"Education Innovations for 21st Century Skills"
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Live Blog

Session: **Innovative Learning Environments**

Main takeaway points

1. Learning environments need to support learning by encouraging social interaction, being learner centered and inclusive, reflecting patterns of learning, and enabling collaboration. Children learn through interaction with environment and other people; moreover, the ECD environment is a "third teacher", after parents and the teachers (Reggio Emilia).
2. There is a need to shift from (i) learning environments characterized by uniformity and conformity and having a delivery driven approach, separate classrooms and a single space layout to (ii) individualized, collaborative spaces having a learning led approach and comprising a variety of spaces and layouts.
3. Such innovations require changing the rules. Current regulations in most CIS countries (sanitary, construction, fire, ECD standards) would have to shift to a child centered approach promoting more efficient and active space. Relevant agencies should come together in this process.
4. The space has to enable interaction as a key element in the learning process: e.g. group discussion, presentations and seminars, large and small group work, small collaborative group work with technology support. Space should be used for display, circulation combined with learning zone, etc. It should be characterized by versatility, connectivity, sustainability, and transparency. Creativity, self confidence, etc. are enabled in active spaces.
5. It is very important to prepare the teachers for using such innovative spaces. A good teacher should get hold of the attention of students, facilitate use of imagination. Any space can be re-arranged, it depends on the teacher to be prepared to work in new environments (e.g. of Brazil: school without walls to have teams with teachers and computers; blended learning approach).

Questions for further discussion

1. How to advance the agenda in terms of the challenge to change regulations?
2. Ways to promote the models of innovative kindergartens for 100 - 200 children, very modern designs, new elements related to active space per child, total space of the building, energy savings? Competitions for innovative designs.
3. What are the areas of further development? More efforts needed to highlight the importance of the soft side: new approaches to space (re-)arrangements for child-teacher interactions, etc., new quality system, new management models driven by efficiency gains.
4. Is there sufficient capacity at national levels to improve regulatory frameworks? Support and sharing experience through TA.
5. Renovations programs are ongoing partly because they were not well maintained , but also to create different learning environments
6. Economic sustainability – it may not be more expensive to build a new school, if the design is cost efficient (e.g. energy costs).

Other thoughts

Some countries do not have very strictly monitored standards, but there are economic reasons, cannot afford to build; innovative schools exist more in the private sector. Still teachers in the public sector do their best to make spaces less formal.