

Educación inclusiva y diversa: retos y perspectivas para entender el concepto

Inclusive and diverse education: challenges and perspectives to understand the concept.

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RESUMEN:

Este artículo presenta una aproximación teórica al estudio "Educación Inclusiva de la Población con Orientación Sexual e Identidad de Género Diversas en la Universidad Francisco de Paula Santander". El objetivo es precisar categorías conceptuales interpretando los hallazgos obtenidos. La metodología incluyó una revisión bibliográfica y análisis cualitativo de las políticas educativas. Los resultados muestran que, aunque los avances en educación inclusiva han beneficiado principalmente a personas con discapacidad y en condiciones de vulnerabilidad económica y social, la inclusión de personas con diversas orientaciones sexuales e identidades de género es uno de los retos que se debe asumir para establecer procesos de inclusión total. Sin embargo, las políticas y lineamientos nacionales sobre la educación inclusiva para esta población son limitados. Hay carencias de directrices claras y recursos adecuados para abordar las necesidades específicas, resaltando la necesidad de fortalecer estas políticas para garantizar una educación verdaderamente inclusiva. Es crucial que las instituciones educativas y los responsables de la formulación de políticas trabajen conjuntamente para desarrollar estrategias efectivas que promuevan la equidad y la inclusión en todos los niveles educativos, asegurando así un entorno educativo seguro y respetuoso para todos los estudiantes, independientemente de su orientación sexual e identidad de género.

Palabras clave:

Diversidad sexual, Educación inclusiva, Enfoque de género, Población con orientación sexual e Identidad de género diversa.

ABSTRACT:

This article presents a theoretical approach to the study "Inclusive Education for the Population with Diverse Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity at the Francisco de Paula Santander University." The objective is to specify conceptual categories by interpreting the findings obtained. The methodology included a bibliographic review and qualitative analysis of educational policies. The results show that, although advances in inclusive education have mainly benefited people with disabilities and those in conditions of economic and social vulnerability, the inclusion of people with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities is one of the challenges that must be addressed to establish total inclusion processes. However, national policies and guidelines on inclusive education for this population are limited. There are clear deficiencies in directives and adequate resources to address specific needs, highlighting the need to strengthen these policies to ensure truly inclusive education. It is crucial that educational institutions and policymakers work together to develop effective strategies that promote equity and inclusion at all educational levels, thus ensuring a safe and respectful educational environment for all students, regardless of their sexual orientation and gender identity.

Keywords:

Sexual diversity, Inclusive education, Gender approach, Population with diverse sexual orientation and gender identity.

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Introducción

The ongoing policies of the Universidad Francisco de Paula Santander (UFPS), such as CSU Agreement 070 of March 23, 2023, which establishes guidelines for addressing and responding to discrimination cases, are essential to ensuring an inclusive and respectful educational environment. This theoretical approach explores inclusive education, the diverse sexual orientation and gender identity population, inclusive education from the perspective of sexual diversity and diverse gender identities, and institutional policies and guidelines that benefit students with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities and from which the analysis and the study of various academic texts, research articles, and both legal and educational perspectives are presented to deepen the understanding of educational inclusion and its many significant challenges. Despite the progress made in legislation and jurisprudence in Colombia to protect this population's rights, obstacles hinder effective and respectful inclusion in the educational setting.

The necessity for this analysis stems from the ongoing discrimination and exclusion experienced by individuals with various sexual orientations and gender identities (OSIGD), which adversely affects their access to quality education and other essential rights. Additionally, it is crucial to understand that inclusive education should not focus on a particular segment of individuals but instead include all students, regardless of their differences. Inclusive education ought to be a comprehensive process that addresses and meets the diverse needs of the entire educational community, mitigating the factors that exacerbate the exclusion from the educational system. To achieve this, modifications and adjustments in curricula, methodologies, frameworks, and educational strategies are required. More than just terminology and definitions, it demands a shared vision and the belief that the educational system has a responsibility to provide education for everyone.

