



**The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia**

---

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**

---

---

**Special Needs/ Inclusive Education  
Strategy**

---

**July, 2012**

## **Foreword**

Education is supposed to increase the respect of democratic values of equality and human rights. As a fundamental human right, education is seen as one of the main factors of reducing poverty and improving socio-economic conditions. Education is all about people being able to learn what they need and want throughout their lives, according to their potential.

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) constitution clearly stipulates the rights of every citizen to equal access to publicly funded social services and support shall be given to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities (Article 41). The constitution also states that all international agreements ratified by Ethiopia are an integral part of the law of the land (Article 9 (4)).

The 1994 Education and Training Policy (ETP) of the country states that, all learners including those with Special Educational Needs (SEN), learn in accordance with their full potentials and needs. Within the framework of this Policy, the Government of Ethiopia has designed and launched a twenty years Education Sector Development Program (ESDP) to translate policy issues in to action. To this end, due attention has been given for out of school children and children with Special Educational Needs particularly in ESDP III (2005 – 2010/11). Under this framework the Ministry of Education has designed and implemented a Special Needs Education Program strategy in 2006.

Despite such efforts that Ethiopia has shown in the process of achieving Education for All (EFA), it has been noted that there is still a gap in the provision of access to all learners particularly those with Special Educational Needs. Furthermore, the 2006 strategy has its own gaps during its implementation. To ensure access and quality of education, it is high time to revise and update the 2006 strategy.

Since our driving vision is of an inclusive world in which we are all able to live a life of good health, comfort, respect and dignity, I invite all stakeholders to implement this strategy and help our education vision become a reality.

Demeke Mekonen

Minister of Education

## Table of Content

Titles	Page
1. Introduction -----	1
2. Rationale for Inclusive Education-----	2
3. Evaluation of the 2006 Special Needs Education Program Strategy	
its Implementation and Implications for the Revision of the Strategy-----	3
3.1. Evaluation of the 2006 SNE Program Strategy-----	3
3.1.1 Strengths-----	3
3.1.2. Weaknesses-----	3
3.2. Evaluation of the Implementation of the 2006 Strategy-----	4
3.2.1. Achievements-----	4
3.2.2. Drawbacks-----	5
3.3. Implications of the evaluation on the formulation of the new Strategy-----	8
4. Objectives of the Revised Special Needs Education Strategy-----	8
4.1.General objectives-----	8
4.2. Specific objectives-----	8
5. Strategic Directions-----	9
5.1. Strengthening Educational Management & Administration-----	9
5.2. Increasing Access to all children, Youth & Adults	
with Special Educational Needs at all levels of Education and Training-----	10
5.2.1. Strengthening awareness raising activities-----	10
5.2.2. Creating Conducive Educational Setting-----	10
5.2.3. Enhancing the Education of Girls with Disabilities-----	11
5.2.4. Improving Educational Opportunities for Learners with Disabilities in TVET-----	11
5.3. Capacity Building-----	11
5.4. Promoting Inclusive Curriculum-----	12
5.5. Establishing Functional Support System-----	14
5.6. Strengthening Partnership among Stakeholders-----	16
5.7. Research-----	17
5.8. Monitoring and Evaluation-----	18
Annex-----	19

**“INCLUSIVE EDUCATION:  
THE WAY OF THE FUTURE”**

**We affirm that inclusive quality education  
is fundamental to achieving human,  
social and economic development...**

**48<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNESCO  
International Conference on Education  
Geneva, November 25-28,2008**

## **1. Introduction**

Education is a universally recognized fundamental human right that should be accessible to all citizens. It plays a pivotal role in eradicating poverty and promoting socio economic development in any society. Accordingly, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has been committed to provide quality education to all its citizens, including children with Special Educational Needs (SENs). This is vividly articulated in the Constitution and Education and Training Policy (ETP) of the country. The Government has also displayed its commitment to the education of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) by ratifying various International Conventions, Declarations and Statements, particularly the UN Convention on the Rights of PwDs which was adopted in 2006.

Although, Special Needs Education (SNE) program has been going on in the country for several years by various providers, it was conducted in fragmented and arbitrary manner. This was primarily due to the absence of a nationally governing strategy for the program. By way of addressing this problem, Ministry of Education (MoE) designed the first SNE Program Strategy in 2006 based on the country's Constitution and Education and Training Policy (ETP).

