

Dynamics of Reception, Appropriation, and Contextualization of the Approach of the *Index for Inclusion* in Municipal Schools in a District of the Metropolitan Region

Dinámicas de recepción, apropiación y contextualización del enfoque de la *Guía para la inclusión educativa* en escuelas municipales de una comuna de la Región Metropolitana

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Abstract

This article presents and analyzes the experience of a group of schools located in the District of Huechuraba in the reception, contextualization, and appropriation of the approach described in the third edition of the *Index for Inclusion* (Booth & Ainscow, 2012), drawing on processes related to the design of an inclusive development plan. Devised with input from the school community, this plan defines some strategies to overcome the barriers detected by the group. By way of qualitative analysis and case studies, this paper points to the factors that either support or hinder the proposed approach, and identifies five dimensions that proved to be key for the processes of appropriation and contextualization: *collaborative cultures, participatory action research, inclusive leadership, vision for comprehensive change, and counseling strategies*. The results presented here are based on an analysis of the phases related to exploring and setting priorities, and enable researchers to delve deeper into both the given and generated conditions necessary for inclusive school development in the context of municipal education, spurring reflection about the implementation of transformative strategies at the school level, inspired by participatory research processes.

Keywords: inclusive school development, appropriation, contextualization, index for inclusion

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Resumen

Este artículo recoge y analiza la experiencia de recepción, contextualización y apropiación, por parte de un conjunto de escuelas de la comuna de Huechuraba, del enfoque propuesto por la tercera edición de la *Guía para la inclusión educativa* (Booth y Ainscow, 2012), a partir de los procesos asociados al diseño de un plan de desarrollo inclusivo. Este plan define, mediante la participación de la propia comunidad escolar, estrategias para abordar las barreras detectadas por el colectivo. Se identifican, a través de un estudio de casos y una metodología cualitativa, aspectos favorecedores y obstaculizadores de dicha propuesta y su relación con cinco dimensiones que resultaron ser claves para el proceso de apropiación y contextualización: *culturas colaborativas, investigación-acción participativa, liderazgo inclusivo, visión de cambio integral y estrategias de asesoramiento*. Los resultados presentados corresponden a un análisis de las fases de exploración y determinación de prioridades, y permiten problematizar las condiciones dadas y generadas para los procesos de desarrollo escolar inclusivo en el contexto de la educación municipal, posibilitando reflexionar en torno a la implementación de estrategias transformadoras desde la escuela, inspiradas en procesos de investigación participativa.

Palabras clave: desarrollo escolar inclusivo, apropiación, contextualización, guía para la inclusión educativa

Bringing learning and participation to all implies a particular development of educational systems and the conditions to respond to diversity (Booth & Ainscow, 2012). It is not sufficient for our education systems and conditions to seek partial responses focused on groups of students at risk of exclusion. Indeed, according to Castel (2004), these partial responses operate as a «trap», particularly when the work is focused only on helping those excluded to evade preventive and systemic global policies intended to prevent situations of exclusion from being created.

It is likely that a limitation of debate about the meaning of even greater inclusion is based on the inability to recognize that current school policies are a clear reflection of the existing values in our society, and that barriers to inclusion are an integral part of the structures themselves, whether social, political, economic, or ideological (Booth, 2006; Sapon-Shevin, 2013). We cannot «change the schools» without observing the weaknesses of our policies or at least reviewing the values that inspire them, transcending the traditional structures of educational systems (Sapon-Shevin, 2013).

Booth and Ainscow (2012) consider that inclusive development involves bringing inclusive values into action; that is, putting them into practice in the educational community starting with reflective processes in which educational communities generate awareness about the need to change the organizational structures themselves, in terms of policies, cultures, and practices to address inclusive coexistence. In this sense, the aim is to establish proposals to coordinate the local and the global, favoring the necessary contextualization for the specific challenges of each community in this search for an education that reflects inclusive values and which responds to the sociocultural environment of the institution.

The search for an inclusive school development involves the search for educational institutions that are open, secure, respectful of differences, collaborative, and motivational, where every person feels valued and develops their full potential. The ambition or utopia on which this idea is based is for all people who form part of an educational community to have the power and the right to access and participate in the school curriculum and day-to-day coexistence in the school. This view, which can be attractive, often clashes with traditional schemes and structures that do not usually relate with the ideals of an education with democratic inspiration and that is open and inclusive.

