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## EQUITABLE POLICIES AND THE REALITY OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

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**Abstract:** The article presents a historical and bibliographical survey of the concept of disability, as well as the normative frameworks that make up its trajectory, evolution, reflection, scenarios and challenges, with a focus on enrollment data for people with disabilities in Brazil from 2002 to 2021. This is an exploratory study, based on a documentary survey of secondary data from the Higher Education Census, produced by the Anísio Teixeira National Institute for Educational Studies and Research, within the context of inclusive education, and using the Inclusive Education Extension Project as a case study: *modos de fazer* (ways of doing things), which operates in the continuing training of elementary school teachers (early years) who assist students with disabilities, in the process of school inclusion, focusing on the learning processes of these students in regular education and their intrinsic relationship within the scope of social quality. The analysis carried out showed that the inclusion process, although quite advanced, still does not encompass the perspective of the social quality of inclusion.

**Keywords:** Disability; Disabled people; Inclusive education; Continuing education.

## INTRODUCTION

Currently, in the light of inclusion, people with disabilities face various barriers to inclusion in society. Despite the existence of international treaties, laws and public policies that ensure the inclusion of these individuals on equal terms, it can be seen that this population has been excluded for a long time - through prejudice, disrespect and ruthless actions or through acts that disregard their peculiarities. The situation becomes more serious when health or education professionals encourage a tendency to limit disabilities, instead of providing guidance on how to overcome difficulties. It is up to them to enlighten family members about all the possibilities

and nuances involved in the inclusive process, considering the individual as a whole and understanding that they are not defined by their disability or disorder.

By recognizing the barriers faced by this population, we highlight the need to confront discriminatory practices and implement measures to change this reality, following the premise that people with disabilities must have their specific needs met. This is where inclusive education comes in, as it plays a central role in confronting the logic of exclusion.

Furthermore, the study aims to demonstrate that the concept of disability and the laws that govern it, despite having undergone significant evolution and being important in the inclusive process, still do not guarantee full access for this population in society, as there are still limitations in understanding the real abilities of these people. This limitation is reflected in the way school inclusion is still carried out in practice, without the vision that, like any other subject, people with disabilities should be treated/guided/taught considering their peculiarities, their way of being in the world.

## METHODOLOGY

This research is divided into three parts: (i) a historical-bibliographical review of the concept of disability and the normative frameworks that make up its trajectory, as well as the reflection of these conceptions in the reception and education of these subjects; (ii) a survey of current data on the enrollment of people with disabilities in basic education, from 2002 to 2021, in order to demonstrate the scope of inclusion policies and (iii) an analysis of the extension project *Inclusive Education: ways of doing!* aimed at continuing training for elementary school teachers and assisting students with disabilities in the process of school inclusion in regular education, focusing on their learning processes and

their impact on social quality of inclusion.

This is an exploratory study, which aims, based on the relationship between the three topics mentioned above (theory, results of legal application and practice), to demystify the conception, still widespread informally, that the limitations presented by these subjects - physical or intellectual - prevent them from developing, including issues related to the disability itself. This belief prevents them from being treated as effective citizens, with autonomy and the possibility of participating in society in their own way.

### **A BRIEF HISTORY AND THE MAIN NORMATIVE MILESTONES IN THE HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF THE CONCEPT OF DISABILITY**

When dealing with the history of the concept of disability, its normative milestones and evolution, it is relevant to address the state actions that have marked this trajectory - public policies, whose concept is in line with what (Mastrodi; Ifanger, 2019, p. 10) argues 10): public policies are government actions carried out not in order to guarantee a certain right - although they do so indirectly - but in accordance with the state's objectives and purposes, i.e. the creation of a public policy depends primarily on a state need, and "to the extent that there is economic and social development, an environment for promoting rights is created".

The definition provides an essential factor for understanding the history of the education of people with disabilities, since government actions relating to special education were strengthened by international movements, associations and groups of parents of people with disabilities who began to demand these actions as a right, fomenting the need to create institutions that catered for these people, such as the school for the blind and deaf and the movement for the disabled .

At the time of the Empire, marked by a rural and unschooled society, there was a profound silence about the disabled, anonymously hiding those who were most different or whose presence was most disturbing. Later on, when elementary school organization gained momentum, but always in the background, the first initiatives were taken to organize schools for the disabled.

As with education in general, the close relationship between the education of the disabled and society's mode of reproduction became clear. As long as it was possible and convenient, the disabled were segregated from society, while later, according to Jannuzzi (2004, p. 53 apud Crochík and Sass, 2011), "the case for educating the abnormal was made on the grounds of saving public coffers and private pockets, as this would avoid mental institutions, asylums and penitentiaries", by incorporating these people into the workplace.

The emergence of Special Education began in Europe and the USA in the 18th century, with the creation of institutes to cater for deaf and blind children who, due to these abnormalities, were unable to benefit from regular education processes (Mazzota, 1996). In Brazil, this happened in the middle of the 19th century, when the Imperial Institutes for Blind Children were set up in 1854 ; the Institute for the Deaf and Dumb in 1857 , the Juliano Moreira Hospital in Bahia in 1874, beginning medical care for individuals with intellectual disabilities (Capellini and Rodrigues, 2014), and the Asilo dos Inválidos da Pátria in 1887 , in Rio de Janeiro.