The Strategy focuses on the promotion of inclusive education to meet the Millennium Development and Education for All Goals. Nevertheless, the strategy was designed to serve for the duration of five years (2006-2011). In addition to this, inherent weaknesses within the strategy, problems encountered during its implementation, the dynamic nature of education and the ratification of United Nations (UN) Conventions on the Rights of PwDs by the Government, necessitated the revision and updating of the strategy.

This strategy document comprises four major parts: the first part underscores the rationale behind strengthening inclusive education in the Ethiopian education system. The second part presents a critical assessment of the 2006 SNE Program Strategy, its implementation and implications of the evaluation to the formulation of the present strategy. The third part sets the objectives of the revised strategy. The fourth and final part provides multi- various strategic directions that should be adhered in order to attain the envisaged objectives.

Here, it should be noted that Regional and City Administration Education Bureaus are expected to adapt this strategic document to the objective realities of their respective regions and administrations.

Finally, MoE calls upon all stakeholders to work hand in glove with for the full implementation of the strategy.

## **2. Rationale for Inclusive Education**

Education is a human right, as reflected in the principle of Universal Primary Education (UPE), and Education for All (EFA) goals by 2015 to which Ethiopia is committed. Ethiopia has ratified the 2006 UN Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which recognizes the right of PwDs to inclusive education at all levels of the education system in 2010. Subsequently, this right has become part and parcel of the Constitution of the country.

More specifically IE:

- enhances its recipients' quality of life, enabling them to become independent, productive citizens with a sense of dignity and self-worth,.
- has an economic benefit, both for individuals and for society,
- contributes to a just and democratic society, the elimination of discrimination and the promotion of social equity,
- promotes the achievement of UPE and EFA,.
- is more cost-effective than the creation of special schools across the country.
- assists all children in their learning to develop and realize their potentials.
- Helps children with disabilities stay with their families.

Although the majority of Children with Disabilities (CwDs) and learning difficulties are being served in an inclusive classroom setting, those few number of children with severe physical, intellectual, autistic, deaf-blind, etc disabilities, must also be served in special schools and/or special classes. Inclusive education will also provide conducive classroom settings to meet the educational needs of gifted and talented children.

### **3. Evaluation of the 2006 Special Needs Education Program Strategy, its Implementation and Implications for the Revision of the Strategy**

#### **3.1. Evaluation of the 2006 SNE strategy**

##### **3.1.1. Strengths**

- It is the first strategy that has clearly indicated the future direction of Special Needs /Inclusive Education in the country,
- It comprised important strategic directions for the implementation of SNE/IE issues in the country,
- It has been instrumental in mainstreaming SNE/IE issues at all levels of the education system,
- It has played a role in improving the level of awareness on the education of Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSEN) among various stakeholders.

##### **3.1.2. Weaknesses**

- It did not put clear and adequate strategic directions for raising awareness at all levels,
- It lacked clear direction on allocating funds, creating horizontal work relations with different departments within the Ministry of Education and assignment of focal persons at Zonal and Woreda levels,
- It did not give due attention to the development and the application of screening and assessment tools,
- It did not address the need and administration of learning assessment,
- It did not address the needs of gifted and talented children, youth and adults,
- It did not address the special educational needs of adults,
- It lacked clear direction for creating accessible environments and school facilities to LSENs,
- It did not address the double disadvantages of female students with disabilities.

## **3.2. Evaluation of the Implementation of the 2006 SNE Program Strategy**

### **3.2.1. Achievements**

Due to the favorable conditions created by the strategy, the following achievements have been attained:

- SNE programs were launched at Addis Ababa University (AAU) at BA, MA and PhD levels; Bahirdar, Dilla, Haromaya and Gondar Universities at BA level; and Adwa, Debrebirhan, Kotebe, Gambella, Hosaena and Sebeta Colleges of Teacher Education at Diploma level and experts who are believed to contribute to the field have been trained. The training is still under way.
- SNE/IE has been offered as one introductory course in all teacher education institutions in the country,
- Sign language training has been also initiated at BA level at AAU under the linguistics department,
- MoE has laid fertile ground and launched a plasma programs with interpreters for high school deaf students,
- As part of the capacity building programme, a short and long term training was delivered to Regional Education and City Administration Bureau experts who would serve as resource persons in their respective Regions and City Administrations,
- Nine pilot resource centers have been established at national level in selected six cluster schools and three special schools in the country to serve LSEN in the neighboring and satellite schools; ten itinerant teachers have been assigned to serve in these resource centers. This serves as a model for future undertakings,
- Campaigns aimed at tackling attitudinal problems were conducted in all the Regions and City Administrations and tried to reach 9000 Regional and Woreda Educational Heads and experts, as well as community members on various Special Needs/Inclusive Education issues,



