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Percepciones a una educación inclusiva en el Ecuador

Perceptions of inclusive education in Ecuador

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Resumen

El presente artículo tiene como finalidad realizar el análisis de la política de inclusión educativa en el Ecuador y su relación con el accionar pedagógico vigente en los escenarios educativos. Los sistemas educativos del estado ecuatoriano a pesar de estar alineados a parámetros internacionales de inclusión, no ha superado la brecha de discriminación a las personas con necesidades educativas especiales (NEE). El presente documento aporta principalmente a la innovación en el pensamiento pedagógico de los docentes, para ello, parte del informe de Warnock (documento que fue elaborado por la Comisión de Educación británica) el mismo que revoluciona en la forma de pensar de todos cuando revela que “no existen niños ineducables” (Warnock, 1987, p. 15). La metodología utilizada en la estructuración de este trabajo es de carácter inductiva – deductiva y se apoya en la investigación bibliográfica. Los resultados del presente estudio revelan falencias y dificultades en la inclusión educativa de estudiantes con NEE, los problemas más relevantes que se observaron fueron las deficiencias conceptuales en torno a inclusión educativa, escaso conocimiento sobre un currículo inclusivo y debilidades en una supuesta homogeneidad en el aula. Este documento presenta brevemente algunas perspectivas y



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desafíos para promover un pensamiento inclusivo pero, sobre todo, abierto a la diversidad.

Palabras clave

Docencia, innovación, inclusión, pedagogía, práctica.

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to carry out the analysis of the policy of educational inclusion in Ecuador and its relationship with the pedagogical action in force in the educational scenarios. The educational systems of the Ecuadorian state, despite being aligned to international parameters of inclusion, have not overcome the gap of discrimination against people with special educational needs (SEN). This document mainly contributes to innovation in the pedagogical thinking of teachers, for this purpose, part of the Warnock report was used (a document prepared by the British Education Commission) the same one that revolutionizes the way everyone thinks when revealing that "there are no uneducated children" (Warnock, 1987, p. 15). The methodology used in the structuring of this work is inductive – deductive in nature and is supported by bibliographic research. The results of this study reveal gaps and difficulties in the educational inclusion of students with SEN, the most relevant problems that were observed were the conceptual deficiencies around educational inclusion, little knowledge about an inclusive curriculum. This paper briefly presents some perspectives and challenges to promote inclusive thinking, but above all, to open to diversity.

Keywords

Teaching, innovation, inclusion, pedagogy, practice.

1. Introduction

This document aims to innovate the thinking of the teacher regarding the inclusion of people with special educational needs (SEN) in the teaching-learning process, since the teachers are the responsible for the formation of new generations. For this purpose, the documentary analysis of the contributions of both international and national bodies has been carried out. The analysis identified deficiencies in inclusive action. The problem is mainly seen in the cognitive and procedural weaknesses of teachers during educational inclusion processes.

To understand the context of study, as a starting point, the analysis of the contributions of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has been carried out, being the first to declare human rights globally, followed by the world conference on people with SEN, the latter focused on avoiding discrimination and linking the international commission on education for the 20th century and within the framework of the Dakar conference, giving an approach to education for all, becoming these the collective commitment of countries, which have "an obligation to ensure that the objectives and purposes of Education for all are achieved and supported" (UNESCO, 2000, p. 38), postulates that have currently been part of the 2030 agenda and of the sustainable development goals in Ecuador

At the national level, it has been identified the role of the current governments. In Ecuador since 2007, educational inclusion is part of a public policy that originates from constitutional declarations, reaching a level of concreteness through legal guidelines such



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as: Organic Law on Disabilities (LODDIS), Organic Law on Intercultural Education (LOEI), being the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) the governing body in education.

It is important to note that the idea of including people with SEN in the educational field was thought in the Integrative School at the end of the twentieth century. The first step towards inclusion is non-discrimination and the pursuit of equal rights for people with disabilities (PwD). The second step in its view is the Warnock report published in 1978 in England in which the term SEN is introduced for the first time, which referred to students who require support during their schooling, whether or not they have some kind of disability, thus breaking the paradigmatic scheme of the time, because it was thought that there could only study healthy people..

Hence, several international institutions such as UNESCO established policies of inclusion and coexistence of a structural nature. In order to meet this milestone, the higher education system in Ecuador seeks a transformation oriented to the access, permanence and qualification of students who require comprehensive attention.