Between 2014 and 2015 one of the districts of Santiago hosted an experience in the implementation of the third edition of the *Index for Inclusion* (Booth & Ainscow, 2012), within the context of a support program developed by the team at the Cognitive Development Center of Universidad Diego Portales, with the help of the Index For Inclusion Network (www.indexforinclusion.org).

This article will explore the different forms of appropriation that schools in the Huechuraba district have developed for the materials and devices proposed in the *Index for Inclusion*, detailing those that favor and hinder this process.

Conceptual framework

We have already said before that, at present, inclusion represents an aspiration towards which the efforts of various groups of people and organizations are oriented, such as national governments and states (Figueroa & Muñoz, 2014). In this regard, Chilean education policy has established views about inclusion based on a broad narrative, where the major reforms have been described as *inclusive*, this being understood to mean equal access and the end of copayment and profit in public education.

While these transformations take place in our education system, from a critical perspective the challenge involves favoring respect for diversity in a competitive and unequal educational context. This makes it necessary to have physical, psychological, social, and instrumental resources with a view to ensuring propitious conditions for the full participation of students in the decisions of the educational community.

According to García, Romero, Aguilar, Lomeli, and Rodríguez (2013), the concept of *educational inclusion* has a close relationship with that of *educational quality*, which is related to the defense and respect of human rights, given that this quality is available to the diverse student body, giving them all the same value, dignity, and rights.

Educational inclusion contains an educational and social meaning, while also rejecting that education systems only guarantee the education of children of a certain homogeneous nature. In this regard, the position on inclusion that inspired this paper is defined by Garcia et al. (2013) as «radical» or «critical» because it focuses on building a school culture that reduces barriers to the learning and participation of all students and the school community. This implies the generation of cultural changes that allow diversity to be seen as a resource, at the same time as encouraging the eradication of concepts that problematize the educational process based solely on the students, creating labeling. For this inclusive perspective, the school should focus on creating conditions to achieve the learning and participation of all students.

Inclusive school development

Along these lines, Booth, and Ainscow (2012) consider that inclusive development implies putting inclusive values into action, promoting reflective processes in which educational communities become aware of the need to modify their own structures, in terms of policies, cultures, and practices, to address the issue of inclusive coexistence.

According to Ossa, Castro, Castaneda, and Castro (2014), in order to change educational practices (and the traditional notion of the school), it is necessary to reorganize the meaning and intention of teaching and learning processes, which is essential for the agency of the educational unit itself. This is particularly important because if we follow the reasoning of Brígido (2006), the school operates on habits and attitudes consciously or spontaneously, but not explicitly. The act of addressing these educational structures consciously allows the «hidden curriculum» to be revealed: the undeclared educational purposes that result in the education we now see as a consequence of processes of traditional schooling based on standardization and homogenization. For this reason, in the proposal to promote transformations oriented towards inclusion, reflective spaces emerge as practice communities in terms of spaces that seek this conscious and continuous development based on a critical process that projects the day-to-day tasks of the school, and particularly its socializing and formative role, in keeping with the educational purposes or intentions that are the basis of inclusion.

Inclusive school development reflects the continuing challenge of reforming the school to make it accessible and habitable for the diverse range of people who form a community, under the force-idea of a «school for all» as aspiration and inspiration; this based on the development of innovations that are oriented towards integral education and which propose a basis for community participation at various levels. In this vein, the proposal that was implemented and studied involves the visualization of these processes drawn from self-assessment and collaborative design, which, using the open investigation and participation inspired by inclusive values, develops the capacities of the school to manage diversity.

In order to promote these changes, Ossa (2014) states that it is necessary to express a level of significant and participative «critical innovation» that overcomes instrumental rationalities and which requires

specific management tools, namely: (a) articulation of the educational project with inclusive purposes; (b) development of reflective-collaborative work to support teaching practices; (c) expansion of the notion of educational management, incorporating the dimension of innovation. These concepts reflect the need for these transformative processes to consider the dimension of empowerment in every one of the steps of inclusive change.

Inclusive school development emerges as part of a systemic relationship between transformations in the dimensions of cultures, policies, and practices at the school (Booth & Ainscow, 2012). This leads us to address these dimensions in an integrated, simultaneous, and coherent manner, guiding the fortification of inclusive attitudes and values throughout the school (Booth, 2006).