- MoE has collected data on CwDs for the first time at national level since 2006/07,
- The annual education statistics abstract of MoE for 2010/11 showed that the number of CwDs who have received education in primary schools in the country were 55,492 (M= 32,072, F= 23,420). This shows that the number of CwDs has increased by 66.6% compared to that of 2006/07 which was 33,300 (M= 19561, F = 13739). Similarly, the number of learners with disabilities in secondary schools, which was 3,482 (M=2149, F=1,333) in 2006/07 grew to 5,297 (M=3,333, F= 1,964) in 2010/11, registering a 52% increment.

### **3.2.2. Drawbacks**

#### **Lack of commitment on the part of implementers**

Implementers at various levels did not display enough commitment to the effective implementation of the Strategy. This is manifested in their reluctance to assign focal persons, mainstream SNE/IE issues in planning, budgeting, monitoring, evaluating and reporting.

#### **Absence of screening and assessment tools**

There are no screening and assessment tools for early identification of learning problems of (attention deficit, hyperactivity, learning disability as well as gifted and talented) learners. As a result, teachers found it difficult to accommodate LSEN.

#### **Limited capacity**

- There is acute shortage of professionals, and support staff in SNE/IE at all levels,
- Existing SNE/IE courses in TEIs and HEIs are overly theoretical and too reliant on the medical model. Hence, graduates lack practical skills to be effective at school level.

#### **Limited awareness**

The effort made to create awareness on disability issues was so scant that widespread misconceptions are still prevalent at all educational levels, among stakeholders and the society at large.

Accordingly:

- political leaders at all levels could not lead the implementation of the strategy with commitment and paying due attention,
- most teachers and education leaders are so reluctant to admit and give the required support for CwDs,
- the public at large, particularly parents of CwDs, frequently share negative attitudes towards PwDs. These conservative attitudes and superstitious beliefs have often led to parents of such children keeping them at home, sometimes hiding them away out of shame.

### **Limited budget and funding for LSEN**

The budget allotted to SNE/IE is too meager to run the implementation of the strategy effectively.

### **Lack of data**

Sufficient data concerning LSEN in general and those with disabilities in particular are not easily available in the country and even the existing ones are fragmentary and not well organized. This is mainly attributed to the absence of appropriate data base system.

### **Limited Provision of Educational Services**

- Most of the primary and secondary schools are not willing to accommodate children and the youth with special needs education. Only a few disabled (blind, deaf, children with intellectual disability, children with physical impairment, etc) are getting the opportunity in the limited schools.
- Only a few young disabled are getting training opportunities in TVET and Higher Education institutions and those few involved make their own personal efforts to tackle educational challenges.

### **Inaccessible facility and unsafe school environment**

- No measures have been promoted to facilitate accessibility (toilet, library, signage, recreation areas, playgrounds, ramp, water supply, etc) and there are no regulations to

ensure accessibility of the built environment, except for a very recent Ethiopian building Proclamation No. 624/2009

- Furthermore, there are no special transport arrangements for PwDs.

### **Insufficient teaching -learning materials, stationeries and assistive devices**

Teaching- learning materials (Braille text books, large prints, tactile graphics, abacus, etc); stationeries (slate, styles, talking calculator, Braille paper, etc); equipment (for making Braille books, computer software such as Job Access with Speech (JAWS) etc.) and assistive devices (wheelchair, hearing aids, cane, crutch, etc.) are not available in the national market, as a result of this, schools are under-resourced.

### **Lack of interpreters for Deaf learners**

There is lack of sign language interpretation services for Deaf learners in regular schools, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), HEIs, and TEIs. In addition to this, there is no well recognized system of accommodating such aides in the education system.

### **Rigid curriculum**

- Teachers are not sufficiently trained in adapting the regular curriculum to suit the needs of individual learners,
- There is no guideline for the implementation of curriculum adaptation and/ or modification at the school level.