Metodología

A systematization matrix for analyzing background information was developed, which allows the identification and collection of the bibliographic documents used in this review article. Such a matrix included relevant data such as the document type, title, authors, source of consultation, and access link, among other details. The bibliographic search was carried out primarily through Google Scholar and digital repositories of universities and recognized scientific journals, including Redalyc, Scielo, Dialnet, Doaj, Derecho y Vida from Universidad Externado de Colombia, and the UFPS Repository. Only those documents closely related to the study topic, "Inclusive Education for the Population with Diverse Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity at UFPS," and those addressing the categories identified in the research were selected. This selection process was grounded in the need to ensure the relevance and quality of the sources, adhering to the principles of systematic review that emphasize comprehensiveness and rigor in data collection (Kitchenham, 2004). A detailed analysis of the information gathered was subsequently conducted, followed by an interpretation of the findings, whose aim was to provide a comprehensive and well-founded perspective on the study topic, in line with the methodological guidelines proposed by Creswell (2014) for qualitative research.

Discussion and Research Topic Development

Inclusive Education

Inclusive education can be regarded as a contentious and divergent issue in today's world, as academic and expert perspectives on the subject are far from unanimous. This lack of consensus adds a layer of complexity for those seeking to research, conceptualize, or implement this educational model. It is therefore essential to first establish a clear stance on what is understood by inclusive education, as this foundational understanding serves as a prerequisite for formulating proposals, recommendations, or critiques on the matter.

Inclusive education is, at its core, a pedagogical approach aimed at integrating all students into the general education system, regardless of their individual characteristics or diverse contexts. This approach extends beyond the integration of students with special needs, promoting an educational environment that respects and values the diversity of all learners. Booth and Ainscow (2000) developed a model of inclusion grounded in the creation of inclusive schools through adaptation and continuous improvement. According to their framework, educational inclusion entails the practice of integrating all students into the school environment, ensuring their active participation in activities while safeguarding against discrimination or exclusion based on any condition. This model underscores the critical importance of fostering active student engagement in school life, essential for establishing a genuinely inclusive process.

Within this framework, inclusive education, as articulated by Arnaiz (2004, p. 5), "focuses on supporting the unique qualities and needs of every student within the school community, ensuring that they feel welcomed, safe, and empowered to succeed." Accordingly, the conceptualization of inclusive education requires a commitment to embracing the heterogeneity of learners, rejecting any form of exclusion, discrimination, or distinction, and emphasizing that each student is part of a whole, a member of a group. In contrast to inclusive education, segregated education embodies a model that conceptualizes education through diverse yet homogeneous groups, as exemplified by traditional educational paradigms.

As for Wigdorovitz (2008), the initial understanding of educational inclusion was centered on providing individuals with special needs the opportunity to access quality education, often within mainstream schools, as a measure to prevent their isolation. Yet, this concept has evolved to include all individuals considered "different," whether due to their age, geographic location, economic situation, gender, membership in minority groups, or employment status, among others.

Other scholars approach inclusive education not only through the lens of student diversity but also by recognizing differences as a means to strengthen educational models. Reyes et al. (2023) argue that inclusive education is founded on a pedagogical principle that directs the teaching process, ensuring that learning is adapted to the unique characteristics and needs of each individual. Diversity, in all its forms, whether

socioeconomic, gender, cultural, racial, related to sexual orientation, disability, or special educational needs, is recognized as possessing inalienable rights to access education on an equal footing, thereby acknowledging the richness of human diversity. This approach advances equity and enriches educational environments by incorporating a wide range of perspectives. In this particular way, an environment of reciprocal respect and understanding is fostered, which is essential for the holistic development of all students. Inclusive education is thus established as a model designed to meet the needs of children, youth, adolescents, and adults, ensuring that no one is subjected to discrimination or exclusion, while paying particular attention to the challenges faced by those whose specific characteristics or conditions complicate their access to the right to education. This approach acknowledges the limitations of traditional education systems, which often restrict access and, regrettably, contribute to the persistence of social challenges such as educational, social, and cultural exclusion, ultimately reducing opportunities for affected individuals to enjoy other fundamental rights, including the right to decent work and a dignified standard of living.