The index for educational inclusion

The *Index for Inclusion: Developing learning and participation in schools* (Booth & Ainscow, 2012) is a set of support materials for the integral self-assessment of a school. The text establishes the idea that both adults and children have detailed knowledge about the necessary improvements that should be made at their schools. In this process it is key to use concepts such as *barriers to learning and participation*, *resources to support learning and participation*, and *support for diversity*, as they allow open and shared exploration of this knowledge and the suggestion of ideas for future research on the school.

In the *Index*, inclusion is understood from the conception of the education development and society closely linked to the value of democratic participation. In this material, inclusion is related to providing coherence to the improvements performed at the school under a variety of labels (education in rights, coexistence, environmental education, etc.) for which they are oriented towards the promotion of learning and participation of all: children and their families, the staff, the management team, and other members of the community (Booth & Ainscow, 2012).

The Index offers support through a participatory and horizontal process unlike one based on supervision, competition, and fear of failure (Booth & Ainscow, 2012). The material facilitates the development opportunity for schools within a collaborative framework, according to their own principles. The process begins with self-examination of the school using indicators and questions that refer to the analytical dimensions of cultures, policies, and practices (Booth & Ainscow, 2012).

The *cultures* reflect the relationships, values, and deeply-rooted beliefs, the *policies* have to do with how the school is managed and the plans to change it, and the *practices* are based on what is taught and how is taught and learnt. Changing cultures is essential in order to sustain the development of the school. Every dimension is divided into two sections, namely:

- Cultures (building community and establishing inclusive values).
- Policies (developing a school for all and organizing support for diversity).
- Practices (building a curriculum for all and orchestrating learning).

The Index has been used as a resource to promote the inclusive schooling development and it has a long tradition in various countries and contexts (Farrell & Ainscow, 2002).

In 2005, a study was carried out in England (Booth & Rustemier, 2005) to analyze the use of the Index in schools and local education authorities (LEAs) in the country. Some of the most important conclusions of the study are:

- The Index can help schools to perform profound changes in their cultures, policies, and practices.
- Schools and authorities that have used it most extensively are those that have great achievements.
- It helps schools to have greater control over their own process of development.

Durán et al. (2005), in their review of using the first version of the Index in Spain, concluded that the change in the school based on the inclusive view is complex and unique, and that the material is «sensitive» because it generates debate easily as well as conflicts at times, which are overcome from the approach of the schools. The same study reveals the importance of the school making the materials «on its own» and not merely replicating an analytical model.

A study conducted in 2012 (EASPD, 2012), funded by the European Commission analyzes the use of the Index in 10 European countries (Hungary, the Netherlands, Finland, Germany, Belgium, Austria, Ireland, Portugal, France, and Slovenia). The conclusions of the study included the finding that the Index is known nationally in at least four countries and is used in schools and other educational organizations to promote and improve processes of educational inclusion. In this study the following conclusions were reached:

- Use of the materials allowed to establish an agenda and structure the debates at school, and they were also useful to discuss educational inclusion.
- The materials revealed how the processes of inclusion in schools are performed and helped the school to shape a clear and relevant vision of goals and objectives.
- The search for possibilities was promoted rather than merely reporting its absence.
- The materials helped in planning classes, allowing a positive emphasis to be placed on the possibility of learning from others.
- They were useful in identifying actions to be performed by different actors.
- The materials were not used as a whole, but in parts.
- They were useful to emphasize collaboration with other community bodies, with the positive involvement of parents being particularly noteworthy and encouraging.

As regards empirical experiences related to the implementation of the *Index for Inclusion*, Sales, Fernandez, and Moliner (2012) implemented an adaptation of this, reinforcing observational elements from Aguado's intercultural contexts in two schools in Spain. Both schools had different characteristics, in accordance with which they drew certain conclusions after comparing the two self-assessment processes. In the study the authors conclude that the need for inclusive change must come from the educational community itself, with the involvement of the management team being essential to the process of transformation. They also identified that the self-assessment phase should be directed and conducted by teachers. Basically, the educational community should decide when is the best time to begin a project of this scope.

Álvarez and Ligabue (2010), in Argentina, also documented an experience of use the Index materials, showing the relevance of adapting the materials to the context and the importance of developing the institution's «familiarity» with the Index. It is important to promote links of trust between members of the school community to address emerging issues without fear. Prioritization, agreement, establishing consensuses, and respecting different positions are measures that generate conflicts in educational institutions, and these must be recognized and addressed in a transparent and open manner.

