



## *Inclusivity in Education, experiences, achievements, challenges and challenges*

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### **ABSTRACT**

The main objective of this research is to identify the main achievements of inclusiveness in education through the experiences of the protagonists and thus establish the main challenges to achieving inclusiveness of people with disabilities in education.

The unit of analysis of the present research is constituted by a non-probabilistic sample of 24 students of secondary education of the Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra highschool, 2 inclusive students of higher education of UNAN-RUCFA, 6 teachers, young people from the municipality.

The change in the paradigms of education in general needs to be strengthened and in some cases broken to allow inclusivity in the education of inclusive people; currently, their participation is of quality in each of the activities.

## INTRODUCTION

This article presents the experiences, achievements, challenges, and challenges of inclusivity based on the studies conducted with students from Miguel de Cervantes School, the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua, UNAN-Managua, and the Municipality.

The main objective of this research is to identify the main challenges of inclusiveness in education through the experiences of the protagonists and thus establish the main challenges to achieving inclusiveness of people with disabilities in education.

Currently, the cognitive and competency-based process has allowed students with disabilities to act and relate in the educational and social environment, the objective of which is that they are inserted in higher education and can opt for the labor field for their knowledge and skills without any prejudice, achieving autonomous, critical individuals capable of relating positively with others, cooperating with them.

The change in the paradigms of education in general needs to be strengthened and in some cases broken to allow inclusiveness in the education of people with disabilities, assuming that the process is already underway.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This section describes the methodological process used in the elaboration of this research, as well as the techniques and methods applied to collect the necessary information that will be useful to achieve the established objectives.

### Approach and scope of the research

Following the theoretical references of Hernández, Fernández, and Baptista (2014), the research is situated in a mixed approach precisely because it consists of a set of systematic, empirical, and critical research processes that involve the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data.

The research is considered mixed because it processes data of quantitative and qualitative origin. About the former, a questionnaire was applied to know the number of students with inclusiveness in the sample of the Miguel de Cervantes Highschool and UNAN RUCFA, From the qualitative perspective, interviews were conducted with 6 students at the secondary level and 2 at the higher education level as well as with 5 teachers of inclusive education, this to know the inclusive education, experiences, achievements, challenges, and challenges as well as through the observation of teachers to follow up the whole process of teaching and learning.

### **Units of analysis**

The unit of analysis of the present research is constituted by a non-probabilistic sample of 24 students of secondary education at the Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra Highschool, 2 inclusive students of higher education of UNAN-RUCFA, 6 teachers, following Bernal (2010), are part of the population that is selected, from which the information for the development of the study is obtained and on which the measurement and observation of the variables under study will be carried out (p.161).

### **Collection techniques**

Two research techniques were applied in the research process: observation and interviews. In the case of the former, according to Arias (2012), it is a technique that consists of visualizing or capturing by sight, systematically, any fact, phenomenon, or situation that occurs in nature or society, according to pre-established research objectives (p.69).

Regarding the interview, Arias (2012) also expresses that it is a technique based on a face-to-face dialogue or conversation, between the interviewer and the interviewee about a previously determined topic, in such a way that the interviewer can obtain the required information (p.73). This technique was applied to teachers and allowed them to deepen in aspects related to inclusive education.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

For Escribano. Education is an eminently human process because it presupposes exclusive capacities of the person, such as intelligence, the good use of freedom, and the capacity to communicate and relate to oneself and others (2004).

According to Belth “Educating consists in transmitting the models by which the world is explicable”. According to Durkheim “The man that education is to realize in us is not the man as nature has made him, but as society wants him to be.”. Mentions Dewey “Education is the total of processes by which a community or a small or large social group transmits its acquired capacity and purposes to ensure the continuity of its existence and development”.

According to the UN (2015). In Sustainable Development Goal number 10 it talks about reducing inequalities; it indicates reducing inequalities and ensuring that no one is left behind. Inequality within and between countries is a continuing cause for concern. Despite the existence of some positive signs towards reducing inequality in some dimensions, such as the reduction of income inequality in some countries and preferential trade status benefiting low-income countries, inequality continues.

In Nicaragua, the State is committed to bringing education to the entire population without detriment to the economic situation of families, as well as establishing a duty and

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obligation of the State to improve access to general and permanent education as a promoter of the Nicaraguan State, training the population for the benefit of the country.

