guarantees that there are equal opportunities and possibilities to access education and to achieve in education irrespective of personal background. Inclusivity celebrates diversity, creating conditions where

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every child can receive education in mainstream settings. As an approach to overcome exclusion (UNESCO, 2003) and reposition the EFA, inclusive education draws on the idea of social inclusion (World Bank, 2013), highlighting genuineness in the ways educational institutions welcome and engage all learners.

THEORETICAL INSIGHTS

This paper is patterned after the inclusion is social inclusion formulation, originating from the functionalist social theory of Emile Durkheim, a European philosopher and documented in O'Brien & Penna (2007). In the early 20th century, the European society was experiencing a transition, moving from an agrarian to industrial society. The economic shift generated a social dislocation. Durkheim felt concerned with how to sustain social order and stability in such a society. Durkheim's earlier propositions for an inclusive society echoes down the centuries. The concept received huge popularity due to its widespread application by development agencies and in development studies as a way of understanding and alleviating poverty in the south, including Africa and the Americas (Jackson, 1999). Also, its application in developing countries such as those in Africa, arguably, arises from the interactions in social policies between the north and south due to globalisation and international migration (Francis, 1997). The concept becomes germane to this paper on the strength that it serves as a model to analyse local contexts, in terms of the extent to which children are included in primary schools in developing countries.

Social inclusion focuses on equal access to and success of all individuals in social institutions. The World Bank defines the concept as the process of enhancing the ability, opportunity and dignity of people, disadvantaged on the basis of their identity, in the society (World Bank, 2013). It is an idea that emphasises the opening of institutional doors and allowing access of all individuals the opportunity for freedom of participation and decision-making in issues that affect them (O'Reilly, 2005; Oxoby, 2009; Woodcock, 2013). Such an atmosphere is one where all people feel valued and recognised, their differences are treated with respect and they are accepted by others.

Educational inclusion is a facet of social inclusion and it suggests efforts required to engage children in ways that can increase the tendency for all of them to access, participate and complete school. A comprehensive plan of education is imperative to improve children's wellbeing, prepare them for primary school and beyond and provide them with better opportunities to succeed at school (Robo, 2014). The approach questions dominant norms and values that often feature in the education of children in local communities. Looking at these cultures, there is a possibility that some of them have negative impacts on the provisions available for all children with regards to schooling. An inclusive system encourages a rethink of some of the existing traditions and practices to benefit the children irrespective of background. Using that process, a new critical consciousness can emerge among the diverse local subjects in and out of the school to inspire them to seek avenues to resolve those barriers that block children from achieving equity along the lines of, for instance, gender, tribe, religion, language and impairment. By sweeping social differences under the carpet the school becomes a potent agency through which to subvert all forms of segregation. Simply, the conceptualisation presupposes the provision of egalitarian opportunities for all pupils at school and be empowered therefrom to contribute for the common good of society.

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Social inclusion stands in marked contrast to social exclusion. The idea of social exclusion came from France by the New Labor Government in the 90s (Barry, 1998). Although antithetical to each other, both concepts, however, are a dualism that is inseparable. The analysis of social inclusion is certain to illuminate the exclusion aspect. Social exclusion embeds implicitly in policies in developing countries, including those in Africa as inequities arising from the process of (educational) development, migration and globalisation are challenging structural inequalities in the allocation of basic social amenities and entitlements among categories of the population (*cf.* Department for International Development – DFID, 2005, 2007). However, nuances concerning the notion abound e.g. de Haan & Simon (1998), Sen, (2000), Beall & Laure-Helene (2005), Pradhan (2006) and Levitas, Pantazi, Fahmy,Gordon, Lloyd & Patsios (2007). Regardless of the ambiguities and controversies that feature in the thinking of these authors on the subject, their analyses nonetheless are unanimous to the effect that they all point to deprivation and disadvantages which individual or groups face due to inadequate access or limited participation in mainstream programmes. The barriers confronting individuals or groups is a product of complex factors stemming from their distinct social attributes e.g. tribe, gender, majority, minority, migrating to new areas, religious faith, language and a range of varied abilities (Gardener & Subrahmanian, 2006; Sayed, Subrahmanian, Soudien, Carrim, Balgopalan, Nekhwevha & Samuel, 2007).

