

**INTERCULTURAL AND INCLUSIVE
EDUCATION IN LATIN AMERICA**

INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON INCLUSIVE
EDUCATION VOLUME 24

**INTERCULTURAL AND
INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN
LATIN AMERICA:
TRAJECTORIES,
PERSPECTIVES AND
CHALLENGES**

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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SERIES EDITOR PREFACE

The adoption internationally of inclusive practice as the most equitable and all-encompassing approach to education and its relation to compliance with various international Declarations and Conventions underpins the importance of this series for people working at all levels of education and schooling in both developed and less developed countries. There is little doubt that inclusive education is complex and diverse and that there are enormous disparities in understanding and application at both inter- and intra-country levels. A broad perspective on inclusive education throughout this series is taken, encompassing a wide range of contemporary viewpoints, ideas and research for enabling the development of more inclusive schools, education systems and communities.

Volumes in this series on *International Perspectives on Inclusive Education* contribute to the academic and professional discourse by providing a collection of philosophies and practices that can be reviewed by considering local, contextual and cultural situations to assist governments, educators, peripatetic staffs and other professionals to provide the best education for all children. Each volume in the series focuses on a key aspect of inclusive education and provides critical chapters by contributing leaders in the field who discuss theoretical positions, quality research and impacts on school and classroom practice. Different volumes address issues relating to the diversity of student need within heterogeneous classrooms and the preparation of teachers and other staffs to work in inclusive schools. Systemic changes and practice in schools encompass a wide perspective of learners to provide ideas on reframing education to ensure that it is inclusive of all. Evidence-based research practices underpin a plethora of suggestions for decision-makers and practitioners, incorporating current ways of thinking about and implementing inclusive education.

While many barriers have been identified that may potentially constrain the implementation of effective inclusive practices, this series aims to identify such key concerns and offer practical and best practice approaches to overcoming them. Adopting a thematic approach for each volume, readers will be able to quickly locate a collection of research and practice related to a topic of interest. By transforming schools into inclusive communities of practice all children can have the opportunity to access and participate in quality and equitable education to enable them to obtain the skills to become contributory global citizens. This series, therefore, is highly recommended to support education decision-makers, practitioners, researchers and academics, who have a professional interest in the inclusion of children and youth who are potentially marginalising in inclusive schools and classrooms.

Volume 24 in the *International Perspectives on Inclusive Education* series offers a unique opportunity to explore different aspects of intercultural inclusive education, specifically within the Latin America region. This is the first book in the IPIE series to focus on one region and in addition, to publish the book both in English and in Spanish. This convergence of perspectives provides an exclusive chance to delve in greater depth across the Latin America region. Being bilingual, it also gives access to this information in the local language, thus allowing a greater number of people to benefit from the shared research and perspectives about inclusion across eight countries.

The collection of distinguished authors has presented detailed information on their countries' context and status regarding implementing inclusive educational practices. These highlight the enormous variety in how inclusion is enacted within the region and some of the distinctive issues and challenges that they face. While all countries are aiming for equity in education, the additional challenges encountered by indigenous populations, large numbers of immigrants, those living in rural areas, culturally diverse families and those who experience disadvantage results in different opportunities for establishing effective inclusive schools. Many countries are aiming to better include families in partnership in education decision-making, to support more inclusive communities. Teacher training is also considered critical as a mediator of change towards inclusion across all jurisdictions, with an emphasis on ensuring teachers have the necessary knowledge and skills to translate policy into practice.

Advances in education and the use of technology are evidenced across all regions. The authors report that many countries have implemented inclusive legislation or policy, but that competences to promote and implement effective inclusive practices are still underdeveloped. The authors all provide a realistic critique of how their countries have sought to adopt a more inclusive approach, often within difficult political changes, with many providing effective examples of how this is occurring. Although these positive outcomes allow for other countries to reflect on whether these findings can help them to better facilitate inclusion in their own region, examples of highly effective practices are still seen to be in the minority.

Though this book focuses on a specific region, there are few similarities in how individual countries are working towards implementing inclusion in practice. Education across the region is highly complex, very diverse and manifold. What each country has in common though, is a clear understanding of what needs to be done with a strong focus on equity. To do this the challenges vary both across and within nations, but by providing examples of how each country is meeting some of these challenges enables the astute reader to gain insights into practices that may be appropriate for responding to some of their own challenges.