According to Parra (2010), inclusive education is presented as a pedagogical approach that values diversity, recognizing it as a factor that enriches the educational process and, consequently, promotes human development. Yet, it is acknowledged that implementing this educational model poses a significant challenge for Colombia and Latin America as a whole, as it seeks to deconstruct and reconceptualize the traditional educational system that has been sustained and perpetuated over the years.

In this context, the primary action required to transform education is to understand it as a dynamic process that must remain in constant evolution, adapting not only to social realities but also to the challenges posed by development.

Other studies focused on higher education, such as those by Reyes (2023), provide a brief analysis of inclusive education in universities and largely align with the perspectives discussed thus far, which emphasize that implementing inclusive education in universities requires the adoption of an educational model rooted in the appreciation and acceptance of diversity, that is, a framework that aims to deliver quality education to all, regardless of race, religion, sexual identity, gender orientation etc. In this regard, it is asserted that the objectives of an inclusive university revolve around ensuring access to quality education for everyone, and embracing diversity as a core principle. The goal is to adopt an equitable approach that fosters human development while acknowledging cultural differences. Consequently, it is recognized as an essential component of human rights and social justice.

Notwithstanding, it is acknowledged that implementing inclusive education entails overcoming significant challenges, such as increased investment, the establishment of comprehensive inclusive education policies within the university subsystem, teacher training on these policies, curriculum updates, educational planning, the adaptation of teaching methodologies to the sociocultural characteristics of students, effective teacher-student communication, classroom climate, and other related factors that are essential to achieving the comprehensive realization of inclusion through education.

For this reason, inclusive education goes far beyond merely ensuring the presence of students of diverse sexual orientations, genders, religions, races, or cultural backgrounds in the classroom but otherwise, it entails the implementation of comprehensive actions to guarantee equality and equity within the student community, fostering, through the classroom, a more just society that upholds fundamental rights while promoting tolerance and respect for diversity. As Arnaiz (2003) states:

“For schools to become more inclusive and to adequately respond to the diversity of their students, it is essential to address key elements such as their organization and functioning, the presence of coordination and collaborative work among teachers, the cooperation of the entire educational community, and the effective use of resources and pedagogical practices.”

The pursuit of inclusive education must be recognized as an ongoing process aimed at addressing and responding to the diverse needs of the entire educational community (students, teachers, administrative staff, and others) through the expansion of learning opportunities while mitigating the factors that exacerbate exclusion from the educational system. – As Cristol (2019) notes, achieving this goal necessitates implementing changes and adjustments in educational content, approaches, structures, and strategies, grounded in a shared vision and the belief that it is on the education system to provide education for all.

It is not under this rationale that inclusive education should not be confined to targeting a specific sector or group of individuals, as has often been the case in traditional education. Nor should it merely involve admitting persons with disabilities into universities or educational institutions to meet the “diversity quota” expected of such entities. The concept of inclusive education has frequently been misinterpreted and narrowly associated with the acceptance of students with disabilities within the academic community.

An example illustrating the assertions made in the preceding paragraph can be found in Colombian legislation. Laws such as Law 762 of 2002, which ratifies the Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities; Law 1145 of 2007, which establishes the National Disability System; Law 1346 of 2009, which approves the “Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities”; Statutory Law 1618 of 2013, which sets forth provisions to ensure the full exercise of the rights of persons with disabilities; as well as Decree 366 of 2009 and Decree 1421 of 2017, have all contributed to strengthening the perception that inclusive education is exclusively intended for individuals with disabilities.

Similarly, in the field of research, inclusive education has traditionally been centered on individuals with disabilities, often conflating the concepts of disability and educational inclusion. It’s sufficient to review the research articles published across various platforms and digital repositories reveal this prevailing trend. However, more recent studies on the consolidation of inclusive education make a distinction between educational integration and educational inclusion. Educational integration aims to guarantee the right of

individuals, particularly those with disabilities, to be educated in mainstream institutions. In contrast, educational inclusion pursues a broader and more ambitious goal, as it “seeks to make the right to equitable and quality education a reality for all students, especially for those who are excluded or at risk of exclusion, enabling them to become active, participatory, critical, and empathetic citizens” (Escarbajal Frutos et al., 2012, p. 136). Thus, educational inclusion extends beyond addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities to encompass other groups, such as sexually diverse populations. This approach underscores the importance of recognizing and valuing human diversity in all its forms, promoting an educational model that responds to the needs of all students, regardless of their differences (Parra, 2011).