As a result of the aforementioned drawbacks, education has been inaccessible for most CwDs. For instance, the national average gross enrollment rate at primary level was 96.4% in 2010/11, while that of CwDs was merely around 3.2%\*. This signifies that nearly 96.8% of CwDs are not being served by the education system and are still out of school. Moreover, the quality of education received by CwDs has remained to be very low. This is mainly attributed to the inadequate training of teachers in SNE, unfavorable school facilities and absence of inputs appropriate to LSEs.

*\* The percentage was calculated on the basis of WHO's assumption that is persons with disabilities account for 10% of any population.*

### **3.3. Implications of the Evaluation to the Formulation of the Revised Strategy**

The implications of the evaluation made on the 2006 SNE program strategy and its implementation to the preparation of the revised strategy are two folds; on the one hand, the revised strategy should deal with strategic issues that were either omitted or inadequately addressed by the previous strategy. On the other hand, it should address the major problems encountered during the implementation of the previous strategy.

## **4. The Objectives of Inclusive Education Strategy**

### **4.1. General objective**

The overall objective of the strategy is to build an inclusive education system which will provide quality, relevant and equitable education and training to all children, youth and adults with SEN and ultimately enable them to fully participate in the socio-economic development of the country.

### **4.2. Specific objectives**

More specifically the strategy envisages attaining the following objectives:

- Ensure that children, youth, women and adults with disabilities have equal educational opportunities as the non-disabled members of the society,
- Increase society's awareness on the rights of LSEN to an inclusive education, to attain appropriate attitude and provide relevant educational services,
- Strengthen SNE/IE programs in teacher education institutions in order to produce competent teachers who have both theoretical and practical knowledge in the field of special needs education,
- Expand and strengthen functional support system in all educational settings,
- Adapt the curriculum to meet the educational needs of all children which also enables them to receive livelihood training.

## **5. Strategic Issues**

### **5.1. Strengthening Educational Management and Administration**

#### *Establishing Responsibility and Accountability*

- SNE/IE services are offered within the existing education and training structure. Therefore, the various hierarchies in the education structure (from Federal Ministry to each educational institution) will take full responsibility and accountability for ensuring that all children, youth and adults are served by the education system,
- SNE/IE experts should be assigned at all educational levels, i.e., Higher Education, VET, Regional, Zone (if necessary) and Woreda levels to take care of inclusive education issues (i.e., offering professional assistance to schools, organizing trainings, aggregating data on LSEN, ensuring that SNE/IE activities are mainstreamed in planning, budgeting, monitoring, evaluating and reporting, etc.) in their respective places.

#### *Allotting Sufficient Budget*

- MoE will allocate adequate budget for activities to be undertaken at Federal level for progressive realization of the SNE/IE strategy,
- Regional governments and City Administrations should ensure that adequate budget is allocated and properly expended for progressive realization of the SNE/IE strategy,
- Federal MoE solicits additional fund from donors and other development partners in order to strengthen SNE/IE practices in the country,
- Higher Education as well as TVET institutions should ensure that students and trainees with special needs receive appropriate services by allocating sufficient amount of budget,

- Similarly, Regional/ City Administration Education Bureaus, WEOs and schools are expected to devise mechanism for soliciting additional resources for the implementation of SNE/IE strategy in their respective jurisdictions.

### ***Preparing Implementation Guidelines and Data Collection Instruments***

- MoE in consultation with stakeholders will prepare the necessary guidelines for the implementation of the SNE/IE strategy and REBs as well as HEIs and TVETs adapt the guidelines in the context of their respective regions and institutions,
- MoE in consultation with REBs, City Administrations and HEIs will prepare appropriate instruments to gather data on various aspects of LSEN, particularly on CwDs. Each educational institution, region and city administration will be responsible and accountable to systematically gather and send relevant data to Educational Management Information System (EMIS) of MoE.

## **5.2. Increasing Access to all Children, Youth & Adults with Special Educational Needs at all levels of Education and Training**

### **5.2.1. Strengthening awareness raising activities**

Inclusive education relies on widespread acceptance of the rights of LSEN to be educated in general education classrooms and to receive equitable resourcing (that is, funding which is adequate to meet their needs). Failure to recognize these rights constitutes one of the biggest barriers to inclusive education.

Accordingly, a concerted and continuous effort must be exerted to raise the level of awareness and rectify the wrong attitudes held by parents, community elders, religious, political and education leaders, teachers, employers and the community at large. To this end, a multifaceted and target-tailored communication approaches (such as campaign, community mobilization, social marketing, etc), and techniques (such as workshops, TV and radio spots, school mini-media, brochures, community dialogue, panel discussion, symposium, posters, etc), will be employed.