I strongly recommend Volume 24 in the *International Perspectives on Inclusive Education* series as essential reading for anyone interested in reflecting upon how the unique regions across Latin America are moving towards establishing sustainable inclusive educational practices. The editors are to be commended on being able to bring together such an eclectic group of authors able to provide detailed and considerate information about such diverse countries; and the

chapter authors on their sincerity in reporting practices that aim to enhance an equitable educational approach for all. So many pertinent issues are raised and treated with genuineness, thoughtfulness and integrity. This gives readers a range of perspectives to utilise to reflect upon their own regions, with a critical review of how these ideas may help them in their own goals to achieve effective, equitable and sustainable intercultural inclusive educational practices.

Chris Forlin
Series Editor

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PREFACE

In the panorama of inclusion and interculturality in 21st century Latin America, political, economic, social and epistemological tensions and conditions converge and interact at different levels and in different educational spaces in complex ways. The study of these manifestations is the subject of this volume in which renowned researchers participate to offer an overview of these processes – inclusion and interculturality – necessarily imbricated in education with a human rights perspective in the Latin American region.

This book is composed of 15 chapters written by 30 authors, who present different facets of inclusive education and intercultural education in Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru.

The first chapter is an initial approach offered by two of the editors, Silvia Romero-Contreras and Ismael García-Cedillo, regarding the current contexts and determinants of inclusive and intercultural education in Latin America. Next, regarding inclusive education, issues related to its implementation at the basic and higher education levels and teacher education and training for inclusion are addressed; the relationship between families and schools is also analysed from the perspective of inclusion and the role of explanation in science education in promoting equity. In relation to intercultural education, the evolution of interculturality in Brazil, Mexico, Chile, Peru and Ecuador is presented. In addition, the implementation of the rural education model with *escuela nueva* in Colombia and the study of lessons through learning communities in rural Mexico are discussed. The final chapter is on the promotion of epistemic justice and intercultural learning communities.

In relation to the chapters related to inclusive education, Ernesto Treviño Villarreal and Eugenia Victoriano Villouta analyse educational opportunities at higher education level for students with special educational needs associated with disabilities in Chile. Through the educational trajectories in higher education of students with disabilities, they report on the barriers they face in transition (low expectations and insufficient guidance in their entry process), access (they are not selected through an exam, like other applicants) and permanence (they face physical, social and academic barriers).

Dianne Chambers and Rodrigo Hübner Mendes analyse the situation of persons with disabilities and the inclusive education process in Brazil. They highlight advances in legislation to promote inclusion. The authors analyse the progress and challenges facing inclusive education in the country, particularly in relation to students with disabilities and the provision of technological support.

Paula Tapia Silva, Patricia Soto de la Cruz and Yarela Muñoz López describe the experience of the ANADIME-CEA Educational Centre, located in a

disadvantaged neighbourhood of Santiago, Chile, which aimed to provide quality learning spaces for all its students. It was ensured that 12% of its enrolment was made up of students with disabilities, although the space was also opened to immigrant students and students from different sociocultural backgrounds, and a transdisciplinary work team was formed. The community participated very actively.

Chris Forlin, Luis Adolfo Machicado Pizarro and Gisselle Gallego describe how, despite advances in education in Bolivia, persons with disabilities face many challenges. Five-year-old children with disabilities start school in regular schools, but without accessibility and inclusion-oriented training for their teachers, who lack the fundamentals to implement inclusive education.

Gloria Calvo reports how, despite the fact that inclusive education has a solid legal basis in Colombia, teacher training needs to be improved, because although topics related to diversity and inclusion are reviewed, competencies to promote inclusive education are not developed. However, she documents several valuable experiences in her chapter: the experience of a teacher training school (*Escuela Normal*) where, among others, Braille and sign language strategies to manage indiscipline and pedagogy for peace are taught; a school that seeks to recover students who have dropped out of school and; a higher level pedagogical proposal that addresses initial teacher training with an innovative perspective and high social commitment.

Also, in the context of teacher training, Lady Meléndez Rodríguez, Rocio Deliyore Vega and Mario Segura Castillo describe successful experiences of teacher training for inclusion in Costa Rica. They identify the features of an inclusive school and its curricular dimension, and describe research conducted by the National Observatory for Inclusive Education to identify good practices in training for implementing inclusive education.