To achieve such an endeavor it is necessary to create inclusive environments, which implies:

- Respect, understanding, and attention to cultural, social, and individual diversity (response of educational systems, schools, and teachers to the expectations and needs of students).
- Equal access to quality education; and
- Close coordination with other social policies. All of these points must take into account the expectations and demands of stakeholders and social actors (UNESCO, 2008, p.10).

Inclusion from the Nicaraguan perspective offers the same opportunities without distinction of sex, race, ethnicity, physical and intellectual capacity, to all its members and creates the same opportunities for all, as stated by the Ministry of Education in its inclusive education policy, with its principles and objectives.

The State recognizes that students with disabilities should enjoy a full life in conditions of dignity that allow them to be autonomous, as well as to exercise their right to participate in the society in which they live and their individual development.

National Assembly (Law 763). *Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Art. 45 Access to technical and higher education.* The Ministry of Education must ensure the training of persons with disabilities to enter technical and higher education, creating for this purpose inclusive policies, coverage, and educational quality programs and scholarship programs. For their part, the National Technological Highschool and the universities should prioritize the access of students with disabilities of limited economic resources to scholarship programs and necessary materials to support them in their studies of disability, the same should be reported immediately to their parents and the Ministry of Health for the corresponding follow-up.

On the other hand, UNESCO (2009) states that: Inclusive education is a process of strengthening the capacity of the education system to reach all learners, involves the transformation of schools and other learning centers to serve all children and adolescents belonging to ethnic and linguistic minority groups or rural populations, those affected by HIV and AIDS or with disabilities and learning difficulties, and to also provide learning opportunities for all youth and adults. (p. 8)

A change of this magnitude requires genuine political and economic commitment, as well as unconditional support from the education system and the community at large.

## DISCUSSION

### Inclusiveness in secondary education

Currently, the cognitive and competency-based process has allowed students with hearing impairment to act and interact in the educational and social sphere, the objective being that they can enter higher education and opt for the labor field with their knowledge and skills without any prejudice, achieving autonomous, critical individuals capable of relating positively with others, cooperating with them.



Figure 1. Integration of hearing and hearing impaired students at the Miguel de Cervantes High School.

Source: Own elaboration. Taken from *Inclusive Exposure*, fifth year.

Miguel de Cervantes High School currently has inclusive non-hearing students.

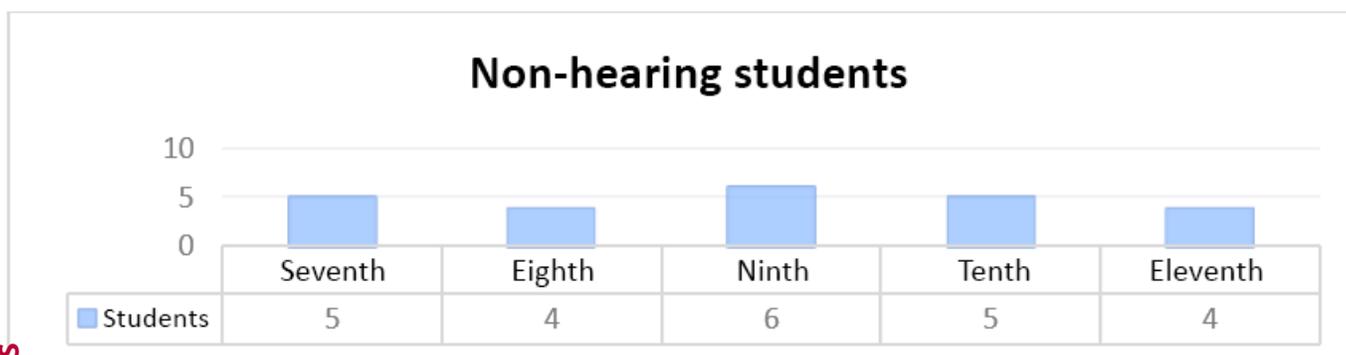


Figure 2. Non-hearing students at the Miguel de Cervantes High School.

Source: Own elaboration.

According to Figure 2, Instituto Miguel de Cervantes has a high population of non-hearing students from seventh grade with 5 students, eighth grade with 4 students, ninth grade with

6 students, tenth grade with 5 students, and eleventh grade with 4 students, which represents a great challenge for the high school, directors, teachers, and students to include these young people so that they have professional and personal competencies.

