INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

Where have we come from and where are we going?
How far has inclusive education in South Africa come since 2001?

- Honestly…. Who really knows?
- Inadequate data
  - Data accuracy is highly questionable
  - Variance is too wide to allow for proper planning
  - Data is absent in many cases
  - Lack of uniform understanding about Inclusive Education impacts accuracy of data
WHAT IS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION?

Inclusive Education recognises the right of ALL children to feel welcomed into a supportive educational environment in their own community. It refers to the capacity of ordinary local schools and ECD Centres to respond to the needs of ALL learners, including those requiring extra support because of learning or physical disability, social disadvantage, cultural difference or other barriers to learning.
Continuum of support model

Low/Moderate level of support need

- Learner accommodated in ordinary public school
  - Provide support to Ordinary public Schools

Low/Moderate/High level of support need

- Learner accommodated in full service school
  - Special Schools as Resource Centres Provide support to Full Service Schools

High level of support need

- Learner accommodated in special school

Highest level of support

- Learner accommodated in special care centre
Challenges to implementation

- Levels of support need not sufficiently understood
- Children out of school should be in special schools
- Many children in special schools should be in ordinary schools
- School admissions processes not aligned with policy
Challenges to implementation

- Not integrated well into all DBE programmes
- Not seen as a priority in DBE Strategic planning
  - No reporting on targets in annual reports
- Poor budget planning. Budget allocations are insufficient and inconsistently utilised across the provinces.
Challenges continued.

- Teacher capacity
  - Lack of experience,
  - confidence,
  - training in teaching to diversity.

- Formality of curriculum delivery & monitoring

- Systemic focus on academic results only
  - No acknowledgement of support given to learners
Successes

- Shift in understanding of concepts:
  - Barriers to learning
  - Levels of support (still to be fully understood by all education stakeholders)
  - Continuum of support provision

- Full Service Schools
- Special School resource centres
- Sign language Curriculum
Successes continued

- Draft of an adapted skills focussed and functional curriculum for learners with intellectual disability from mild to severe
- Gazetted policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS)
- Draft national Norms & Standards for resource distribution for an inclusive education system
- The development of the role of the School based support team
“Inclusive education is not something which has to happen in addition to education transformation in South Africa. It is the means through which education transformation will be achieved”

Tony Booth