The third edition of these materials is aimed at promoting respect for biodiversity and the planet, helping to encourage communication, non-violent relationships, the creation of participatory democracies and understanding of global citizenship (Booth, 2012). This new version, published in 2011, is significantly different from the previous versions as it incorporates an inclusive value framework and an alternative curriculum proposal, as the traditional curriculum is seen as being one of the main barriers to learning and participation (Booth, 2012). This edition was translated and adapted in Chile in 2012 (Booth & Ainscow, 2012; Figueroa & Muñoz, 2014), and an adapted version is now being worked on based on the dynamics of its implementation in contexts of municipal education.

Figueroa and Muñoz (2014) implemented the third version of Booth and Ainscow's *Index for Inclusion* in four schools in Santiago, Chile, being reported in one of them. This study described the various phases of self-assessment process by the educational community, and concludes how the Index helps make the school improvement plan more coherent, being a tool of mediation during the process of educational change. The authors also note how the Index promotes a space for discussion towards a critical and constructive view of education.

On the context of counseling

The district of Huechuraba is located in the North of Greater Santiago, in Chile's Metropolitan Region. It is a municipality with a heterogeneous socioeconomic stratification and with significant presence of an impoverished population, mainly served by municipal education provision.

The municipal education system in Huechuraba covers preschool, primary and secondary education. It has seven municipal schools (the oldest was founded in 1956) which, like the vast majority of municipal schools in the country, participate in the Preferential School Subsidy (SEP) program, which grants increased school subsidies for students who are from social vulnerable situations. The institution has to develop a plan for institutional improvement in the various areas of the quality management system (curriculum management, leadership, leadership, resource management, and coexistence). The focus of this program is mainly on improving the academic performance of students, as measured by standardized tests.

The counseling project is part of a broad spectrum of support coordinated by the Cognitive Development Center (CDC) of Universidad Diego Portales, which linked the use of the third edition of the Index (with support from the Index for Inclusion Network and Professor Tony Booth) with the development of innovations to promote inclusion based on *mediated learning experiences* in the classroom (Feuerstein, 1980). It should be underlined that the project responds to the guidelines of municipal educational policy, which is aimed at providing education that integrates cognitive and value-based considerations from a situated perspective that considers the components of identity that provide the social and cultural reality of the district, and redefines the orientations and styles of work to address teaching, a task that must be assumed by the whole educational community (Departamento de Educación de Huechuraba, 2013).

These guidelines are associated with various educational challenges that explicitly orient the educational management of the district. These challenges include strengthening participatory, democratic, and reflective public education; building educational communities that display the cultural identity of the environments in which they are immersed; and building inclusive communities that value diversity (Departamento de Educación de Huechuraba, 2013).

The counseling project performed included an initial training phase, conducted in the second term of 2014, which consisted of knowledge and exercising in the use of materials on the part of people who were on the team to coordinate the process in 2015. The second stage involved the formation of teams in March 2015, which consisted of inserting critical friends in schools. During this stage, a coordinating group was formed in each school, consisting of representatives of the entire community, responsible for planning and organizing the investigatory process with the Index. The third phase involved the process of self-examination and definition of priorities. After each coordinating team of the process was formed and its internal operations defined, based on the methods suggested by the Index, it designed a process of self-examination of school life to learn about the barriers and resources to promote the inclusion and subsequently to agree and implement a plan of inclusive development.

The process of counseling in the field was conducted by a CDC team, responsible for supporting schools during the development of this program. According to Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), the «critical friends» are agents that are actively involved and engaged in the process of change, providing new insights and ideas to contribute to the reflection of the coordination teams on their own educational practice. This feedback allows the appropriation of the Index materials to be displayed, as well as the reflexivity that emerges from this work.

It should be noted that participatory appropriation (Rogoff, 1997) regarding the meaning of the materials and contextualization of the proposal, was a horizon for this work. It is based on the idea that people change by experiencing participation, generating new patterns of understanding and action. Thus, the participation of the various coordination teams and groups involved leads to the development of a practical and reflective learning process that allows the principles and values of educational inclusion to be linked to the experiences of the institutions themselves. This is the foundation and the purpose of the process carried out: the verification of the possibility of change, based on dialogic action and direct participation in that process.

Methodological aspects

This research is a study of multiple cases, with a descriptive-interpretative scope and a qualitative methodological approach, understanding the strategy of case studies in its broadest sense, as an approach without contextual limits and in depth as a phenomenon from a naturalistic approach (Kazez, 2009; Stake, 2007).