Challenges in educational that affect children within rural areas tend to be associated with remoteness, subsistence economy, weak integration into national education, poor educational provisions (*cf.* Beall, 2002) and local ideological beliefs that are resistant to change that favour inclusion. Huge population, for instance, in Nigeria reside in isolated rural communities (Akinola, 2007; International Fund for Agricultural Development – IFAD, 2012), in some places surrounded by forests and/or deserts. The location keeps the population far away from central government based in the cities. The distance can make them vulnerable to marginalisation in receipt of educational provisions from government, and even other corporate entities that promote education. Reason being that the responsible agencies could place their interests as being of low priority. Also, the geographical concentration of children from minority groups within local communities implies that national educational policies and programmes can underestimate or overlook their disadvantages. Poor provisions reduce the chances for them to develop and make progress. Children who are excluded tend to lack requisite skills and competencies because they are being shut out from enjoying the opportunities that can lead to successful schooling.

EDUCATION FOR ALL

Focus of the present paper is framed around the context of the outcomes of the 1990 education for all (UNESCO, 1990) forum that aimed to universalise primary education to advantage all children worldwide. From 5-9 March 1990, four United Nations bodies: World Bank, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNESCO and United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) collaborated with 155 governments and 150 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to organise the Jomtien conference on Education for All in Thailand (Unterhalter, 2013; Ewa, 2015). Participants at the world education conference ratified six development goals that aggregated to be called the EFA (Yamada, 2007; Ewa, 2015). EFA emerged as a rights-based approach to education backed by the universal declaration of Human Rights, particularly the global Convention on Rights of the Child (Reichert, 2006; United Nations, 2011). Goal 2 of the EFA, in particular, aimed at universal access and completion of primary

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education, goal 3 is a resolve to enhance learning and goal 4 focused on elimination of gender imbalance between males and females in education achievement (UNESCO, 1990; Yamada, 2007). These objectives demonstrate the determination of national governments and agencies to fill the gaps in education by ensuring equality in schooling for all primary age children, tax free.

Member states of the United Nations and signatories of EFA, however, failed to realise the objectives of EFA within the time frame (UNESCO, 2000). Issues within partner countries connected to insufficient resources, population growth, lack of legal support and resistance of local cultures slowed the pace of progress of EFA (UNESCO, 2002; Ewa, 2015). As a response, ten years later, key actors in education convened another world education forum from 26 - 28 April, 2000 in Dakar, Senegal to evaluate the extent of achievement of the programme and adopted the Dakar Framework for Action on EFA (UNESCO, 2000). The Dakar conference drew wider support from governments, international governmental organisations (IGOs) and NGOs compared to those who had attended Jomtien in 1990 (Unterhalter, 2013). The huge support shown at the forum highlighted the level of seriousness with which stakeholders were prepared to mobilise resources to tackle barriers to education of children.

At the forum, participants resolved to expand and improve educational opportunities and reaffirm the pledge by governments and agencies to include all children in education (Ewa, 2015). From 2000 to 2010 over 50 million children were enrolled in primary school (UNESCO, 2013). It was a significant feat that educational systems recorded in registration of children in schools across countries. Primary age children who hitherto were excluded had the opportunity to access formal education within their localities. The achievement was short lived, however. United Nations found later that despite the progress made in EFA since 2000, some critical areas remained unaddressed given that 57 million children were still out of school as at 2011 and enhancement in out-of-school number had stagnated since 2008 (UNESCO, 2013). Also, two third of girls in sub-Saharan Africa were expected not to attend school given the current trend in local cultures, and poor attention is accorded to the marginalised (UNESCO, 2013). Besides, the latest EFA Global Monitoring Report revealed a sharp decline in primary attainment among the poorest families from 35 per cent in 2003 to 22 per cent in 2013 with the gap between the average and poorest households increasing by 20 percentage points, particularly, in Nigeria, and that suggests that policy reform is favouring wealthier families more (UNESCO, 2015).

The EFA framework is narrow in the sense that it only concentrates on guaranteeing parity in the extent to which boys and girls are placed in school. It is a prescriptive way of allocating educational resources to favour particular children. It questions whether the EFA can effectively achieve equity in the pursuit to include all children in education. Burnett (2008), for example, raised concern in relation to equity as an issue in inclusion, which is given insufficient attention within the EFA goals. While clarifying the notion of equity as a vital means to ensuring inclusion within the EFA, Ainscow, Dyson & Kerr (2006), viewed equity as: (a) treating everyone equally; (b) minimizing divergence across social groups by bringing the achievements of the less advantaged to the same level as those of the more advantaged groups; (c) achieving a common standard for all learners—for example, basic literacy and numeracy; and (d) meeting the needs of all individuals through differential treatment in order to take learner diversity into account. The different ways in which Ainscow et al. (2006) have defined equity in relation to inclusion raise the need for educators to respect the rights of every child to

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schooling as well as provide them with equal chances to engage in school programmes and to achieve.