This will be put into practice by all concerned stakeholders whereby the MoE, HEIs, TVETs, Regional and City Administration Education Bureaus, Zone Education Departments and Woreda Education Offices (WEOs) taking the lead. Moreover, a detailed communication guideline will be developed and implemented.

### **5.2.2. Creating Conducive Educational Settings**

#### ***Accessible Facilities***

Many educational settings (Schools, TVET, TEIs, HEIs, and Adult Education Centers) in our country are not conducive and friendly enough to accommodate PwDs. Facilities such as adapted toilet, adapted seats in library, adequate space for wheel chairs, ramps, signage, water supply, play grounds; etc should be accessible to these children. In the case of multi-story school buildings, measure must be taken to build a modified ramp. Until then, classes for learners with physical disabilities should be located in the ground floor. As stipulated in Ethiopian Building Proclamation No. 624/2009, future buildings should have inbuilt ramp and lift/elevator services for the use of students with disabilities.

#### ***Creating Friendly School Environment***

Education leaders at all levels, particularly school management bodies should strive to create friendly relationship between and among CwDs and their non- disabled peers, teachers, administrative personnel and supportive staffs by raising the awareness of the school community.

### **5.2.3. Enhancing the Education of Female Students with Disabilities**

It should be noted also that females with disabilities are double disadvantaged and hence, special effort should be exerted to bring them to schools and training institutions and give them special support to enhance their participation.



#### **5.2.4. Improving Educational Opportunities for Learners and Trainees with Disabilities in TVET and HEIs**

Training opportunities in TVET for trainees with disabilities are very minimal. In addition to this, even the very few who got the chance to be admitted in these institutions, are enrolled in only one or two vocational streams. Thus, affirmative admission criteria will be put in place to make the TVET institutions more accessible to them. Moreover, MoE and Regional/City Administration, TVET Bureaus/Agencies will conduct research to determine which types of vocational streams are areas of preference for what types of disabilities, what types of support should be available, as well as facilitating the employability of the trainees.

Higher institutions and TVETs that host students and trainees with special educational needs should understand the fact that the students and trainees have multifarious problems and thus the institutions are expected to provide the necessary support. To realize this both institutes will develop an SNE/IE implementation strategy in their respective institutions.

### **5.3. Capacity Building**

#### ***Training of Teachers***

Teachers are critical to implementing SNE/IE and so too are those who provide specialist advice to them; school administrators and those responsible for teacher education.

All teachers, including Early Child Care and Education (ECCE) teachers will be equipped with appropriate attitudes, values and skills to teach diverse populations, including LSEN. This preparation will take place in initial (pre-service) teacher education and in in-service training in accordance with Teachers Development Program (TDP). Adult education facilitators will also take orientation on SNE/IE in pre-service and in-service programs to assist youth and adults with disabilities.

#### ***Training School Management and Support Staffs***

Experts at HEIs , TVETs, Regional and City Administrations, Zones and Woreda levels, other education providing institutes, itinerant teachers and those working in resource centres will receive additional training (pre service and in service) to prepare them for their roles in advancing

SNE/IE. Their training should enable them to work across disability categories and to carry out their advisory responsibilities with principals and teachers. To effectively implement SNE/IE the training of experts with diverse educational backgrounds (speech therapist, physiotherapists, etc) is desperately needed. To produce these professionals at medium and high level, MoE will establish a system to train in collaboration with higher education institutions.

Educational institution administrators and supervisors will also be equipped with different skills to respond effectively to the diverse needs of all learners and to promote SNE/IE in institutions under their jurisdiction.

### ***Capacitating Teacher Educators***

In order to deliver effective programs of training for the above groups of professionals, attention will be paid to the qualifications and skills of teacher educators in TEIs. Where staff members lack these qualifications and skills, steps will be taken to update them. There will be continued efforts by MoE to harmonize SNE/IE training programs at all levels of TEIs and HEIs in accordance with the spirit and philosophy of SNE/IE.

## **5.4. Promoting Inclusive Curriculum**

### ***Adapting Curriculum***

In developing an inclusive curriculum, account will be taken of the key characteristics of an inclusive curriculum as identified in international documents, namely: flexibility, relevance and adjustability to the diverse characteristics and needs of lifelong learners.