The case studies correspond to seven municipal schools that participated in the counseling project for the formulation of inclusive development plans, which was an initiative undertaken by the Cognitive Development Center on behalf of the Municipality. For this report, the analysis unit was focused mainly on the school's coordinating team responsible for implementing the initiative (approximately seven members per school), which was formed (with some variations in practice) by representatives of the various actors of the school community (principals, teachers, education assistants, parents, and students), plus the critical friend or direct external advisor (three critical friends spread among the seven schools).

The study also considers the project's exploration stage and prioritization of barriers, which lasted approximately 12 months.

The methodological strategy was ethnographic and used documentary analysis. For the results presented here, the data were obtained through participant observation and field notes systematically recorded by the critical friends throughout the period studied of the counseling process, both in working sessions and on ad hoc visits. The analysis of the information was performed based on a content qualitative analysis of the field notes (91 field notes), which were oriented in accordance with criteria for collection of evidence and interpretative keys on the operation and problematization performed by the schools. The analysis was conducted on the basis of vertical and transversal categorization of and between cases regarding the articulation between the guiding concepts and emerging dimensions in the development of the project.

The results presented here respond to a first level of descriptive organization of these categories.

Results

The results shown below correspond to a descriptive analysis of the data produced during the counseling work with the schools. They are built around five key dimensions for inclusive development, for which dynamics were investigated that favor and/or hinder its contextualization and appropriation by schools. These dimensions are: (a) collaborative cultures; (b) participatory action research; (c) inclusive leadership; (d) integral change view; and (e) strategies of collaborative counseling. Each dimension is described below.

1. Collaborative cultures: This dimension corresponds to the purpose of the proposal to build and promote inclusive cultures that foster continuous collaboration between the different agents in the educational community. In relation to this, a set of characteristics was identified in the teams that was revealed to favor the process in some cases and hinder in others. In the first case, it was found that there was a feeling among the team of having a shared responsibility regarding school improvement and the existence of a prior history of collaboration. In particular, direct or indirect promotion of participation and open dialogue based on certain levels of trust proved to be significant, as well as the ability to admit dissent in the working sessions of the team regarding the course of the actions:

A small debate is generated when Pedro says that the problem is that the coexistence manual has not been disseminated, as María explains again that the problem is that it has not been built between everyone. Pedro seems to be more flexible, accepting that it should be built as a group, but then he adds that this construction with the community should begin from a predefined «basic minimum», stressing that what already exists should be considered (*«because there is already a basis»*), and that, in that discussion, the key figure is the general inspector. Ana confronts Pedro, telling him that proposing ideas does not mean imposing them, so as a team it should make proposals, but it should ultimately be decided with the community (Field Note 19, School 1).

The session takes place fluently, calmly. Everyone speaks. There is no reticence in the expression of opinions or attempts to assume greater prominence on the part of anyone. Everyone uses their style and accounts for their interest in the opinions emitted [...] There is a cordial and interesting space for participation, a friendly listening space (Field Note 7, School 4).

On the other hand, in terms of barriers to the development of collaborative cultures, in certain schools there is a tolerance of participation at the formal and specific level, a history of fragmentation and isolation of the practices, a culture centered on control and supervision and, in particular, avoidance and silencing of dissent, or the assumption of false consensuses. This latter characteristic can be seen in the following observation from the critical friend, which refers to how token participation of some bodies is presented in a work session, based on an apparent consensus dictated by the management:

I see that instead of openly confronting the threat, it has been decided to mount a representation to give visitors what they are looking for, to leave them in peace: so it seems like a participatory team, with the student, the assistant, the deputy inspector, even though they don't do or say anything, even if they have no idea what's going on (Field Note 7, School 2).

Disinformation was observed among students called, both in terms of the sense and actions of their participation in this space and certain language or terms used by adults (Field Note 8, School 4).

I noted again that Diego and Pedro felt that they had been questioned and their work attacked. They tried to leave certain barriers out of the discussion that still seem too threatening to them, and they hindered the work because their interventions meant think about issues that had already been discussed and hampering reflection (Field Note 15, School 1).

2. Participatory action research: The dimension of action research refers to the relevance shown by the processes of systematic investigation and reflection regarding the evidence, concerning self-assessment to remove barriers and the design of improvements to identify and plan actions, using the methods suggested in the *Index for Inclusion*. In this regard, the way of assuming the challenge of investigative and participatory nature of the planning methodology became a key factor, with some beneficial and disadvantageous aspects being identified.