However, provisions within the EFA are directed towards guaranteeing access-oriented education of children more than ensuring their participation and achievement (UNESCO, 2000). This is further portrayed in the actions of governments and agencies to develop the capacity of school, including teachers, resources and curricula, in a rather traditional way focused on enabling it welcome soaring pupil population. The direction of EFA, for instance, overlooked the issues about attendance of children with impairments (Miles & Singal, 2008), under-prioritises engagement of diverse children in lessons and how they are achieving in schools.

In spite of that, the priority on achieving a balance in access means all learners would have to fit into an unchanged school infrastructure, culture, values, system and curricula. It is what Peters (2004) called the 'placement paradigm' - that is, schooling is seen as a place rather than an appropriate delivery of educational provisions for the children placed in the school. Trapped in that access-based perception within the EFA, governments and organisations tend to be unaware, hesitant or lack the political will to democratise primary education to give children high quality opportunities and freedom to engage with educational matters that affect them in ways that can maximise learning outcomes for all of them. The situation is likely to keep EFA on the brink to achieving its potentials should the world continue on the same path of provisioning education for children.

MAKING EFA INCLUSIVE

The strategies used to foster EFA have so far demonstrated an inability to provide the kind of education that is appropriate for diverse children. As documented in the EFA Global Monitoring (GMR) Report (2009) there is expression of uncertainty in relation to the ability of the EFA to achieve the goal to provide universal primary education for all children in developing countries (DCs). National education systems in DCs have not been able to provide primary education that would include all children in the poorest homes and those historically underserved populations resident in remote areas (DeStephano, Moore, Balwanz & Hartwell, 2007). Thus, the GMR revealed that some 75 million children of primary school age are still out of school, and their numbers are reducing too slowly and too unevenly to achieve the 2015 target (EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2009).

It must also be noted that huge disparities in access and completion occur within countries. So, for example, 55 per cent of primary age children who are not in school are girls, and over 4 out of 5 of these children reside in rural areas across developing regions including sub-Saharan Africa (EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2009). Children of tribal and religious minorities are also among those who have limited access to and completion in state-funded primary schools in remote locations within less developed countries. Government assumedly do not adequately incorporate the needs of all children in the rural communities to enable them benefit from the EFA compared to the urban counterparts. Issues arising from local tradition and inflexible provisioning of school resources under the EFA are also obstacles to access and completion of primary education for children with impairments (*cf.* DeStephano et al., 2007).

Focus on pupil access alone will mean that many primary schools in multilingual contexts would lack appropriate language strategies to include children whose mother tongue is different

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from the official medium of instruction. Within some linguistically heterogonous communities, school instruction is delivered in the local language of the dominant tribes – sometimes as a second language - to disadvantage the minorities (Gacheche, 2010). According to Pinnock (2009), 72 per cent of children who are out of school are found in linguistically diverse countries that enforce a non-indigenous language for schooling. Children who use unfamiliar language of instruction at school are likely to experience difficulties to enjoy the lessons, engage in what they are learning and to question what they do not understand. Coupled with that, EFA has not been able to address the competence-based curricula that obtain in many education systems.

As the standards agenda dominate concerns in national education in many developing countries, the consequence of failing examinations and making the next grade are likely to involve loss of esteem and increase in cost of schooling for pupils (MacBeath, Galton, Steward, MacBeath & Page, 2006). This anti-inclusion culture, against some uninformed thinking, is not unidirectional, exerting negative effects only on the pupils. Rather, it poses a bi-directional consequence too. While some repeaters would strive to re-earn the confidence of parents and teachers about their abilities, the school is also likely to face a difficult task in relation to trying to rebuild or sustain some kind of positive status in order to attract more children or support from government and other funding agencies (*cf.* MacBeath et al., 2006). Hence, regardless of the progress many DCs have made to expand universal access to primary education to reach the objective of EFA on increased enrolment rate, high rates of grade repetition and school dropout drain out a huge proportion of the pupils even before they reach the final grade and diminish the image of the school (DeStephano et al., 2007). A significant number of children leave school without having acquired basic numeracy and literacy skills (EFA Summary Report, 2010). Due to disparities in completion rates, for instance, among sub-Saharan African countries, it has been difficult to get accurate data on primary completion rates among children in rural areas within the region (UNESCO, 2012). It is possible for some relevant institutions, usually headquartered in the cities, to manipulate the statistics on completion rate of pupils in urban schools to also serve as representative data of primary completion for their peers in rural villages.