The role of the teacher during pedagogical practice is important, so it seeks to make the educational inclusion of children, young people and adults effective, by promoting "learning in society underpinned by the axis of action of learning to live together" (UNESCO, 1998, p. 34), without any risk of exclusion regardless of personal, physical, sensory, economic, social or cultural condition.

Educational practice invites the generation of creative and innovative actions with a strong scientific knowledge about SEN to more related topics such as: methodologies, strategies that allow the formulation of curricular adaptations that respond to the difficulties of each student.

The problem, according to the United Nations (UN), is not to make substantive changes to pedagogical practice. Some of these problems could be improved by homogenizing education, opening its doors to students with SEN in order to avoid discrimination, or simply by giving way to a human and constitutional right. However, one of the weaknesses of teachers is not knowing how to face diversity in the classroom from a cognitive, technical and attitudinal approach. Limiting aspects that do not allow to break an identical barrier of thought and generate advanced procedures that seek to innovate people with individual differences (ONU, 1982, 17).

In this sense, educational institutions have failed to consolidate the concept of inclusive education in its entirety. Even though UNESCO collaborates with "governments against inequalities and exclusion" (UNESCO, 1960, P.1). Similarly, states have established policies and guidelines for marginalized and vulnerable groups. In particular, students with disabilities, being in a majority number in the child population who do not attend school. This has driven the need to innovate pedagogical practice from a structural change of thinking and attitude to true educational inclusion.

This document is structured in four parts. The first part takes a retrospective view on inclusive education, addresses its origin and evolution to the present day, this is done through the guidelines of international organizations such as UNESCO. The second part describes the real picture of educational inclusion in Ecuador, identifying itself as a universal right embodied since the Constitution and all legal support. This section addresses the strategic actions carried out by MINEDUC, such as programs and projects that are operated by teachers for the generation of inclusive schools. The third part refers



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to innovation from a conceptual approach, in which it is defined as the ability to generate new things. In addition, the analysis of educational innovation is carried out as a new paradigm evidenced by the pedagogical practice of teachers in the classrooms. Finally, the fourth part addresses the main premises obtained after the documentary analysis and formulated as conclusions.

2. Retrospective visión about inclusive education

Assisting people with SEN in educational institutions became a pedagogical need. The moment when the teacher needs to give effective and quality attention to each of them, at all levels of teaching. Therefore, it is not a recent activity, and furthermore, it becomes a constitutional mandate when the states establish it as a right like in Ecuador (Asamblea Nacional Ecuador, 2008).

Educational inclusion, as a pedagogical need that addresses the individual differences of students at any level of study, is not a recent topic. This arises in considering education as a compulsory right of all people in the world, implicitly those with SEN. It was proclaimed as a universal right in the Declaration of Human Rights on 10 December 1948 in Paris, at the United Nations General Assembly, being considered "(...) the full development of the human personality and the strengthening of respect for dignity (UNESCO, 1948, p. 8).

The Declaration cited as generalizing does not refer to educational inclusion as a means of enforcing universal rights, and does not cover gender diversity or SEN particularities. On the contrary, "it serves the integrality of the human being in the search for the strengthening of his/her capacities with respect and dignity" (UNESCO, 1948, p. 10). This characteristic created inclusive education as an essential need.

Hence, twelve years later, in 1960 in Paris, UNESCO generates an important normative instrument in the field of education, as a specific reference, this being the Convention on combating discrimination in the field of education, in order to commit Governments to "formulate, develop and implement a national policy aimed at promoting, by appropriate methods to national circumstances and practices, equal opportunities and treatment in the field of education (...)" (UNESCO, 1960, p. 2).

This regulation broadly covers the right to education and has a binding force with international laws. In respect of diversity, they outlaw all discrimination in order to promote the educational inclusion processes of people with SEN, by mentioning in article 3 the commitment of the intervening States, in:

Repeal all legislative and administrative provisions and abandon all administrative practices involving discrimination in the field of education;

Adopt the necessary measures, including legislative provisions, so that no discrimination is made in the admission of students to educative institutions (UNESCO, 1960, p. 2).

This breakdown of thought is supported by the Warnock report, based on diversity, with individualized and comprehensive attention being proposed for students with SEN. From this, special education has been seen from a different angle, and as a complementary means to provide care for students with severe or profound disabilities, difficult to be assisted in regular education. Therefore, "special schools must continue to exist to educate children with severe and complex disabilities" (Warnock, 1987, pp. 45-73).