Firstly, it was critical for teams to prioritize and ensure the existence of spaces and time for systematic joint reflection, albeit limited by institutional constraints. Recognition of the active participation of the community as an essential requirement was also important in the process of action research, and the initiative to expand the forms of consultation:

It's important, in any case, the willingness that the team shows to take other routes if the data produced by application of the questionnaire, without ignoring the opinions of other actors who will be consulted and who may wish to be involved in the topic, but are speaking from other logics, languages, or according to other meanings or orientations (Field Note 4, School 4).

Despite the fatigue, they all worked very well as a team and managed to construct objectives that gather and express the chosen priorities. They carried out the exercise to establish relationships between the barriers of each section, linking the dimensions together and reflecting on key concepts such as citizenship, democracy, and participation, creating a fluid and dynamic participation. I perceived that they were very interested, particularly Paulina, who seemed to be very involved in the topic and enriched the discussion (Field Note 18, School 1).

On the other hand, both the resistance in some management teams to review their own predefinitions and prioritizations in relation to the discordant evidence produced by the diagnosis and the predominance of closed data survey techniques (questionnaires) were seen as the main barriers for the appropriation of action research, especially in those schools where stakeholder participation was restricted and fragile. «The questionnaires have dominated the scene. It's all about applying them» (Field Note 7, School 2).

The initial difficulty was of particular significance, common to almost all schools, to problematize based on the prioritization and analysis of evidence to identify barriers, a situation in which the role of the critical friend was key in making progress:

I observe that Andrea feels proud of the contribution of her student, but the content of the interviews does not relate to the topic that brings us together: inclusion. Neither Andrea nor Julia are clear about it. I see something similar in the other team members. There is a mood to do things, but without the appropriation of the meaning and purpose of them (Field Note 8, School 3).

The discussion has no direction; protagonists do not seem concerned about giving it one. I hear questions asking for details or to clarify aspects that are not clear to me. I perceive that Juana, María, and Pablo are doing the work for the meeting to be held, but without the intention of this being articulated in a coherent work (Field Note 3, School 3).

3. Inclusive leadership: This dimension refers to a type of leadership that encourages team building and collective decision-making within the educational unit. Thus, an open, participatory, and distributed leadership is essential to guide inclusive development plans. Regarding this dimension, certain characteristics were identified in the managers that favored the process and elements of internal democracy, such as the presence of some level of trust and distribution of tasks, the dialogue, and collectivity in decision-making, and, in particular, delegation of tasks and promotion of emerging leadership in the teams:

I recognize a spirit and strategies in the principal to promote participation: asking questions, giving the floor to others, organizing the wording of the intervention. In this sense, she shows leadership in the meeting to mobilize it and summarize at the end. There is a general atmosphere of openness and expression in the meeting (Field Note 5, School 4).

Ana, who is one of the most active and involved person, both in terms of reflection and concrete actions, demonstrates a searching that represents involvement that goes beyond our meetings, which have required more time from her. It is not known whether this attitude of leadership and responsibility in this regard is innate, personally motivated, or if there will be an internal agreement for her to actively take more responsibility for this process; however, she is responsible and committed regardless (Field Note 7, School 1).

However, in this dimension there was a series of barriers regarding the form of exercising leadership (or absence of leadership in some cases) that hindered the process of working to prepare an inclusive development plan. These essentially refer to traditional styles of leadership of a more bureaucratic kind, characterized by strong authoritarianism and the need to establish control over all the work of the team, in order to avoid potential risks or threats to their management that could emerge from the process. In this regard, this tended to limit participation and centralize the final decisions, a situation that was accepted by the rest of the team or was opposed in any case where there was a lack of consistency perception with the inclusive approach of the work proposed.

David challenges the principal to indicate some initiatives that he has planned and carried out, but only commenting (in an isolated manner) that this ultimately creates reluctance, passiveness, and despair among teachers, who end up waiting for the leader to tell them what they should do (Field Note 14, School 1).

The group created by the principal without prior agreement or analysis is a surprise, where she includes many new people, who have been incorporated along with her administration, and people who formed part of the team that took part in the group working sessions who are absent for various personal reasons. A certain reticence is seen (in gestures and looks) regarding the inclusion of the school psychosocial duo (Field Note 6, School 7).