Absence of data and/or presentation of inaccurate statistics on primary completion for pupils in school paints a difficult situation in assessing the global prospects of actualising the EFA by 2015 or to ascertain what effort or funding is needed more (UNESCO, 2015). Poor institutional capacity means that a considerable number of children living in rural zones would have limited opportunities to be included in school. This suggests the inability of EFA to sustain commitment to achieve significant political attention from international and national governments and private organisations in terms of appropriate support, legislation, resourcing and financing to be able to ensure diverse children, who live in difficult circumstances, not only enter school, but also survive through the full cycle of primary education (Steer & Wathne, 2009). Other components of anti-schooling and anti-learning culture such as zero tolerance assertive discipline regimes exacerbate the situation leading, initially, to confinement in referral areas and ultimately to suspension and exclusion (MacBeath et al., 2006). Education that is genuinely for all children goes beyond access to ensuring diverse children engage with learning experiences and leave school with positive outcomes.

This leads the writer to join others to argue that the objectives of EFA require review and re-definition to place much more emphasis on promoting inclusive forms of education. In this respect, it is encouraging that the idea of inclusion forms a core philosophy underlying

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UNESCO's programmes (Peters, 2004) and serves as a guiding principle for educating all children in the future (UNESCO, 2002, 2008, 2009). This starts with the belief that education is a basic human right of all children and the foundation for a more just society (Ainscow & Miles, 2008).

The discussion of inclusive education policy is, inter alia, focused on making substantial investments on physical facilities and equipment, curricula renewal and adjustment, altering teaching methods, and providing support services; eliminating social exclusion (Sen, 2000), which is a consequence of attitudes and beliefs and responses to the expectation and needs of excluded groups who are defined by markers of gender, tribe, religion, language, impairment, socio-economic and migrant factors (Vitello & Mithaug, 1998; Ainscow & Miles, 2008). The inclusive approach presents a blanket way to ensuring the prospects for education are available for even groups of children who are traditionally disadvantaged in society as well as those we do not yet know.

Commenting further about inclusive education as the basis for moving the goals of the EFA forward, Dunleavy (2008) and Gordon (2010) highlight that by guaranteeing access alone does not ensure equity in pupil school experiences. According to these authors, one way to overcome the challenges of inequity among diverse learners is to engage with their voices, treating their perspectives with value and incorporating them into school programmes. Analyses by other proponents of inclusive education such as Fielding & Bragg (2003), Flutter & Rudduck (2004), Cook-Sather (2006), Tangen (2008), Czerniawski, Garlick, Hudson & Peters (2009), Boorman, Nind & Clarke (2009) Messiou (2012), Flynn (2014), Robinson (2014) and Shirley (2015) also underlined the engagement of pupil voice as one avenue to promote inclusive schooling. Pupil voice is a recent initiative gaining prominence in educational research as an alternative practice to alleviate exclusionary pressures in teacher-driven classroom instructions and to reposition the school to serve as a micro democratic society (Fielding & Bragg, 2003; Flutter & Rudduck, 2004).

THE SALAMANCA STATEMENT

The idea of inclusive education was given international impetus by the world conference held from 7–10 June, 1994 in Salamanca, Spain on the future of special needs education, attended by representatives of 92 governments and 25 international organisations to further the objectives of EFA (UNESCO, 1994; Kisanji, 1998; Eleweke & Rodda; 2002; Ainscow, 2005; Dei, 2005). Reflecting on the future of the field of special education within the context of EFA, delegates agreed a Statement arguing that regular schools with an inclusive orientation are 'the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all', adding that such schools can 'provide an effective education for the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system' (UNESCO, 1994: viii; Ewa, 2015).