The latter pursues a much broader purpose than that of integration, as “inclusion seeks to make the right to equitable and quality education a reality for all students, focusing particularly on those who are excluded or at risk of exclusion, so that they may become active, participatory, critical, and empathetic citizens” (Escarbajal Frutos et al., 2012, p. 136). Thus, inclusive education must not solely address individuals with disabilities as the only social group lacking inclusion, but must also encompass other populations, such as sexually diverse communities.

Finally, the Universidad Militar Nueva Granada, in its document “Guidelines for an Inclusive Education Policy 2020”, provides a clear distinction between what is understood as inclusive education and educational inclusion. According to the Universidad Nueva Granada (2020, p.15), inclusive education “is concerned with identifying barriers to learning and also promotes respect for difference, as well as social and cultural development and participation.” Educational inclusion, on the other hand, reflects a more limited perspective, suggesting that students must adapt to the system rather than the system adapting to them. Therefore, these two concepts can be considered distinct.

To sum up, inclusive education represents an educational model aimed at realizing education as a universal right, one that addresses the diverse needs of the student community without discrimination, segregation, exclusion, or stigmatization. Rather, it seeks to build and strengthen education through the recognition of diversity, enabling the achievement of individual goals and aspirations while advocating their fundamental rights and guarantees.

Population with diverse sexual orientation and gender identity

The population with diverse sexual orientation and gender identity, also referred to by the acronym OSIGD, corresponds to what is commonly recognized as the LGBT+ population. The acronym OSIGD emerged as a response to individuals who do not identify as or self-denominate as heterosexual and felt excluded or unrepresented by the term “LGTBIQ+.” Consequently, the terms “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” were adopted as they encompass a broader demographic, providing representation and inclusion for a greater number of individuals who do not align with the aforementioned acronym.

In this regard, the report on violence against LGBT persons within the context of Colombia's armed conflict, conducted by the Caribe Afirmativo corporation, provides a compelling reflection on the acronym LGBT. The report points out that:

The reference to a specific collective or social group identified by the acronym (LGBT+) or its various combinations should not be interpreted as uniform or monolithic, as though it represented a homogeneous social group with a shared identity. This acronym is used to group diverse sexual and gender identities and is conceived as a political category for the advocacy of rights. However, on both ontological and epistemological levels, there are significant differences, asymmetries, and inequalities between one identity and another, even when they are articulated under the same acronym" (Caribe Afirmativo, 2022, p. 15).

This perspective necessitates acknowledging sexual and gender diversity as a broad and dynamic field, avoiding the risk of reducing the acronym (LGBT) to a predetermined framework that, in the name of political correctness, might define, essentialize, or stereotype practices and identities that do not align with its categories. Such practices and identities require alternative understandings or conceptualizations. For this reason, the term (OSIGD) proves to be more inclusive than the acronym (LGBT+).

It is widely recognized, however, that the population with diverse sexual orientation and gender identity has historically faced exclusion, discrimination, and marginalization across various social domains, which have had profound implications on their ability to fully develop in society. This discrimination has been perpetuated by various actors, including families, society, and, regrettably, the State itself. The latter bears the greatest responsibility to redress these injustices against the population with diverse sexual orientation and gender identity (OSIGD), as it holds the obligation to guarantee and protect the fundamental rights of all individuals, regardless of their sex, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, or any other characteristic.

In this regard, Colombia's Administrative Department of Public Administration, in its document titled Guidelines for the Inclusion of the Perspective of Diverse Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities (OSIGD) in Policies Aimed at Improving the State-Citizen Relationship, asserts:

Public administration must not be influenced by prejudices or beliefs that hinder the effective realization of rights for any population or that promote the violation of such rights. Along this line, no argument can justify discriminatory treatment in the delivery of public services. Consequently, if a public servant act based on prejudices when assisting or engaging with the population with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities (OSIGD), they are infringing upon constitutional rights. Public administration must serve as a space free from homophobia, transphobia, biphobia, lesbophobia, or any other form of discrimination (Administrative Department of Public Administration, 2022, p. 21).

