


Editorial

Leader

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La inclusión como acogida Inclusion as a welcome Inclusão como bemvinda

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Inclusion has become one of the defining topics of discussion and study in the 21st century, centered around two key challenges: first, the concept of diversity and difference; second, society's responsibility in achieving true inclusion. However, both of these challenges cannot be addressed without adopting an ethical stance—that is, questioning our perception of those who differ from us in physical, social, cultural, ideological, and political aspects, as well as in their way of life. The existence of diversity compels us to navigate the unknown, challenging us to engage with perspectives beyond our own. This uncertainty in the face of difference and diversity can provoke fear and rejection, ultimately fostering systems of exclusion. Yet ethics, which extends beyond a mere set of rules, calls for a position of responsibility toward those before us. Ethics must transcend our instinctive rejection, fear, and uncertainty regarding differences, so that we do not infringe upon or diminish the dignity and humanity of others. Dignity and humanity belong to every person, regardless of our individual ideas and beliefs.

For this reason, we must recognize that inclusion, particularly in education, is a process that demands both responsibility and commitment. It calls on us to educate, guide, and support individuals in their development as whole human beings. But what is inclusion? To answer this, we must return to the fundamental purpose of education. Before it became focused on the acquisition of knowledge and specialized skills, its primary aim was to support children and young people in learning how to belong and actively participate in their communities and society. In other words, inclusion is not merely placing a child or young person with physical, cognitive, ideological, religious, or social differences into a classroom. True inclusion means creating conditions that foster both belonging and participation.

Education as a space for belonging and participation becomes possible when we recognize and embrace the plurality and diversity of every individual within the human and social fabric. That is, education faces the challenge of moving beyond the pedagogical practice of standardization and homogenization, which took hold

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during the era of mass education in the consolidation of modern nations and societies. This approach sidelined education as a process of individualized embrace and personal guidance.

In this context, inclusive education, which emerges from the recognition of diversity and individual distinctions as values and sources of enrichment, paves the way for a pedagogy and didactics of embrace, fostering a sense of belonging and equal participation for all. Inclusion, at its core, is about creating an educational environment that embraces all learners, ensuring access to learning and training spaces where they can fully develop.

Within this framework, the ethics of inclusion as an educational principle moves beyond normalization and instead embraces diversity and the varying capacities of individuals—including what is traditionally labeled as disability—acknowledging that each person, according to their unique characteristics, can grow and thrive. For this reason, any labeling that undermines the dignity and potential of learners and citizens who differ in their abilities or educational needs must be discarded. An example of this shift is the move away from the term “abnormality” toward an understanding of different ways of existing and being in the world—recognizing disability not as a deficiency but as part of the broad spectrum of diverse physical, cognitive, and social ways of learning and developing.

Inclusive education, as a model of embrace, faces the challenge of identifying strategies and tools to address

diverse educational, didactic, and pedagogical needs. Achieving this requires that states and institutions first implement awareness and motivation programs for public officials and educators, fostering openness to the respect and recognition of diversity. Second, the budget should include allocations for investment in infrastructure adaptations, procurement of materials, and educational technology, among other essential resources to equip and organize inclusive spaces that are properly designed to foster pedagogical embrace for all, ensuring a sense of belonging and participation.

Inclusion as Embrace is an ongoing process being built through the efforts of many educators and civil society groups, making it a path still in development. It is crucial to recognize that the creation of an inclusive society cannot be achieved individually. It requires collective participation, the exchange and systematization of experiences, and insights that allow us to view local conditions and needs from new perspectives. In this issue, the authors rigorously examine findings, interpretations, and perspectives that serve as valuable guidance for understanding inclusion as both a social issue and a public policy. The invitation is to explore each of the works on inclusion, which result from dedicated research efforts aimed at improving spaces for participation and equality. These contributions are compiled in Vol. 11. No. 2 (2024) of *Inclusión y Desarrollo Journal*.