Informed by this formulation, the Salamanca Statement adopted the following agenda:

1. Every child has a fundamental right to education, and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning;
2. Every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs;

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3. Education systems should be designed and educational programmes implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs; and

4. Those with special educational needs must have access to regular schools that should accommodate them within a child-centred pedagogy capable of meeting these needs.

Whilst the Salamanca Statement was focused on the need to rethink the field of special education, its rationale and agenda for change provide an important contribution for redefining the strategies used to promote EFA.

UNDERSTANDING INCLUSION

A body of literature sheds light on the different ways in which inclusive education is defined within the international literature (e.g. Kisanji, 1998; Booth, 1999; Riehl, 2000; Eleweke & Rodda, 2002; Booth & Ainscow, 2002; Peters, 2004; Dyson, Farrell, Polat, Hutcheson & Gallannaugh, 2004; Dei, 2005; Ainscow, Farrell, Frankham, Gallannaugh, Howes & Smith, 2006; Ainscow & Miles, 2006; Armstrong & Miles, 2008). A consensus from the various perspectives is that inclusive education, as it relates to EFA, is about participation of diverse children in a common school. However, there remains considerable debate regarding how the concept should be defined. For example, in their publication, *Improving Schools, Developing Inclusion*, Ainscow et al. (2006) said the definitions of inclusion can be descriptive or prescriptive. A descriptive definition of inclusive education indicates the various ways, which inclusion is used in practice and the prescriptive definition of the concept demonstrates the way we wish to use the term and would like it to be used by others. They went further to summarise the following five ways in which inclusive education is conceptualised in the international literature:

1. Inclusion as a concerned with disability and special educational needs;

2. Inclusion as a response to disciplinary exclusion;

3. Inclusion in relation to all groups seen as being vulnerable to exclusion;

4. Inclusion as developing the school for all; and

5. Inclusion as ‘Education for All’.

These will be explained in turn.

Inclusion as concerned with disability and special educational needs

One dominant perspective about inclusion is that the field is mainly concerned with making provisions to educate children with disabilities or those classed as having special educational needs in regular schools (Mittler, 2000; Booth & Ainscow, 2002). The assumption cuts across literature. Garuba (2003:192) formulates the concept as ‘full-time placement of children with mild, moderate and severe disabilities in regular classrooms’. In the same vein, Christensen (1996), Ajuwon (2008), Olofintoye (2010) and Olaleye, Ogundele, Deji, Ajayi**,** Olaleye & Adeyanju (2012) view inclusion as the process of enrolling learners with disabilities in the mainstream classroom. This also reflects in education policy documents of some national governments. For instance, evidence that the Nigerian government is grappling with the meaning of the concept is demonstrated in national education policy where it is stated that

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inclusive education or integration of special classes and units shall be provided so as to integrate handicapped children into ordinary public schools under the national Universal Basic Education (UBE) (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). The confusion is unsurprising because the idea of inclusive education emanates from the field of special education.

But, the special educational needs view is a negative way to define inclusion. Giving priority for children with impairments and those with special needs to access regular educational settings ignores the other aspects in which participation of the learners may be required (Ainscow et al., 2006). Also, the narrow way in which some educators, researchers and policymakers associate inclusion with education of disabled children, according to Farrell (2004), may lead to the needs, interests and requirements of specific groups being overlooked. The special educational needs perspective of inclusion is one notion that assumes the placement of children with physical challenges in special provisions as an appropriate response to their educational needs. While opposing the argument from a rights standpoint, Abberley (1987) in Ainscow et al. (2006) views the compulsory segregation as contributing to the oppression of children with impairments in the same way other practices marginalise other children on the basis of gender, language, tribe and religion (Corbett, 1996; Gerschel, 2003). More so, the notion limits provision of support to particular categories of learners rather than an inclusive measure that would benefit all children in the whole school (Ainscow et al., 2006).

Inclusion as a response to disciplinary exclusion

If inclusion is viewed as primarily focused on children categorised as having special educational needs, it is linked to the perspective that the concept involves to also work with children labelled as having behavioural difficulties in school (Ainscow et al., 2006). At the mention of inclusion some practitioners and parents would fear that they have been asked to work and interact or allow their children to learn with peers who have 'bad behaviour'. These bad behaviours are defined herein as events involving children that parents report or occur in school relationships, classroom instructions and considered as falling short of the standard of conducts, which the school expects from each child. Some examples include bullying, affray, truancy, late coming, dishonesty, disrespect, arson, learning difficulties and failure to complete assignments. On many occasions, the school arguably sees sending the affected children home, example for failing to do classroom tasks, bullying, truancy, disrespect or getting pregnant as a disciplinary measure to address the bad behaviours. And, a considerable number of children suffer exclusion from school as a result.