Aligned with this rationale, it is the responsibility of the State to invest in the training of its public servants and other agents who have a direct or indirect relationship with the population (SOGI), promote citizen participation in awareness-raising initiatives aimed at

fostering respect for the rights of individuals with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, establish spaces free from discrimination, violence, and stigmatization, and ensure conditions in which individuals feel safe and at ease to thrive within society by guaranteeing inclusive education that allows individuals (OSIGD) to feel supported.

This is particularly pertinent given the pervasive violence and discrimination faced by some individuals due to their sexual orientation or gender identity, which remains evident in many regions, so much so that the mere perception of homosexuality or transgender identity places individuals at risk. (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2011, p. 3). They also note that the most significant violations affecting this population include murder, rape, physical assaults, torture, arbitrary detention, and discrimination in various spheres such as employment, healthcare, and education. Consequently, international organizations, including the United Nations (UN), have prioritized protecting and promoting the universal human rights of individuals (OSIGD).

Finally, it is clear that the population (OSIGD) requires the protection of the Colombian State. Consequently, they must guarantee all possible conditions to safeguard their fundamental rights, not only by legislating in their favor but also by implementing actions, guidelines, and public policies that promote their inclusion and acceptance in society or otherwise, failure to do so would constitute a breach of the essential purposes of the State, as enshrined in Article 2 of the Political Constitution of Colombia, which establishes that:

Article 2: The essential purposes of the State are to serve the community, promote general prosperity, and ensure the effectiveness of the principles, rights, and duties enshrined in the Constitution; to facilitate the participation of all individuals in decisions that affect them, as well as in the economic, political, administrative, and cultural life of the Nation; to defend national independence, maintain territorial integrity, and ensure peaceful coexistence and the prevalence of a just order. The authorities of the Republic are established to protect all individuals residing in Colombia, safeguarding their lives, honor, property, beliefs, and other rights and freedoms, and to ensure the fulfillment of the social duties of both the State and private citizens (Political Constitution of Colombia, 1991).

In conclusion, the population with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities is subject to special protection by the Colombian State and the international legal framework due to the systemic violence they have endured throughout human history. For this reason, a key concern of major human rights organizations worldwide is to ensure that this population is effectively protected within States. Achieving this requires a concerted effort to promote their inclusion across various spheres social, labor, educational, academic, political, and beyond, and to prioritize their protection in government agendas, as well as a central focus in the pursuit of safeguarding and guaranteeing human rights.

Inclusive education through the lens of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.

The population (OSIGD) is currently the subject of both international and national protection. From academia and within the legal framework, positions have been adopted to ensure the protection and safeguarding of the fundamental rights of individuals who self-identify as sexually diverse.

One of the most significant approaches arises from the consolidation of inclusive education, which, as outlined in the chapter on inclusive education, refers to an educational model aimed at the inclusion of all students, regardless of their economic or social status, and without any discrimination based on sex, race, religion, physical or intellectual ability, sexual identity, or any other factor.

Therefore, both secondary and higher education must strive to implement a model based on inclusion, as, according to UNESCO, inclusion is fundamental for achieving a sociocultural change where diversity is seen as a positive contribution to the creation of inclusive educational environments (UNESCO, 2008). Thus, inclusive education for the population (OSIGD) involves, first, the creation of safe, discrimination-free environments to ensure real access to education for children, adolescents, and young people; and second, the development of guidelines or policies (both national and institutional) that facilitate students' ability to grow freely according to their unique characteristics and differences, which also encourage students to recognize the particularities and differences of others, without such differences serving as justifications for any form of discrimination or violence.

In this regard, the Ministry of Education (2018), in the document titled "Approach and Gender Identities for the Guidelines on Inclusive Higher Education Policy," acknowledges that in Colombia, within the heterosexist and androcentric nature of educational institutions, individuals and social groups with divergent sexual identities also face inequalities and discrimination that may affect individuals with non-normative sexual identities in the educational system in general, and in the higher education system, in particular.