Cristina Perales Franco presents research on the role of families in the inclusion of their children in Mexico. She analyses the school–family relationship under an inclusion approach, i.e. the possibilities and barriers for the participation of all families. She reviews the three main practices linking school and families: firstly related to participation in parents' associations; secondly related to cultures, for example in the construction of gender roles; and thirdly related to families' contributions: economic and cooperative through manual work or food preparation.

Valeria M. Cabello and David Geelan report a study in which they analyse the ways in which science is taught, particularly in relation to the explanations of teachers in Australia, Canada and Chile. The explanations offered in class can be emancipatory when they are done as intentional teaching, which requires a deep knowledge of the students and not just a focus on correct answers. They found that there is a relationship between the type of explanations and socio-economic status.

In relation to intercultural education, the chapter by Stefano Claudio Sartorello and Alexandre Ferraz Herbetta provides the context in which intercultural education has evolved in Mexico and Brazil. They consider the substitution of the paradigm of critical interculturalism for that of inclusive education to be harmful for

the indigenous population, given the deficient nature of the population served by the latter. They consider that it remains to be seen whether recent political changes in these countries will lead to the development of intercultural and inclusive policies that are also critical and decolonial.

Laura Alicia Valdiviezo, Rukmini Becerra Lubies and Dayna Andrea Moya Sepulveda point out that the Peruvian state has dismantled intercultural bilingual education and describe how the Chilean state has failed to implement the legislative framework that protects the rights of minority groups. In their work, they address the experience of the Quechua and Mapuche populations.

Pilar Samaniego-Santillán, Verónica Gabriela Maldonado-Garcés and Mónica Delgado-Quilismal mention that, especially in higher education, there is still a long way to go to achieve the goals set years ago, as Indigenous and Afro-descendant populations show interrupted educational trajectories and much higher poverty rates than the general population.

Diego Juárez Bolaños analyses rural higher education in Colombia. He specifically describes the experience of implementing the Rural Education Model with Escuela Nueva in Caldas, Colombia, through the testimonies of graduates of the Universidad en el Campo; given the good results, he points out some recommendations for replicating the experience in other regions.

Luz María Moreno-Medrano, co-editor of this volume, points out, based on the framework of critical interculturality, that teachers must know their students in depth, so that they can perceive the dynamics of exclusion produced by differences of class, ethnicity, gender and disability in order to offer them a relevant education. In order to make these differences visible and overcome them, she proposes lesson study, a pedagogical approach that allows teaching collectives to reflect on how they learn, how to improve the classroom climate and how to promote collaborative learning not only among students, but also among teachers themselves, and presents an experience in which the proposal to create schools as learning communities is successfully implemented in a rural teacher training college on the southern border of Mexico.

For Sylvia Schmelkes del Valle, one of the strands of interculturality proposes that inclusive education should include minorities through an environment free of discrimination and prejudice and offer culturally and linguistically relevant educational content. She advocates for an education for indigenous peoples characterised by epistemic justice, i.e. that their knowledge and ways of constructing it should be given on an equal footing with Western knowledge and the scientific way of producing it, in order to achieve a more complete understanding of the world. She analyses some contributions of indigenous knowledge: the relationship with nature and the understanding of the cosmos, the conception of community, governance and the style of democracy, the containment of inequality and the conceptions of educating and learning.

Education in Latin America has made substantial progress, but major challenges remain related to inequality, poverty and, in some cases, the unwillingness of some governments to address and overcome them. The implementation of intercultural and inclusive education will allow the education offered to all students to be of progressively higher quality. When 'all' is mentioned, it means that

the personal, social, family and school conditions in which children live should not be used as an excuse to avoid offering them a quality education, as this is precisely what they need most to transcend these conditions. For indigenous children, moreover, an intercultural and critical education is required.

As can be seen, the contributions presented in this book reflect a multifaceted picture of inclusive education and critical interculturality in Latin America. In all the texts, the difficulties of Latin American students are made visible and successful experiences or strategies for overcoming difficulties are outlined.

We are grateful for the enthusiastic and generous collaboration of all the authors. We believe that reading these works will bring about changes that will benefit the people of the region, particularly those living in vulnerable conditions.

Silvia Romero-Contreras
Ismael García-Cedillo
Luz María Moreno-Medrano
Mexico, 2024

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All chapters in the text have been peer reviewed by two academics or practitioners in the field of intercultural and inclusive education. The reviewers formed the editorial board of this text.

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