Klasen (1998) and Ainscow et al. (2006) see exclusion beyond the state of being kept out of school. Rather, they view it broadly as having to do with all discriminatory, devaluing and self-protective processes that occur within the school and society. Such disciplinary exclusion is an avenue to further resist inclusion. The concept of inclusion nonetheless overrides whatever reason, which makes any child vulnerable to marginalisation or exclusion (Mkonongwa, 2014). It is about creating supportive environments to check and alleviate discrimination that may be personal or institutional against education of children (Ainscow et al., 2006).

Inclusion with regards to all groups being vulnerable to exclusion

There is even a growing concern to regard exclusion in education in terms of addressing discrimination and disadvantages for other groups who are prone to face exclusionary pressures (Ainscow et al., 2006). A broader perspective that encourages the provision of appropriate resources to respond to the needs of diverse people within institutions is documented in World

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Bank (2013) as mentioned earlier. It is referred to as social inclusion as can also be found in the work of O'Reilly (2005), Oxoby (2009) and Woodcock (2013), a concept that is seen as a broad way to tackle social exclusion (de Haan & Simon, 1998; Sen, 2000; Beall & Laure-Helene, 2005; Pradhan, 2006; Levitas, Pantazi, Fahmy, Gordon, Lloyd & Patsios, 2007). In regards to education, social inclusion is a rights-based language underpinning the creation of adequate opportunities for children whose access to and participation at school is at risk, e.g. children who are pregnant or caring for babies while in school (Ainscow et al., 2006). Others include over-aged children, school dropouts, children who served as conscripts into armed groups and children who live in broken homes. Social in/exclusion is an all-encompassing term used to examine the experiences of different groups of children with regards to their education in various contexts (*cf.* Ainscow et al., 2006).

The formulation around social in/exclusion of children is problematic for two reasons. Firstly, it suggests a notion of power in which children who are included are dominant or powerful whilst those excluded are subordinate or powerless (Jackson, 1999). Secondly, it hypothesises a division about the level of control of legitimacy the included and excluded groups possess with regards to schooling to produce unequal power balance between them. A situation as this shows the disconnection in relationship, which people have with others in a variety of social roles to affect social cohesion. And that disconnectedness is then replicated among children at school. In which case, children do not have shared values and commitment to togetherness despite their diversities. This finds further expression in hesitance to collaborate and co-operate within and between social groups. It is because children do not feel safe to bond and to support each other. Rather, a feeling of 'otherness' and 'competiveness' takes prominence in their midst. Whilst the effects of education exclusion in these cases might have evidence, exclusion on the other hand could take the form of subtle forms of manipulation in the delivery of education provisions to advantage some individuals and groups at the expense of others or the fortification of negative social attitudes towards particular children (Department for International Development - DFID, 2005, 2007).

Some values underpin social inclusion such as: everyone needs support – though some people sometimes need more support than others; everyone can learn – learning from mistakes and making changes; everyone can contribute in various ways to develop society; everyone can communicate and everyone is ready (Robo, 2014). This thinking challenges attitudes and practices that alienate individuals on account of their diversities. It provides a broad spectrum for assessing how far people have the chance to be included in mainstream programmes. The formulation problematizes the exclusion and de-legitimation, in the integrative, pedagogic and communicative practices of institutions, of the rights and abilities of some children (Dei, 2005).

Inclusion as promoting a school for all

The social inclusion perception in relation to education for all children makes it crucial to support the development of a common school for all or comprehensive school and application of appropriate instructional practices to be able to cater for the needs and interests of the diverse learners within it (Ainscow et al., 2006). The comprehensive school according to Ainscow and associates depicts the huge desire to promote a reform, which is about creating a single type of 'school for all' that broadly serves a socially diverse community (UNESCO 2001; Ainscow & Sandill, 2010). It is what Eleweke & Rodda (2002:114) corroborated as inclusive schooling, 'the means of developing classrooms that cater for all children'. Impliedly, faith-based schools, for example, Mission schools, Arabic schools, run especially in some socially heterogeneous contexts, have curricula that sometimes promote extremist religious doctrines to encourage

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exclusion (*cf.* Gibbon & Silva, 2006). Faith schools inhibit free choice of school for children and their parents. The traditional system of education, on the other hand, plays a vital role in preserving local cultures. However, aspects of it that allocates children to differentiated social roles and instruction (*see* Dunne & Leach, 2005; Marah, 2006; Lewis & Lockheed, 2007; Unterhalter & Heslop (2011) occur in antithetical direction to the notion of inclusion. Also, the philosophy on inclusion is in opposition to the segregatory educational provisions, which the special educational needs proponents advance such as location of special units/departments for children with impairments in regular schools or establishment of special schools for those classed as having special educational needs.