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Since the Warnock Report, important actions have been carried out such as: the world conference on SEN in Salamanca in 1994, affirming the "Principle of Education for all and examining the practice to ensure that children and young people with SEN's education are included in all these initiatives and can take their right place in a learning society" (UNESCO, 1994, p. 3), from the concept of universality, non-discriminatory, inalienable, inclusive, respecting gender, disability, ethnicity, or economic vulnerability.

At the above-mentioned conference, UNESCO establishes as its main agreement with States the policy of teacher training, in response to the "need and urgency to provide education to all children, young people and adults with SEN in the same education system" (UNESCO, 1994, p. 48), a commitment joined by more than 300 participants, representing 92 States and 25 International organizations.

The 22 articles enacted in the Uniform Rules on Equal Opportunities for PWD, published in 1982 by the United Nations (UN) aimed to highlight the "need to address disability from a human rights perspective" (UN, 1982, p. 2), with the intention of breaking down paradigmatic barriers of exclusion and promoting inclusion, by enacting international guidelines with moral and political commitment of States to adopt equal opportunities measures in various fields.

The uniform rules determine the obligation of States to establish generalized policies, hence in Article 6 is established the need to:

(...) recognize the principle of equal opportunities for education at the elementary and higher levels for children, youth and adults with disabilities in integrated settings, and guarantee that education of people with disabilities be an integral part of the education system (UN, 1982, p. 16).

Similarly, in the year 2000 in Dakar - Senegal took place the global declaration on education for all, with the intention of providing special attention in six areas, including: girls' and women's education and crisis education in the framework of action; becoming these the collective obligation of nations to "ensure that the objectives and purposes of Education for all are achieved and supported" (UNESCO, 2000, p. 38).

The fifth commitment of this forum was Inclusive Education, which "involves guaranteeing access and permanence, the quality of learning and full participation and integration (...)" (UNESCO, 2000, p. 39), allowing access to the education system for girls, children, adolescents, adults whatever their status. This group considered differences in gender, ethnicity, disability, economic status, people with diseases and in abandonment conditions, generating a special educational need.

Part of the above commitment is "non-discrimination on the basis (...) of gender; it is an essential human right and must be respected and encouraged by educational systems" (UNESCO, 2000, p. 39). The postulates aim to meet the strong challenge of breaking mental structures, generating inclusive paradigms that allow people with or without SEN to be considered as social groups with high potential. Therefore, education is the means of eliminating differences by increasing its visibility across the board.

The International Education Office (IEO), at the 48th meeting of the International Conference on Education, focused on learning opportunities, conceived as existing and with little access for people with SEN. The conference defined inclusive education as the "process of addressing and responding to the diversity of the needs of all students by



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increasing participation in learning, cultures, communities, and the reduction of exclusion in Education" (CIE, 2008, p. 1).

There have been several interventions of international organizations for educational inclusion. These include: world forums, cooperation days, conferences addressing issues on democratic coexistence, inclusion and culture; as well as proposals to create educational systems that offer learning opportunities without discrimination. All these actions provide "inclusive guidance that represents the most effective means for combating discriminatory attitudes, creating host communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all..." (UNESCO, 2015, p. 10).

The 2030 global education agenda, focused on poverty eradication, is currently being developed, recognizing education as the key axis. The 17 (seventeen) agenda objectives are based on education, and specifically objective 4, which seeks to "guarantee inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (UNESCO, 2016, p. 15). Therefore, Education is the means to provide students with SEN the skills needed to improve their quality of life and contribute to the societies in which they live.

3. Educative inclusion in Ecuador

The educative system in Ecuador promotes inclusion at all levels of education. Hence, educational institutions have been carrying out actions aligned to the postulates of education in the 21st century, one of them "learning to live together, learning to live with others" (UNESCO, 1998, p. 10). It breaks down any exclusion scheme and promotes healthy coexistence, in democracy and acceptance of individual differences of people with SEN.

The Ecuadorian state as a member of the UN, considering the postulates of UNESCO and other international guidelines, in faithful compliance with its responsibilities, has been promoting inclusive strategic efforts in response to the articles 11, numeral 2 of the magna carta promulgated in Montecristi in 2008, in which it is mentioned as a principle of equality that "all people are equal and will enjoy the same rights, duties and opportunities" (Asamblea Nacional Ecuador, 2008, p. 27).