4. Integral change view: This dimension refers to the understanding of the school as a whole and not as institutional fragments, a characteristic that is essential in the process of inclusive development. The school is more than a specific pedagogical program focused on a certain type of student and, in this sense, one principle of the *Index for Inclusion* is to promote the possibility of producing programmatic synergies between different initiatives that coexist in the school and which share the same pedagogical principles. This orientation also revealed beneficial and hindering factors, as well as risks. Regarding benefits and hindrances, the main factor involved the difficulty perceived in some teams, and that was channeled from the proposal, to respond partially to the various demands made to the school, so articulation of the project was sought with similar or parallel previous initiatives (e.g. actions in leadership, coexistence, ecological projects), and specifically with institutional management instruments (Educational Improvement Plan [PME] and Institutional Education Project [PEI]).

At this meeting, particularly on the part of the principal, there is a strong intention to link the inclusion project to certain definitions of the school (PEI and PME in particular), showing that what is expected or suggested in these latter documents is based on, oriented to, and/or in relation to the inclusive approach (Field Note 8, School 4).

María tells me that working on inclusion and PEI together that day was something that Pablo had proposed in the team meeting this morning. I'm pleased that this idea of joining forces and tasks is already present at the school without having to implement it myself (Field Note 6, School 3).

Notwithstanding above, the lack of an integral view of development of the school is one of the difficulties to which the schools are strongly conditioned. The multiple demands of the political-administrative environment and the fragmentation of actions seems to be a system that is difficult to redirect. The need to respond to emergencies and the lack of conditions for collaboration shape characteristics that prevent the view of the school as a collection of isolated initiatives and programs from being overcome. In this regard, it was noteworthy that, in some cases, the proposal of self-exploration and articulation generated from the counseling could run the risk of being diluted under the pretext of creating synergies, in previous definitions arising from instances external to the school itself and which, for different reasons (time, difficulty in accepting the evidence not consistent with management predefinitions), were attempted to be imposed:

In the last meeting, held after an impasse between the team coordinators and the AC [Quality Agency], the team decided that the priorities of action would be related to the weaknesses identified by the Quality Agency. In methodological terms, and as was announced previously, rather than deal with the information that was gathered by the questionnaires, the school decided to limit the diagnosis and the priorities of action to the topic of healthy habits and eating. This decision did not consider the previous review of the remaining questionnaires on the argument that their results were in the same vein as the diagnosis of the Quality Agency (Page 8, Paragraph 40, Report 2, School 2, September, 2015).

This trend, although in few cases, was a problem that required a change in the strategy of support from the critical friend towards more direct questioning, which allowed it to be reversed to a certain extent.

5. Strategies of collaborative counseling: This dimension refers to collaborative counseling strategies aimed at enhancing and developing reflective autonomy in the teams, and which became an important dimension for the process. The support method faced opposition at the beginning in certain aspects of the school culture, but managed to gain validity thanks to the role of the critical friend, which evolved positively during the process. Among the beneficial factors, the role of the critical friend is highlighted as an irritant agent and reflective facilitator, contributing to validate the opinions of all actors, while introducing distance and suspicion regarding the relevance and legitimacy of certain decisions, promoting constant connection of actions with the inclusive values. The critical friend was also key in promoting reflection based on the evidence collected, «This was the meeting at which the role of the critical friend as a more distant observer was fulfilled; the conversation and the process advanced by themselves, freely but purposefully» (Field Note 13, School 7).

I highlight the centrality of participation, the importance that the work in 2015 on the inclusion project should be an initiative that makes sense for the school team; that issues are addressed that are problematized by all actors; that it is a project that is convergent with existing school initiatives; that it allow a view of the initiatives that the school is planning from the perspective of inclusion; that it be understood that the guide is more a framework for conversation and reflection than a set of steps or procedures in order to become an inclusive school (Field Note 7, School 4).

Nevertheless, the intervention strategy was not exempt from obstacles, such as, for example, the need to renegotiate the role of the critical friend between being a more directive participant and a participating observer.

Insofar as we see each other (with the team) and my intervention acts as a stimulus, the team focuses on the project. When the stimulus is not directly present, the team disperses and dissociates itself from the work [...] The lack of autonomy of the team regarding the AC [Quality Agency] is another unavoidable realization [...] (Field Note 8, School 3).

From Paola's answer, «I haven't done the work», I can corroborate that she always acted based on a need to comply. On the other hand, I presume that despite the good relationship that has been established between us, there is the deceptive idea that I somehow supervise the work of the school (Field Note 8, School 5).