Children are not defined only by their special educational, behavioural or religious needs; other factors such as social disadvantages, family background, economic issues, gender and language are also critical to understanding needs and providing for the whole child (Farrell, 2004; Mkonongwa, 2014). The failure to include social disadvantages and/or language barriers as aspects of individual's 'special needs' renders the ideal of 'equal opportunity' problematic (MacBeath, et al., 2006). Pro inclusion thinking such as this is connected to the social inclusion perspective, and it departs from defining special needs as attributes of persons who have been formally labelled as having impairments or handicap. Instead, it looks at the issue from the stance of those who are being deprived due to inadequate access to appropriate provisions within social settings. And it raises the capacity of the school to effectively reach out to all children whatever their situations (Ainscow & Miles, 2008). Juxtaposing that with Peters (2004) placement paradigm, the idea about inclusion goes beyond placement to adapting provisions in ways that can meet the complex needs and expectations of diverse pupils at school. It means revising education objectives and practices within institutions to respond to the situations existing in the particular contexts they interact.

One form of thinking about inclusion apt to this formulation is Dyson & Millward's (2000) 'organisational paradigm', a notion, which broadly supports educational systems that make provisions for all children to check disadvantages to their learning at school. It is an analysis that challenges arguments that attribute educational failures to the competences of individual children and their families and rather sees the barriers to learning, participation and 'pupil voice' (Flutter & Rudduck, 2004; Rose & Shevlin, 2004), which pupils experience at school as explanations for their exclusion and marginalisation. These perspectives associate the constraints children face in learning with inappropriate curricula, poor resources, inflexible teaching practices, lack of expertise, local ideologies that are resistant to change and negative attitudes. In a broad sense, 'inclusion means reducing barriers to learning and participation for all pupils; as increasing the capacity of schools to respond to the diversity of pupils in their local communities in ways that treat them all as of equal value; and putting of inclusive values into action in education and society' (Ainscow et al., 2006: 297).

Inclusion as 'Education for All'

The education for all perspective is evidence of the way international education policies are woven around inclusion (UNESCO, 1990, 2000). The United Nations introduced EFA to enable DCs rethink their policies and practices to improve the way they provide education for children. EFA as stated earlier focused on access to school for all children with particular emphasis on girls (UNESCO, 2000). While welcoming the removal of exclusion of girls in education, the priority to increase girl child education, however, limited the opportunities and possibilities for other groups of children who are also experiencing barriers to education to be included in schooling (*cf.* Ainscow et al., 2006). For example, children who live in difficult

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circumstances in remote areas are omitted from EFA. Education for all children is not simply consisted in raising the number of particular children who go to school; it is more about eliminating barriers to ensure all categories of children are in school and actively engage in the learning experiences and value for all children for who they are. Thus, the broad formulation of inclusion by UNESCO (1994), Dei (2005) and Ainscow et al. (2006) would help to reinforce EFA so that it indeed enables participation in education of all children within their local communities. Inclusive education, as to be a central concept of education for all, means genuinely all; not nearly all (Ainscow & Miles, 2008).

CONCLUSION

Education for all has given some indications concerning inability of the policy to include all in DCs. Focus of the policy to ensure equality in access to education in regular settings overlooks other important aspects that also require active participation of learners. Faced by these obstacles, there is a need for reform to make the strategies that promote EFA inclusive within education systems in DCs. The inclusive agenda provides an opportunity to make the change possible so as to move available provisions of the EFA forward beyond a simple focus on access. Inclusive education as to be the way of the future for providing education for all assumes a rights-based approach to encourage a transformational way of provisioning education that can adequately serve the needs of a diverse population in mainstream environments. By repositioning the EFA for it to become inclusive means that education is indeed for ***all*** irrespective of personal characteristics and circumstances in society.

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