This enactment determines that all people, even with individual differences, have the right to be included in the educational system. This is established as a Constitutional Mandate, section five, article 26 in which it is promulgated that:

Education is a right of people throughout their lives and an inescapable duty of the state. It is a priority area of public policy and state investment, guarantee of equality and social inclusion and an essential condition for the good living. Individuals, families and society have the right and responsibility to participate in the educational process (Asamblea Nacional Ecuador, 2008, p. 33).

The guarantee of equality and inclusion enacted in the previous article is concreted in a sequential and consistent way. To this end, the Constitution established the creation of the national system of inclusion and social equity¹. In the same governing document, article

¹ The system of Inclusion and Social Equity "is the articulated and coordinated set of systems, institutions, policies, standards, programs and services that ensure the exercise, guarantee and



46, numeral 3, the State is assigned the role of taking measures to give children, teenagers and adults "preferential care for a full social integration" (Asamblea Nacional Ecuador, 2008, p. 40).

Therefore, it has been established that the "state will ensure its incorporation into the regular education system and in the society" (Asamblea Nacional Ecuador, 2008, p. 40), by creating specific programs with the aim of eradicating exclusion, promoting the integration and inclusion of PCDs. These include national programs such as the Manuela Espejo Mission², which aims to "care for people with disabilities, catastrophic diseases and children with HIV/AIDS in Ecuador" (SETEDIS, 2009, p. 1).

From 2017, the national development plan (2017 – 2021) arises as a new state planning agenda with the government change. It is created based on a diagnosis of the actions of the previous government period and proposes development axes whose objective is education.

Thus, one of the objectives of Axis 1 is "quality and inclusion: expanding opportunities in higher education" (SENPLADES, 2017, p. 68), in which free education is mentioned as a right until the third level, supporting equitable and inclusive access of students with SEN to the education system.

As a means of concretion of the provisions, the Organic Disability Law (LODDIS), Article 27, guarantees access to education to PCDs, mentioning that:

The State shall ensure that people with disabilities can access, remain and complete their studies in the National System of Education and the Higher Education System, in order to obtain education and training, attending classes in a specialized educational institution or in a school education institution, depending the case (CONADIS, 2014, p. 11).

In compliance with the constitutional postulates and LOODIS, guidelines have been adopted in elementary school and high school, in order to carry out educational inclusion processes. Thus, through the Organic Law on Intercultural Education (LOEI), Article 2 states that "priority and specialized care of children and teenagers with disabilities or who suffer from catastrophic diseases of high complexity" must be given (MINEDUC, 2017, p.4).

The Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) promotes guidelines in compliance with providing education as a constitutional right. Thus, Article 6 of the LOEI states that is an obligatory requirement of the State, to "develop and implement the curricular adaptations necessary

enforceability of rights and the fulfilment of the objectives of the program under development" (Asamblea Nacional Ecuador, 2008, p. 106)

² Mission Solidaria Manuela Espejo is a biopsychosocial genetic clinical trial to study and register all people with disabilities on a national scale. For its part, the Joaquín Gallegos Lara program was created after the Manuela Espejo Mission detected the most critical cases of people with severe physical or intellectual disabilities living in an environment of poverty, being often abandoned during hours or days.

The Manuela Espejo Solidarity Mission is an unprecedented movement in the history of Ecuador; which was at first a scientific - medical study to determine the causes of disabilities and to know the biopsychosocial reality of this population from the biological, psychological, social, clinical and genetic points of view, in order to indicate real state policies, covering multiple areas such as health, education and social welfare



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to guarantee the inclusion and permanence in the education system of people with disabilities, teenagers and pregnant young women" (MINEDUC, 2017, p. 12).

The entire legal framework concerning educational inclusion processes that are being managed in the country are based on the "regulations concerning the care of students with SEN in standard education institutions or in specialized educational institutions" (MINEDUC, 2013, p. 3), whose purpose is to "regulate the mechanisms of the National Education System for the care of people with SEN, whether or not they are associated with any disability" (MINEDUC, 2013, p. 3).