Within an inclusive classroom, it is likely that there will be learners who are functioning at two or three levels of the curriculum. Some will be working at their age level, some will be working a year or more ahead, and some will be working at an earlier age level.

This means that teachers should use multi-level teaching or, at a minimum, make adaptations to take account of the diversity within classroom. Such adaptations include making provisions for gifted and talented learners who can be expected to advance more quickly through the curriculum than their peers.

Hence, curriculum adaptation and modification will be exercised at all levels of MoE (HEIs and TVETs) and also an implementation guideline will be developed in collaboration with concerned stakeholders.

### ***Designing Individual Educational Program***

Some learners' individual needs call for Individualized Educational Program (IEP). Hence, teachers are required to design IEP to accommodate these learners. To put this into effect at all levels of educational hierarchies, teachers will be capacitated and IEP guideline will be prepared at federal level.

### ***Availing Appropriate Teaching- Learning Materials and Stationeries***

Teaching- learning materials (Braille text books, large prints, tactile graphics, abacus, etc); stationeries (slate, styles, talking calculator, Braille paper, etc); computer software (such as JAWS etc.), should be available to LSEN at all levels of educational institutions. MoE in collaboration with HEIs, TVETs, REBs and other partners will find some way of making these materials available in the National market.

### ***Improving Learning Assessment***

When learning assessment is used for selection or ranking it is inevitable that some LSEN will fare the worst, thus stigmatizing them as 'failures' and de-motivating them. As far as learning assessment is concerned, it is essential that assessment serves educational purposes by promoting learning and guiding teaching, not simply functioning as a tool for sorting and selecting learners for advancement. It should provide the best possible account of what a learner knows, can do or has experienced.

Methods of assessment of learners and trainees with special educational needs should take account of their particular disabilities (e.g., a blind learner/trainee may need to be tested orally and practically or in Braille or a tape recorded test, a test to be given to a deaf learner/trainee may need to be supported in written form as well as practically and via sign language, and a learner with a learning disability may require more time in an exam, they may also take one exam in one day). Continuous assessment such as, portfolio, project work, self-assessment, observation etc.,

should also be used as alternatives or supplementary to exams. For effective realization, different guidelines will be prepared at all levels of educational institutions.

### ***Suiting Functional Adult Education to Adults with Disabilities***

In the ongoing functional adult education program, the learning needs of adults with disabilities should be taken into account in the development of curriculum for the program. Facilitators will also give appropriate support to these learners. Adult education centers are responsible to provide such basic materials such as slate, styles, sign language dictionary, abacus, etc. Moreover, need based non- formal vocational training will be also given to these adults so that they can be more productive to themselves and the country at large.

## **5.5. Establishing Functional Support System**

For successful implementation of SNE/IE, continuous support will be given to learners and trainees with special educational needs, regular classroom teachers at all levels and educational institution leadership bodies. Such support takes place in a variety of forms including the provision of:

- professional development training for teachers and trainers ,
- adapted teacher's and trainer's guides,
- adapted learning and teaching materials and equipment,
- special classes or units,
- itinerant teachers,
- assistant teacher and trainer co-teaching,
- technical assistance to management (e.g. for data collection, reporting, needs assessment, etc.)

### ***Designing and Implementing Screening and Assessment Tools***

To provide support for LSEN, their needs should be screened and assessed as early as possible in their school careers i.e., in ECCE and primary education. In order for this to take place, teachers will be trained to observe and to conduct screening assessments of learners in their classrooms.

Where appropriate, such preliminary screening will lead to referrals to specialists (e.g. itinerant teachers) to conduct more detailed assessments.

Such referrals will be undertaken in consultation with the learner's parents. The Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA), which is used in the country, will form the basis of such early identification. A tool for an early assessment on mathematics was developed. Screening tools for ECCE will also be prepared by MoE. Besides, other screening tools for children and youth with special educational needs should be developed. When the tools become available, all teachers will be trained on the instrument developed to identify learners' learning difficulty. Parents will also take part in the training as the need arises. On the other hand, advanced tools that enable experts identify the type and severity of disability will be developed. For effective utilization of the tools relevant awareness creation and capacity building training will be offered. A system which coordinates concerned bodies and sector offices will be established.

