

Building teacher capabilities for  
creating inclusive learning environments

# Educational context

- Near universal (lower) primary school enrolment
- Secondary enrolment tells a different story
  - Dropouts vary from 17-24%
- Private players in education
  - Parental aspirations towards education strong
- Increasing use of digital technologies

# What does this paper attempt

- Attempted to explore determinants of inclusion in terms of teacher practices, teacher beliefs and the role of curriculum
- Identify paths for teacher development
- Outline for newer curricular choices

# Data collection from....

- Classroom experiences
  - Tribal schools in Chittoor District, Yanadi community
  - Government schools in urban Bengaluru, rural Bengaluru and rural Karnataka
  - Government aided schools in urban Bengaluru
- Observations classified along the lines of student participation (and engagement), classroom processes, curriculum development
- Structured questionnaire (42 respondents)
- Focus group discussion (10 teachers)

# Sites of field data

- Kaigal Education and Environment Program, Chittoor District, Andhra Pradesh
  - Foundation for Education, Ecology and Livelihood
- Teachers' Communities of Learning Program
  - IT for Change

# Classroom experience and observations

- Students engagement varied across the contexts
- Teachers understanding of the students and empathy for parents was highest in tribal schools
- Curricular experiences were relatively diverse and flexible in tribal schools – a standard curriculum in government and aided schools

# Classroom experience and observations

- Learning activities were very varied in tribal schools (often teachers had to learn new activities); standard content in the other two cases
- Environmental education was an important aspect of the tribal schools and not of the government schools
- Parents were invested in the tribal schools; parent-school relationship somewhat tenuous in government and aided schools

# Response to questionnaires

- School environment has changed
  - Student learning attitudes
  - Change due to home environment
- Students participate freely in classroom
- Teachers acknowledge curriculum is only somewhat relevant
- Silence, obedience, textbooks and curriculum are seen as important



# Response to questionnaire

- 69% felt there should be detention
  - More than 50% felt that detention at all levels should be there
- Majority felt corporal punishment is effective at times
- Majority felt that the curriculum should be different for “high” achievers and “low” achievers

# Group discussion

- School environment has changed
- Parents are more engaged
- Students are sharper and brighter
  - But we seem to be failing them
- Curriculum should reflect the needs of society
  - Not possible for curriculum and syllabus to change for each individual context
- Teachers have no time to read and understand and work with children

# What emerges

- Students actively engaged and participate in the classroom where curricular experiences are diverse and teachers are provided the inputs and flexibility to design curriculum
- Empathy for students and understanding of the community results in students being more accepted
- Curricular experiences that draw upon the local environment promote inclusion

# What emerges

- Government and aided school teachers say silence, obedience important
- Teachers seem to believe in a universal curriculum
- Teachers need to have experiences of a diverse curriculum and critical pedagogy
- Teachers' assessments of students based on how they fit in, how they perform in the curriculum
  - They are unable to imagine other skills/ intelligences
  - Somewhat of an ablist, "meritocratic" argument
- Including to exclude?

# What kind of TPD can support inclusion

- Teacher development
  - Understanding of equity and marginalization, diversity and indigenous communities
  - Political agenda of education and hidden curriculum
  - Assessment based on multiple parameters – not only reading and writing
- Curricular development
  - Embedded in the local environment
  - Inclusion of different dimensions of knowledge can support inclusion