MINEDUC, by agreement No. 0259-13, issued in 2013, seeks to prevent the exclusion of children and teenagers from the education system. Therefore, it promotes the design and implementation of projects that strengthen the capacities of teachers and organizational structures, transforming regular school education institutions into inclusive institutions. To this end, it has given way to the "process of identifying and responding to the diversity of special needs of all students through greater participation in learning, cultures and communities" (p. 5)

As mentioned, the intention of State policies is currently to promote inclusion in the education system at all levels, in order to fulfill a process of responsibility around the good management of students with SEN in the classroom. The purpose is to make them active in an inclusive society in the future. This paradigm shift that has been proposed and implemented for its achievement in the country for more than ten years has become a national challenge. Therefore, teachers of elementary school, high school, third and fourth level are coresponsible for the Educational Inclusion.

To complete the process of educational inclusion, MINEDUC has conducted the organic restructuring of the undersecretary of educational coordination, creating a new management model "which includes 9 educational zones (Undersecretary's of the city of Quito and Guayaquil), 140 educational districts and 1117 educational circuits" (MINEDUC, 2013, p. 3), in order to have national coverage, under the guidelines applied through the national directorate of special and inclusive education, as a unit responsible for fulfilling the mission of:

Ensure that the National Education System is inclusive, by providing opportunities and ensuring the quality of educational care to the school-age population with special, transitional and permanent educational needs, related or not related with any disability, for the development of its potential, skills, and social integration (MINEDUC, 2013, p. 10).

It is from 2009, under the concept of warm, inclusive and inclusive education that MINEDUC mentions that "12 regular schools were transformed into inclusive schools and 120 schools were sensitized. Seven guides for the care of students with special educational needs (SEN) were also designed, validated and reproduced, benefiting 3,000 students" (MINEDUC, 2010, p. 55). Es así como se promueve el libre acceso a la educación, en contra de todo tipo de discriminación.

En el país se ha marcado una trayectoria en la búsqueda de nuevas políticas de inclusión, plasmadas en el plan nacional de educación 2016 - 2025. En el cual se han establecido logros importantes entre ellos, el "proyecto caja de herramientas" (MINEDUC, 2016). El cual es una propuesta generadora de una pedagogía social e inclusiva que dota de posibilidades a los proyectos educativos institucionales. A más del proyecto mencionado el MINEDUC ha promovido acciones estratégicas entre ellas:



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This is how free access to education is promoted against all kinds of discrimination.

A trajectory has been made in the country in the search for new inclusion policies, embodied in the national education plan 2016 – 2025, in which important achievements have been established, such as the "Toolbox Project" (MINEDUC, 2016), which is a proposal that generates a social and inclusive pedagogy that gives possibilities to institutional educational projects. In other words, MINEDUC has promoted strategic actions such as:

Guidelines for improving educational care for people with or without special educational needs related or not with a disability (...).

Bicultural Bilingual model for strengthening educational care for deaf people (...).

Educational options for the population with unfinished schooling to complete their studies (MINEDUC, 2016, p. 133).

The ten-year plan (2016 – 2025), operated through the strategic actions have originated the inclusion of students with SEN at all levels. In this way, the policy of non-discrimination and inclusion of the ten-year plan (2006 – 2015) has continued, whose educational reforms were aimed at improving quality.

With the above, MINEDUC performs concrete actions that have been taking place at this level of education. These actions can be observed in the infrastructure and in raising awareness and training of authorities and teachers. Among them, 140 district units are supporting inclusion (UDAI) at the national level, with the aim of ensuring the inclusion of students with SEN or not associated with any disability (MINEDUC, 2019, p. 60). The toolbox is a proposal to generate a social pedagogy of inclusion and nurture institutional educational projects (MINEDUC, 201, p.63). All these proposals have been implemented in order to meet the national objective of equal opportunities from a human rights perspective.

Having carried out the documentary analysis of the various actions, including programs and projects conducted by MINEDUC at the national level, MINEDUC as an educational regulatory body has generated organizational structures with the aim of:

- **All ABC literacy, elementary school and high school "Monseñor Leonidas Proaño" campaign:** it is a program executed through the undersecretariat of specialized and inclusive education, for people who have not been able to complete their studies in the periods and regular ages. To date, 218,000 young people and adults who have deficiencies in the learning process or have school laggards are covered. This program was developed in two phases, its purpose being that this population concludes its studies in approximately 5 years, since the country so far registers 5 million people with unfinished schooling (MINEDUC, 2018).
- **Pedagogical Accompaniment Program:** seeks to improve the relationship between teachers and students, through integrative actions that improve their skills. For this purpose, pedagogical optimization actions have been applied, with 24,560 teachers being trained to perform successful pedagogical accompaniment (MINEDUC, 2018).
- **Educational Inclusion Support Program:** this program has been implemented in school education institutions through organic structures created by the undersecretary of specialized and inclusive education. Being these: district



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educational inclusion support units (UDAI) which are "technical-operational bodies that provide technical, methodological and conceptual support through the work of a team of professionals" (MINEDUC, 2019, p.1) to educational institutions. The Departments of Student Counseling (DECE) responsible for providing support to teachers and providing comprehensive attention to students in educational institutions.