*Thus becoming known as one of the pioneers at the municipal level in inclusive education, being an achievement for the high school to be able to work and participate in the education of the non-hearing population.*

According to the data collection instrument, an interview was conducted with the director, the Interpreting Psychologist, and the Interpreting Pedagogue of the Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra High School, and the results were as follows.

### **Achievements**

At the Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra Highschool, the first promotions in 2019 of high school graduates with hearing disabilities and integration of psychologists and pedagogues in the interpreter teachers in the same way that the non-hearing students have adapted to the environment in communication, both hearing and non-hearing, where they have left with cognitive levels and skills, achieving these to be able to enter the labor field.

Recognition of the work of the interpreters within the inclusive classroom, interaction in social and school activities (dance, theater, poems, cultural activities, catwalks, scientific conferences, race day, integration in the classroom ICT and robotics, among others), these students have raised their level of self-esteem through the development in their different areas of knowledge.

### **Challenges**

According to the question asked to the director, she responded that the main challenges they have about inclusive education at the Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra Highschool are to continue strengthening the teacher's skills to continue to serve inclusive cases, expand the attention to students with different abilities, which will allow the commitment of parents and teachers to work together to move students forward with the empowerment of teachers in inclusive education.

The permanence of students in the educational system at the level of the learning process, promoting reading and writing even though it is assumed that young people are at a secondary school level, so they have difficulties in this important area, implementation of curricular adaptation to ensure meaningful learning.

## **Challenges**

The Ministry of Education should pay attention to teachers, train them in inclusive education and sign language, break the paradigms that are held towards students with inclusiveness, and achieve integration between parents, teachers, and students.

Awareness through the knowledge of the different topics in the context in which it is being developed, integration and appropriation of hearing people socializing among them, reducing the risks of bullying of society towards non-hearing people.

The opening and accompaniment of students with hearing impairment in universities should be promoted, taking into account that not all of them have the economic capacity to pay for interpreters, often truncating their yearnings for self-improvement.

## **Inclusiveness in Higher Education**

The National Autonomous University of Nicaragua UNAN-Managua (2020). In its Admissions Policy. It mentions that, in recent years, the Nicaraguan State, and public universities in particular, have made notable efforts to make higher education an increasingly inclusive subsystem, significantly expanding enrollment coverage and including sectors that historically have had weak access to higher education.

## **Achievements**

According to the Vice Rector of Student Affairs, Santana, T.B (2021). UNAN Managua as a University of higher education, is an institution committed to society to provide quality education for all Nicaraguans without distinction of sexual orientation, cognitive, sensory or physical ability, ethnic origin, economic, socio-cultural or gender status, which is why our rector, guided the installation of the University inclusion commission.

Likewise, one of the main achievements is the graduation of graduates with inclusivity in the different majors.



Figure 3. A student with motor disabilities of the Banking and Finance Major in his Bachelor's Degree defense.

Source: Own elaboration. Taken from the Department of Accounting UNAN Managua.

### **Institutional Challenges of Higher Education**

According to the General Assembly of the UNAN Managua (2021), in the rendering of activities carried out in 2020, the rector mentioned as a closing activity the main challenges of inclusive education, which are mentioned as follows:

- Training teachers in sign language.
- Hiring of teachers Interpreters
- Inclusive education must be seen comprehensively.
- Continuous improvement in education
- Infrastructure conditioning for students with inclusiveness
- Encourage social volunteering
- Linkage with the National Association of the Deaf of Nicaragua (ANSNIC)
- Linkage with the Association for People with Disabilities (FECONORI)

### **Inclusiveness through Art**

In the search for information, explorations were carried out and it was found that the organizational model of Person, Family, and Community reveals the philosophy that leads the efforts made by the Government of Reconciliation and National Unity through its Public Policies, Programs, and Plans, placing the "Human Being" at the center.

The National Human Development Plan reiterates that education is a fundamental human right; consequently, it promotes an inclusive educational model that guarantees access to education, especially for the most impoverished sectors (BCN, 2017-2021).