Final discussion

Generally speaking, it should be noted that processes investigated and the dimensions that we have described are closely linked to the sense of inclusive school development and the materials of the *Index*, shaping principles that are at the basis of the proposal implemented.

In the results presented, the dimensions show various levels of development in every school; however, they are formed as interdependent processes and could contribute to the realization of the proposal accomplished. Regarding schools, the strategy considered was to promote strengths in one of these dimensions to remediate weaknesses shown in others. For example, in some cases where barriers to the emergence of inclusive leadership were identified, previous stories related to collaboration and collegiality in decision-making could be used as a pivot that allowed connection with the principles of participation and democracy and, thus, overcome the specific obstacles related to the management style in the school.

One of the most important achievements of this experience is related to the creation of spaces for shared dialogue and reflection, which are very lacking in the daily activities of schools, particularly in relation to the time that teachers have available for this task. It is impossible to consider that a school develops inclusively without having spaces for dialogue. These spaces favor participatory appropriation (Rogoff, 1997), in the sense that they transform the process and product, since, when thinking of an inclusive school, the sociocultural learning of respect for difference is promoted.

The act of legitimizing and validating others within educational communities emerges as one of the major processes necessary to favor these experiences of democratic and horizontal learning. In these interactions, where the views of all community members are considered, knowledge can be generated at the same times as promoting development of a value framework built by the communities. In this way, we create inclusive school cultures.

The design of inclusive development plans implies the validation of different types of educational planning that went beyond the typical contingent response to the demands of the central administration, oriented by standards of performance. Educational communities had the opportunity to observe, think, and criticize through an interaction that sought to achieve the desire to build transformative proposals on the basis of their own pedagogical views.

Contextualization of materials created a connection and link between the values implied in this process and the dynamics of school change. Generally, one of the main results was related to viewing the school as a consistent unit in itself, with different actors and opinions, but with desires to build and resolve its own pedagogical agenda.

The processes of articulation with current educational policy were key to strengthening the apparent fragility of these countercultural acts and criticisms of the current curriculum hegemony. It is important to anchor these school reforms in the value foundations of a strong and shared institutional educational project. It is essential being able to connect with a critical and autonomous view of the school in its context.

In order to promote the appropriation of the underlying meanings in the inclusive proposal, the necessary conditions for schools to form communities with reflective practices should be addressed. New opportunities should be projected within the school routines that guide open conversations and which favor collaboration in schools and foster cultures that allow the practice itself to be question and problematized, in a context where this is transformational and countercultural in itself.

Regarding these processes, it is important to note that the possibilities of materials such as the *Index for Inclusion* are restricted if the dimensions that we have mentioned are not addressed, namely, certain relative conditions that are apparently superficial, such as the working time allocated to the coordination teams (granted and managed), and other more substantive conditions, like the necessary management to lead these initiatives and institutional support from the central government to articulate and promote such critical innovations (Ossa, 2014). As Figueroa and Muñoz (2014) note, the *Index* is a flexible material and is adaptable to the contexts; however, its benefits will be limited if the school and its team do not explore or study the structure of the materials.

Moreover, as regards learning this process, the importance of generating training processes involving the meaning and relevance of the processes of participatory action research should be considered as a basis for the very agency and improvement of schools (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). In this sense, it becomes necessary to develop educational proposals that promote «addressing paradigmatic disputes, in terms of underlying educational rationales of the educational act, through dialogue and acceptance of others» (Figueroa & Gómez, 2015, p. 40). A good option for development could be provided by training local critical friends, reflective facilitators, co-investigators of the local transformative action that allow collaboration between schools to be feasible, as opposed to the tendency towards competitiveness that comes from the battle to obtain the best academic results or obtain more enrolment for the school.

We believe that the conditions of current national education policy, also called *inclusive*, should promote these types of initiatives, which, at their core, respond to the desire to articulate and make coherent an integral and developing educational proposal. The case studied makes clear the feasibility of designing itineraries that allow proposals to be accepted and validated which depart from the traditional «fulfill the current educational policy» and which permit the specific design of local policies that are contextualized and relevant to the needs visualized by the various collectives that form part of the educational community. In this case, it is important to foster overviews of the purposes of education and the critical relationship between the ethical-political foundations of the proposals generated. In the schools investigated, at least, there are already proposals to address these objectives.

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