- District Inclusion Support Units (UDAI), living organisms created in each of the 140 Districts³. Formed by a transdisciplinary team of clinical psychologists, psychopedagogues, special educators, language therapists, physical and occupational therapists. Its functions include identifying the type of SEN students and advising teachers and parents (MINEDUC, 2018, p.1).
- Departments of Student Counseling (*DECE*), structural organs created in educational institutions, with the aim of providing psychological, psychoeducational, emotional and social support and accompaniment to students and parents. These agencies carry out strategic actions under the comprehensive care model (MINEDUC, 2017b).
- Hospital Classroom Program, created in educational institutions to support students with SEN, who suffer from catastrophic diseases. It helps the student population that is behind in their studies because of their disease. Therefore, MINEDUC in agreement with the Ministry of Public Health (MSP) has implemented "45 state hospitals nationwide, addressed to children and teenagers with disabilities and with a health condition" (MINEDUC, 2016).

The above strategic actions demonstrate the government's interest in complying with international and constitutional guidelines for eradicating discrimination and exclusion of people with SEN, being MINEDUC the protagonist of structural changes in the education system in elementary school and high school, in order to ensure that the exit profile of students allows their access to higher education. Hence, the following section aims to address the capacity for educational innovation in teachers as the decisive factor in the success of educational inclusion.

4. Innovation

4.1 Concept

The term innovation comes from the Latin *innovare*, whose meaning is "to change or alter things by incorporating novelties" (Medina Salgado and Espinosa Espíndola, 1994, p. 59). In the strict sense, the term innovation relates to the generation of new or different aspects, related to the improvement of goods, services or procedures. Thus, it differs from

³ The implementation of the New Model of Educational Management is in progressive development throughout the Ecuadorian territory, which includes 9 Educational Zones (Undersecretariats of Quito and Guayaquil), 140 educational districts and 1,117 educational circuits, and all areas, sections and addresses of the Ministry of Education. The target population covers all users of the National Education System, including students and former students of all levels and modalities, teachers and authorities of public institutions, tax authorities and individuals from Ecuador. In addition, it covers all officials of the Ministry of Education at the Central Level, the Zonal Educational Coordinations and the Provincial Directorates of Hispanic and Bilingual Education who are in transition to the districts



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the invention, which encompasses from new ideas that generate prototypes or new concepts.

To clarify the definition from an epistemological point of view, multiple meanings have emerged around the term innovation. In this regard, Sandoval and Martínez (2018) point out that there are three axes of action:

new, transformational and beneficial. The first as novel, is related to the dimension of something new, different, unknown so far (contextual – objective). The second transformational, is linked to the dimension of change, temporality, as they determine changes in products and/or services in relation to the needs. Finally, the third refers to the dimension of beneficial or advantageous to the community, which determines evolution and social progress (p.4).

By moving the concept of innovation to the education system, it relates to the generation of specific skills in teachers. To allow them to propose strategies that improve the teaching practice in the care of diversity in the classroom. All this related to the need to generate effective solutions in the process of identifying and responding to students' special needs in order to reduce discrimination and exclusion in education

In short, innovation on a personal judgment is the capacity evidenced when a person is able to generate new combinations in the field, one of them educational. Hence, the reciprocity of innovation with education is direct. Therefore, it is necessary to give special attention to students with SEN, from trained teachers who unleash innovative proposals in the pedagogical practice.

Today, although there is a clearly defined public policy, the weakness of providing relevant, timely and appropriate care to students with SEN lies in the lack of trained teachers, in specific topics such as inclusive curriculum and curriculum adaptations, since the gap is evident from the classroom because teachers cannot systematize curricular plans and design curricular adaptations according to the type of SEN of their students.

It can be concluded that to innovate in education is to generate new and different things that make the teaching practice much better. For this reason, teachers' ability to innovate at any educational level is related not only to their skills. But with the level of knowledge acquired in a formal way (knowledge acquired in a process of integral or regulated education) or informal (knowledge acquired freely and experientially).