Accordingly, the most significant action the State can take is to guarantee the conditions necessary to consolidate inclusive education, which serves as both a means and a reflection of the protection of the rights and constitutional guarantees of the population (OSIGD) in which a flexible and adaptable curricular model tailored to the needs of the population (OSIGD). Inclusive education in which all individuals feel welcomed, valued, and, above all, respected, and where issues such as school dropout, aggression, and discrimination are prevented, so all that is needed is to call that inclusive education is considered the fundamental pillar for combating social exclusion and discrimination (Cornellà, 2002).

Institutional policies and guidelines (Higher Education Institutions and the State) benefiting students with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities

Within the principle of university autonomy, higher education institutions must set objectives aimed at guaranteeing respect for the rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities (Yogyakarta Principles, 2007). This is in compliance with key international instruments on the protection of fundamental rights, such as the Convention against Discrimination in Education, the Yogyakarta Principles, and the Sustainable Development Goals, all of which prioritized the protection and defense of the rights of women, girls, and the population with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.

An example is provided by the Yogyakarta Principles, which, since their presentation to the Human Rights Council, have represented a significant advancement in the application of international human rights law regarding the recognition of sexual orientation and gender identity in human beings (Martínez, 2020).

(Izquierdo, 2020), offers a regional perspective in which individuals (LGBT+), as well as those with diverse and dissident sexual orientations and gender identities who construct their identity and gender expression outside the bounds of heteronormativity and the binary sex-gender system, have been subjected to systematic discrimination and violence. This situation has restricted or violated their rights, particularly the right to education, both in terms of access and through explicit and implicit discriminatory treatment.

Therefore, education, as a fundamental pillar for the construction of society, must be conceived under an inclusive model that respects and guarantees the fundamental rights of individuals with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. Consequently, higher education must focus on addressing and implementing policies and educational guidelines that include, among other things, routes for support and prevention for victims of gender-based violence.

In this regard, the (UFPS), as stated by the Vice-Rector for University Welfare, Luis Eduardo Trujillo Toscano, “aims to offer victims comprehensive care tailored to their specific needs, ensuring their protection and preventing revictimization, as well as actions aimed at guaranteeing justice, truth, full reparation, and ensuring non-repetition” (Universidad Francisco de Paula Santander, 2022, p. 4).

This commitment has been demonstrated by adopting the Framework Policy for Inclusive Education (PMEI) through CSU Agreement No. 066 of August 25, 2017, and the Institutional Zero Tolerance Policy for Gender-Based Violence, in accordance with CSU Agreement No. 070 of March 23, 2023, which aims to strengthen inclusive education within the institution. This includes providing quality, equitable, and relevant educational opportunities, as well as developing, implementing, maintaining, periodically reviewing, disseminating, and updating measures for the detection, prevention, care, and sanction of violence against women, violence directed at individuals with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities, and, in general, any form of gender-based violence within the

(UFPS) university community.

In the paper titled “LGBT+ Students and University Professors: Practices of Inclusion and Exclusion in Higher Education,” conducted by (Espinoza and Rodríguez, 2020), a comparative study is presented between Mexico and other countries around the world regarding the educational inclusion of sexually diverse populations. They explicitly state that:

“Across various parts of the world, particularly in Europe and the United States, sexual diversity is officially recognized, including among students. Consequently, demographic and statistical studies are conducted to quantify individuals who identify as (LGBT+). In some universities in these countries, initiatives and programs for inclusive education regarding sexual diversity are designed to enhance the teaching and learning processes for the (LGBT+) population, based on non-discrimination. These programs are regarded as an alternative to reduce and eliminate heteronormativity. In this context, the creation of an inclusive curriculum in terms of gender equity and sexual diversity, alongside the professional training and development of teachers in teaching strategies and support in this area, are essential elements.”

Under this framework, it is not enough merely to have support routes for sexually diverse populations; it is also crucial to construct an entire educational model based on inclusion, one that fosters the teaching and learning processes for the (OSIGD) population, and where the faculty is adequately trained to effectively address the goals of an inclusive education model, grounded in non-discrimination (Infante, 2010).