### ***Equipping and Staffing Resource Centres***

Existing resource centres in cluster schools and special schools will be equipped with appropriate materials (such as Montessori educational kits, (primary level) TV, DVD, Video camera, wheel chair, cane, hearing aid, low vision materials, crutch, etc) and staffed with professionals such as itinerant teachers, psychologists, Braille trainer (at primary level), sign language interpreters, etc. so that they can give support to LSEN and teachers in cluster, satellite and neighbouring schools. Existing centres in secondary schools, TVETs, HEIs and TEIs will also be similarly equipped and staffed. While centres in secondary schools and TVETs provide support to LSEN in their respective educational settings, centres in HEI, and TEIs will serve as centres of excellence for training SNE/IE trainees and offering support to LSEN in their respective institutions. Resource centres will be established in schools and institutions that have no such centres.

The resource centres are also expected to offer support to adults with disabilities and facilitators nearby adult education centres.

The training and assignment of the aforementioned professionals at primary and secondary levels will be the responsibility of REBs and City Administrations, Zone Education Departments, WEOs

while in TVETs, TEIs and HEIs the responsibility will be undertaken by the institutions themselves.

### ***Providing Incentive for Special School/ Class Teachers***

Children with severe disabilities receive education in special schools and special classes attached to regular classrooms. It is well known that teaching these children is a highly laborious and demanding task. Thus special school/class teachers will be provided with incentives in order to motivate and retain them in their profession. MoE will prepare implementation guideline.

### ***Promoting Peers and Parents Support***

Learners and trainees with special educational needs will also receive extra support from their peers as envisaged in the School Improvement Program (SIP). In addition to this, “disability clubs” which comprise all volunteer students and community of the school should be set up in order to establish strong emotional attachment and supportive relationship among CwDs and non disabled peers.

Parents play critical roles in educating and supporting their children. Particularly, parents and siblings of learners and trainees with special educational needs are important sources of information and assistance. Parents are also potential partners in designing and implementing educational programs for their children. Thus, they should be represented in the existing Parent-Teacher-Student-Association (PTSA) or any other structure and be consulted in designing and implementing IEP.

## **5.6. Strengthening Partnership among Stakeholders**

Providing appropriate education for LSEN is a responsibility that is shared among a range of stakeholders (e.g., Partners, Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) providers, the Federation of Ethiopian National Associations for Persons with Disabilities (FENAPD), National Associations of Persons with Disabilities and private providers of education) as well as relevant Ministries (especially Ministry of Health, Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs and Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs).

### ***Establishing National Council***

This partnership entails strong collaboration among stakeholders in terms of providing financial and technical assistance as well as in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating SNE/IE strategy. To put this into effect a National Council on SNE/IE and its Regional equivalents will be established.

### ***Strengthening Collaboration within MoE***

The approach to SNE/IE adopted by the MoE makes it essential that all agencies, centres, directorates and units within the Ministry mainstream the education of learners and trainees with special educational needs in their planning.

Some of the areas of collaboration among the directorates, agencies and units include; data gathering of learners and trainees with special educational needs, preparation of guidelines on curriculum adaptation, IEP, manual for the implementation of SNE/IE in TVET, screening and assessment tools for mathematics and language etc.

MoE will play a critical role in ensuring the effective implementation of the strategic issues outlined in this document by developing a guideline.

## **5.7. Research**

As noted in several sections of the present document, there are many gaps in data (for example, the prevalence rates of learners and trainees with special educational needs, the number of personnel who play an active role in inclusive education, and the deployment of personnel who have received advanced training) at all levels.

As well as promoting research into such themes, the MoE will sponsor research into such topics as inclusive classroom teaching strategies; curricular adaptations; assessment tools and methods; out-of-school children; low achievement; drop-outs; grade repetition; educational intervention; the functioning of resource centers; attitude change among educational leaders, teachers and parents; increasing training opportunities of learners with disabilities in HEIs and TVET; the suitability of built environments and employment opportunities for students with disabilities.

In this connection, it is imperative that there be close and cooperative working relationships between MoE's section in charge of SNE/IE, and institutions engaged in research particularly HEIs.

In addition to this, teachers and trainers will be encouraged to conduct action research on various challenges of learners and trainees with special educational needs face during teaching-learning process in order to alleviate barriers to learning

## **5.8. Monitoring and Evaluation**

The implementation of the strategy will be continuously monitored and evaluated at Federal, Education Institutions, Regional, Woreda and School levels. Information obtained in the process will be used to identify gaps and to offer feedback and technical support to mitigate these gaps.