4.2 Innovate to an inclusive approach

Based on the definitions analyzed, innovating is related to the value, the generation of something new, different and innovative. Innovation in education means that teachers are free to apply their knowledge with the aim of creating innovative proposals around methodologies, strategies, didactics and their application to improve the learning process with students who have individual differences, thus, improving their quality of life. Therefore, the objective is to increase their levels of relationships with members of their environment, in order to feel included in society.

Therefore, innovation, applied to education, is the starting point for breaking traditionalist, flat and coercive paradigm schemes, in which perfection is associated with structuralized schemes; but not in raising awareness and transforming mental positions that accept individual differences as the essence of an active and inclusive society, but that



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the contribution of people with SEN allows the growth and integral development of individuals.

Educative innovation depends on the ability of people involved to establish new relationships between education and reality. All innovation experiences have as a priority the constant training of teachers and the production of materials for the educational practice. The teacher training is based on specific purposes and difficulties that teachers have when introducing and modifying their practice. Diversity in the classroom invites education professionals to generate dynamic, different and versatile alternatives to make their teaching action innovative.

Educational inclusion is the engine of innovation, as diversity in the classroom determines that educational actions are varied and responsive to needs. This stream of innovation in education is no stranger to the programs emerged at UNESCO, nor is it detached from the public policies of the countries.

One of the features that characterizes it is that, by having knowledge about SEN, it is proposed to contribute to the construction of fair societies. This educational action bases its approaches on the effective pursuit of the right to education, on democratization and on non-discrimination. This orientation of education with social origin is essential, so all effort must be made into educational practice, since it is on it that participation and innovation are carried out, it is the work area where the teacher reveals his/her professional capacity and passion to teach.

5. Educational inclusion

Educational inclusion promotes teaching action to admit students with individual differences in the classrooms, whatever the modality of study. It "responds to the guarantee of the right to quality education, through access, permanence and completion" (MINEDUC, 2019, p.1) of the studies. Considering the recognition and appreciation of diversity as a right, this implies responsibility on the part of those involved, who have a leading role in the process.

The State, responsible for linking international guidelines with national decisions, has established a legal area, supporting constitutional mandates in order to support inclusive work in the education system, and enhancing actions that are governed and delegated through the sectional agencies and ministries responsible for education at the national level.

Among them, MINEDUC, which is an entity that generated the inclusive education program, implemented through the project of the new inclusive education model. The aim is to "strengthen and improve care in specialized education and educational inclusion in ordinary education, for children and young people with special educational needs associated with or without any disability" (MINEDUC, 2012, p. 1).

Therefore, with the implementation of this project, educational institutions are committed to breaking down physical, architectural and technological barriers in their educational spaces. In addition, they sensitized the educational community to achieve true inclusion for non-discrimination. Educational units are responsible for supporting the development of innovative teacher proposals, contributing to greater social interaction.

Therefore, teachers are responsible for the pedagogical practice, thus, they must enhance innovative capacities aimed at improving educational inclusion processes, ensuring the



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scope of the learning outcomes established in the curriculum to "facilitate these attention processes to the diversity of students" (Sarto Martín and Venegas, 2009, p. 149) with SEN.

In this circumstance, in order to manage teaching processes that ensure the scope of the learning objectives set out in the curriculum, teachers must acquire professional skills, related to enhancing the management of an educational process that is sustainable and inclusive. These competencies will strengthen cognitive capacities around educational inclusion, such as: curriculum design, curriculum adaptations and inclusive teaching proposals evidenced in the integral development of students with SEN.

The paradigm change of teachers in the pedagogical practice invites the generation of new mental structures, since the capacity for acceptance, tolerance and innovation are decisive in reaching a new way of thinking, in order for teachers to have adequate management of students with SEN in their classrooms.

This is not just a socio-educational change. These are structural and intrinsic changes in teachers, through awareness-raising processes and ongoing training, to determine the success or failure of inclusion processes.

Innovation in pedagogical practice allows teachers to generate creative and innovative curricular proposals, correlated with their students' special needs. It is there that a structural link is generated between educational inclusion and innovation of teaching work, based on non-discrimination. This determines that the teacher, being aware of his/her responsibility for educational inclusion, acts as a compensatory element of the deficiencies of students with SEN.