Conclusions

The consolidation and implementation of an inclusive education model must be a priority for the Colombian State for several reasons. This model significantly contributes to the comprehensive development of society and promotes the protection and guarantee of the fundamental rights of all individuals, particularly the (OSIGD) population. Inclusive education seeks to eliminate the barriers that hinder access to education for all individuals, regardless of their abilities, gender, race, ethnic origin, or any other characteristic. This promotes equity and social justice, ensuring that everyone has equal opportunities.

By fostering coexistence and interaction between students with different abilities and backgrounds, social skills such as empathy, tolerance, and respect are developed—skills that are essential for building cohesive societies that uphold fundamental rights. Inclusive education values the diversity of skills and talents, providing an environment that supports individual needs and maximizes each student’s potential. Recognizing that, in a globalized and diverse world, the ability to work with individuals from different backgrounds and abilities is crucial, inclusive education prepares students to face this diversity in the workplace and society. Furthermore, it is aligned with human rights principles, particularly the right to education, ensuring that all individuals have access to quality education.

Integrating all students into a common educational environment reduces stigmatization, exclusion, and discrimination, contributing to a more inclusive and respectful society, which, in turn, diminishes hatred and prejudice-motivated crimes. Inclusive education shapes committed and responsible citizens, capable of addressing social challenges from an equitable perspective.

Inclusive education contributes to the construction of social inclusion. Arnaiz (2004) argues that inclusive education is a fundamental tool for achieving social inclusion, an objective that governments should not overlook and to which they must allocate the necessary financial resources. Inclusion is not limited solely to the educational realm; its true meaning also encompasses social inclusion and participation in a competitive labor market, which is the ultimate goal of inclusion. Moreover, public policies must promote equal opportunities for all, regardless of their background or status. Collaboration between educational institutions and businesses can facilitate the transition to employment. Eventually, awareness and training on diversity are essential for building a fairer and more equitable society.

The implementation of an inclusive education model in Colombia is essential to uphold the principles of equity and equality, guarantee the protection of human rights for the (OSIGD) population, and contribute to the development of more just, cohesive societies that are prepared to face the challenges of the XXI century. Furthermore, it enables the visibility of the population and reduces discrimination within the classroom. A successful example of the application of inclusion models is evident in the research by Acosta Leal, Ponce Martínez, and González (Martínez, 2020), in which interviews were conducted to analyze students' (OSIGD) perceptions of inclusion in the classroom. The (OSIGD) students expressed that, for the most part, they feel discriminated against, described as "strange creatures," and that it takes time for them to adapt. Meanwhile, the teachers report not perceiving or feeling any form of discrimination towards the (OSIGD) population. It is evident that this result is one of the most repetitive findings when researching inclusion, and it highlights the starting point of listening to the stakeholders and establishing actions that are accepted, consensual, and proposed by all involved parties. On the other hand, if we analyze the implementation of Agreement No. 070 of 2023 at the Francisco de Paula Santander University, it represents a significant step towards the educational inclusion of the population with diverse sexual orientation and gender identity (OSIGD). However, the results indicate that, although there are policies and resources in place to protect and support this population, their visibility and effectiveness remain limited. Students report mixed experiences, with some feeling safe and supported, while others face discrimination and harassment. The lack of awareness about the policies and the insufficiency of specific resources are critical areas requiring attention. To achieve true inclusion, it is essential to strengthen the dissemination of policies, improve training and awareness across the entire university community, and ensure that resources and support are accessible and effective. Only in this way can an educational environment be created that not only tolerates but celebrates diversity, ensuring respect and equity for all students.

Education in universities must undergo a transformation, considering the explicit

power relations between faculty and students, faculty and administrators, and staff and administrators, as well as the characteristics attributed to universities by society as guardians of knowledge and spaces where wisdom is cultivated. These attributions have placed universities in a privileged position, placing high expectations upon them and presenting significant challenges in shaping future citizens. To sum up, it is essential that universities recognize and address these dynamics of power and social expectations in order to create an inclusive and equitable environment that fosters the comprehensive development of all its members, supported by tools such as robust and clear institutional policies that enable the proper management and implementation of inclusion processes.

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