The Government of Reconciliation and National Unity (GRUN) visualizes education as a practice of freedom, as a critical and emancipatory activity. This is how the spaces of education and culture are seen as scenarios that allow people to build their society from the awareness of the social problems that are experienced daily. In this case, both education and culture become a visible and reliable reflection of social realities. From this approach, learning implies perceiving, rethinking, and suggesting, from an inclusive angle, but with a preferential option for the poorest.

The relevance and preponderance of culture and consequently of cultural activities is found in the vital character it has for individuals and human groups. Consequently, the efforts of GRUN in the restitution of rights to education and culture, for Nicaraguans, is a fact of vital importance.

It is a fact of vital importance given that our culture in all its expressions, material, spiritual, and ideological is what identifies us, what gives us our identity, is what links our origin with the future we want to build, consequently, culture is the result of a collective effort through time, becoming our compass and our horizon.

The aforementioned is because our behavior patterns, belief systems, principles, and ways of life derive from culture, which in a nutshell is the sum of all forms of art, love, and thought, which over time have allowed human beings to be freer (BCN, 2017-2021).

The Law of Municipalities grants Local Governments, powers to promote the integral development of the municipalities, in all the competencies of matters that have an impact on socioeconomic development and specifically provide attention to the population through the creation of cultural and community centers, as well as the maintenance of the infrastructure of parks, squares parks, boulevards, leisure and recreation areas, libraries, museums.



Figure 4. Inclusiveness of the Municipality

The municipality promotes education in culture, among other activities related to the provision of public services such as conservation, expansion of cultural and tourism development linked to the progress of the municipality, and the preservation of cultural heritage.

Contributing to the progress of human development, programs and projects have been promoted to facilitate an inclusive education in culture of artistic expressions through its cultural centers, an example of this is that the municipal dance company has as its motto “Art, Culture and tradition with inclusion”.



*Figure 5. Art, culture, and tradition with inclusion*

In the program of the National Highschool of Culture concerning cultural policy, specific objectives were outlined related to promoting culture by providing the people with the mechanisms to do so, in such a way that it becomes another instrument of liberation; likewise to rescue and consolidate the cultural legacy of the Nicaraguan people, to sustain the national identity (Zamora and Valle, 1982).

Another of the data collected is from research in inclusive arts education and artistic methodologies of research in education: themes, trends, and views; in which it expresses the general problem and specific approaches in research on arts education and from that perspective explains that research in arts education makes up specific and very heterogeneous space and that the issues and problems of research in arts education constitute a very specialized territory within the arts-based educational research to work on the development of a new methodology that looks at education through an artistic point of view.

It offers a visual and written description of some of the problems and theories, of some of the researchers, and of the findings and results, both in the international panorama and the

context of Spanish universities, of the research that is currently being carried out in the field of Arts Education with inclusion. First of all, it presents a synthesis of the research topics that most frequently appear in the main research manuals published on Arts Education.

Second, it identifies the most urgent and emerging research topics that have been emphasized in recent years by the most important international professional associations. Third, it highlights some of the leading research journals specializing in inclusive Arts Education. Fourth, it presents a new and very controversial research approach that has emerged in the territory of Arts Education: the Arts based Educational Research (MAIE as in Spanish) Methodologies. Finally, it presents a descriptive-interpretative photographic series composed of twenty-nine portraits of the gaze of professionals in the formation of the artistic gaze, working in seminars, congresses, and classrooms, during the last seven years (Viadel, 2011).

## **CONCLUSION**

It can be said that inclusive education from the approach of secondary education, specifically from the sample of the Miguel de Cervantes Highschool, has a great experience in inclusive education, but in the same way, it must be in constant changes, training to provide quality teaching and values for these students.

Currently, there are 19 inclusive students from seventh to eleventh grade, so year after year the enrollment has been higher in inclusive students, counting them with specially trained staff to have a quality education, this is a sign of the investment being made by the government so that everyone can have access to a free and quality education.

Similarly, inclusive education from the higher education approach and the arts are present at all social levels where our good government is working in a coordinated manner to reduce the gap that exists in inclusive education.

The change in the paradigms of education in general needs to be strengthened and in some cases broken to allow inclusivity in the education of inclusive people, assuming that the process is already underway. Inclusive students who are immersed in a classroom are actively in full relationship with their peers and the socio-educational context; their participation is of quality in each of the activities, tasks, practical classes, exhibitions, and group work where it has been possible to verify that they can acquire educational competencies, even if they have some type of disabilities already referred to in this study.

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