It is there that, according to UNESCO, innovation and inclusion are joined together as an informed initiative to fulfill the professional and social responsibility of the teacher, in order to train students who are whole, creative, critical, confident in their potential and are socially active, and whose insertion into the work is effective. In faithful compliance with the search for a contemporary world that has assumed full inclusion as a matter of law and not a privilege granted (UNESCO, 2006, p. 18).

According to Sarto and Venegas it is the moment when the teacher faces a process of educational inclusion in the classroom, where the teacher should be clear about the learning teaching process, and adopts a particularity in response to the requirements of students with SEN, by achieving a process of educational inclusion from the curriculum proposal in a different action and of greater responsibility with the rest of the group that has homogeneous educational needs (Sarto and Venegas 2009, p. 28). Innovation in teaching practice is not a particularity, but on the contrary it must be a generality in the teacher who is really committed and responsible with the inclusion process.

6. Conclusions

It was concluded that, despite the existence of a public policy promoting inclusion, there is a worn and, in many cases, little discernible link to innovation in the pedagogical practice. This is personally due to poor teacher training on educational inclusion issues, inclusive curriculum and curricular adaptations, which promote the inclusion of students with SEN.

Previous researches on the subject reveal that, in the country, there are few official databases that record the description of students with SEN. Demographic, employability and socio-economic status data also reflect that there are no educational inclusion protocols. "Existing initiatives to integrate PwD into education are few, isolated and centralized in large cities" (UNESCO, 2004, p. 3).



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Based on the above data and the results of the documentary analysis carried out, it could be determined that the topics covered are sensitive. Arguably, for many, they are utopian because of the difficulties that schools face in including students with SEN in the classrooms.

Despite this, speaking of inclusion openly and from a vision of social and educational acceptance has taken time and difficulties due to paradigmatic barriers. Thus, three decades later, in 1978, the Warnock Report concludes that there are no uneducated children, and introduces the term SEN for the first time, but this did not determine the open acceptance of working with students with SEN in classrooms, due to the resistances generated.

The difficulties identified in the inclusion processes stem from barriers of thought by the educational community, and even the teacher's fear of having students with individual differences in their classrooms, due to the lack of training in managing an inclusive curriculum that is versatile and promotes the application of curricular adaptations that respond to identified SEN. As well as the reality of treating students with SEN, which invites the development of pedagogical innovation.

Ecuador is no stranger to this reality, yet assertive actions in inclusion and educational innovation are created as a government decision from 2007, giving a strong emphasis on SEN associated with disability, in the government interest of an inclusive policy giving visibility to PCDs. This is how the MINEDUC school education body gives way to projects of social interest such as the implementation of Inclusive Schools.

This decision originated as a response of respect for the dignity of the human being and with the challenge to create a society sensitive to individual differences, promoting the inclusion of vulnerable population sectors, especially those that require priority attention. Therefore, educational inclusion is not an action of its own for students with disabilities, but for those who are part of priority care groups, in this reason the appropriate term is SEN.

In relation to the pedagogical innovation, although it is true that the Ecuadorian state has given way to methodological strategies such as the *Toolbox for educational inclusion*, the real innovative contribution arises from the initiative and capacities of teachers in the classroom, which make efforts in the face of their reality in the pedagogical practice.

The policy of educational inclusion reveals the actions carried out by government entities, such as MINEDUC, which have generated a solvent structure from the generation of inclusive schools, but lacks of inclusion protocol such as: scarce training in education community awareness programs; cognitive weaknesses on the part of teachers on specific topics such as inclusive curriculum and strategic methodologies that promote the inclusion of students with SEN; reduced contribution by teachers in the design of curricular adaptations; poor advice from district units to support inclusion and resistance to change by teachers, as most do their teaching work with large groups, making specific care difficult for students with SEN.

The analysis has made it possible to identify that, in Ecuador's education system, school institutions and teachers face common problems. It can therefore be determined that, in schools, there is a lack of professionals with specific training in inclusive education. This creates a barrier of knowledge in the classroom for the correct management of students with SEN, which is a limitation in the pedagogical practice.



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In short, it was possible to determine that pedagogical innovation was created from the initiative of teachers. Its effective action in the classroom is the response to processes of inclusion in the framework of responsibility and professional vocation. Hence, the urgent need to train teachers with extensive knowledge in educational inclusion in response to diversity, which goes beyond public policy.



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