MoE will take the leading role in coordinating and executing monitoring and evaluation activities. For this purpose, the MoE will design standard checklists and reporting formats in consultation with concerned stakeholders particularly HEIs, TVET, REBs and City Administrations.

Members of advisory committees for SNE/IE at Federal and Regional levels will be represented in monitoring and evaluation teams that will be organized by MoE, REBs and City Administrations respectively.

Progress reports on SNE/IE at various levels will be incorporated in the existing reporting arrangement of the education system.

Moreover, SNE/IE issues will be given due attention to be an agenda for discussion in annual education conferences that are held at Woreda, Regional and Federal levels (General Education, TVET and Higher Education).



# **Annex**

## **Definition of Key Terms**

### **1. Special education**

Special education typically refers to educational arrangements in which learners with disabilities, impairments or social-emotional difficulties are educated in special classes, special units or special schools that are specifically designed to suit their special needs. In such classes or schools, the teachers have usually received specialised training and learners have access to various therapists. The teacher-learner ratio is usually much lower than in regular classes.

### **2. Special Needs Education**

Special needs education is not to be confused with special education, which it has mainly replaced. Rather it refers to the range of provisions for learners with disabilities, impairments or social-emotional difficulties. These may include everything from special schools, through special classes, to inclusive education.

### **3. Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSEN)**

In general, the term Learners with Special Educational Needs (which will be used throughout this document, and abbreviated as LSEN) refers to learners who, for a variety of reasons, encounter problems in learning sometimes during their educational career, and are in need of additional support for short or long periods.

Another way of describing this group is learners who experience barriers to learning and development. Whichever term is used, learners' difficulties can arise from a range of factors leading to disadvantage and marginalization, especially the following:

- disabilities, impairments and social-emotional problems,
- gifted and talented,
- socioeconomic deprivation, including malnutrition,
- HIV/AIDS,
- ethnic/cultural minority status,
- location in isolated rural communities,
- experience of war and conflict.

Although many of the principles outlined in the present document are applicable to all of the above groups, the focus will be on the first group, namely learners with disabilities, impairments or social-emotional problems, as the vast majority of these learners are out of school. It must be noted, however, that one or more of the other factors often exacerbate difficulties experienced by that group of learners. For example, some Children with Disabilities (CwDs) may also experience socioeconomic deprivation and have the disadvantage of living in isolated rural communities, both factors that are common in Ethiopia.

#### **4. Inclusive Education**

According to UNESCO (2005),\* ‘Inclusive education is a process of strengthening the capacity of the education system to reach out to all learners ... As an overall principle, it should guide all education policies and practices, starting from the fact that education is a basic human right and the foundation for a more just and equal society.’

Thus, inclusive education refers to an education system that is open to all learners, regardless of poverty, gender, ethnic background, language, disabilities and impairments. Inclusion emphasises that all children and students can learn. It requires identifying barriers that hinder learning, and reducing or removing these barriers in schools, vocational training, higher education, teacher education, and education management. It also gives emphasize on groups of learners at risk of marginalization, exclusion or underachievement. The educational environment must be adjusted to meet the needs of all learners.

*\*UNESCO (2005). Guideline for Inclusion. Paris*

That means, Inclusive education is based on an assumption that all children can learn if they are given the right learning environment and support. It is about practical changes of the school and its system including, attitude of the school community, teaching style or instructional adaptation, educational provisions, curriculum modification, physical adaptation for all children, with diverse backgrounds and abilities.

## **5. Integration**

Whereas inclusive education implies full-time placement of LSEN in regular classes, integration involves such learners being placed in regular classes for full or only part of the school day. For the remainder of the day they may be placed in a special class or unit. In some countries, integration is seen as a transitional arrangement before full inclusion is implemented.

## **6. Itinerant Teacher**

Itinerant teacher is a certified special needs education expert who provides counseling service for regular teachers, LSEN, and parents. The services s/he provides include: implementing the child's IEP, assessing the child's educational needs, collaborating with the satellite and neighboring school directors and teachers, coordinating the child's educational goals with other providers and therapists, participating in the core team activities, etc.

## **7. Resource Center**

A resource center is a pedagogical center which is equipped with specific materials and assistive devices as well as staffed with professionals to give support to SNE learners, teachers and neighboring schools.