With the Constitution of 1891, federalism was established and responsibilities for educational policy were defined for the states and municipalities, from primary to vocational education, and for secondary and higher education for the Union (Mendes, 2010). During the first two decades of the 20th century, the country went through a phase of structuring

the Republic and a series of political and social transformations that resulted in changes to the education landscape.

After the First World War (1914-1918), with the industrial upsurge, there was a trend towards the nationalization of the economy, and the demand for skilled labour emerged (Mendes, 2010). These factors were, in part, responsible for the reforms in the educational systems, under the ideology of the new school movement, whose principles were based on economic development. This movement made it possible to unite psychology and education, leading to the widespread use of intelligence tests to identify the intellectually disabled during this period.

Another milestone in special education was the creation of the first school of the Association of Parents and Friends of the Exceptional (APAE) in Rio de Janeiro in 1954. In relation to state actions, in 1958, the Ministry of Education began to provide technical and financial assistance to education departments and specialized institutions, launching national campaigns for the education of people with disabilities, such as: the National Campaign for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Visually Impaired (CNERDV), in 1958, and the National Campaign for the Education of the Mentally Handicapped (Cademe), in 1960 (Mazzota, 1996 apud Capellini and Rodrigues, 2014; Mendes, 2010).

In 1961, the Law of Guidelines and Bases showed concern about how people with disabilities were called and officially inaugurated the expression education of the exceptional (Brazil, 1961), which explained the Brazilian government's commitment to special education.

According to Bernardes (2012), from the 1960s onwards, there was a growing politicization of the issue of disability, which resulted in greater visibility and importance of the issue for political agents and society in general. Several countries created anti-discri-

mination measures to ensure equal rights for people in this condition. During this period, the understanding of what disability is and its impacts was the subject of reflection. The dominant conception defined it as the result of some physical or mental impediment, present in the body or mind of certain people. According to this view, "disability should be treated and corrected, and the person should receive some kind of intervention from professionals to solve the problem, and thus adapt to the way society is built and organized" (Bernardes, 2012, p. 16). Despite the advance in the conception of disability for these parameters, the thinking did not perceive the disabled as citizens, but as individuals on the margins of society.

Law No. 5,692, of August 11, 1971, article 9, defined the special education clientele as students with physical or mental disabilities, those who were considerably behind the regular enrollment age, as well as the gifted (Brazil, 1971), promoting special education. On July 3, 1973, the Ministry of Education's National Center for Special Education (Cenesp) was created, the first federal government educational body responsible for defining this policy. In 1985, the Center "was elevated to the status of Special Education Secretariat and a national committee was set up to draw up a joint action policy to improve special education and integrate people with disabilities, conduct problems and gifted people into society" (Mendes, 2010, p. 101). The following year, the nomenclature changed from exceptional pupils to pupils with special educational needs.

The democratic bias brought about by the 1988 Constitution reached people with disabilities by ensuring that their education would take place in the regular school system and the right to specialized educational care. We can see the legislator's concern to see people with disabilities as subjects of rights, in the

same way as other citizens. Bernardes (2012, p. 16) points to a change in the concept of disability, which has come to be understood “as a product of the physical, organizational and attitudinal barriers present in society, and not the individual fault of the person with the disability”, generating profound changes in the structuring of public policies for this public, as disability has come to be seen as one more of the human characteristics.

In 1990, the World Declaration on Education for All was drawn up, the socio-political premise of which was the democratization of education. In 1994, the Salamanca Conference took place in Spain, which resulted in the drafting of the Salamanca Declaration. In it, the right of all people to education was affirmed in accordance with the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the commitment of the world community to guaranteeing this right to all, regardless of their differences. It presents concepts that have been sequentially incorporated into the documents and policies implemented in the country. The text states that difference is inherent to humanity and that it cannot therefore be a factor in discrimination. Among the points proclaimed is that: “[...] those with special educational needs must have access to mainstream schools, which must accommodate them within a child-centered pedagogy and be able to meet those needs” (Salamanca Declaration, 1994, n.p.).

In the same year, the National Policy on Special Education was published, guiding the process of instructional integration that conditions access to ordinary classes in regular education to those who “[...] are able to follow and develop the curricular activities programmed in ordinary education, at the same pace as the so-called normal students” (Brazil, 1994). It emphasized the inclusion of students with special educational needs in ordinary classes, aiming to abolish segregationist practices.

The current National Education Guidelines and Bases Law of 1996, article 59, states that education systems must ensure that students are provided with specific curricula, methods, resources and organization to meet their needs; it ensures specific terminality for those who have not reached the level required for completion of primary education due to their disabilities and guarantees the acceleration of studies for the gifted in order to complete the school program (Brasil, 1996). It can be seen that the legislator's desire is not just for access, as in the National Special Education Policy, but also for permanence and completion, which is now a guarantee.

In 2001, the National Education Plan (PNE) emphasized the need to produce means in schools that guarantee that everyone is welcome, without distinction: “the great advance that the decade of education should produce would be the construction of an inclusive school that guarantees that human diversity is catered for” (Brasil, 2001). The plan establishes objectives and targets for the education of people with special educational needs.

In 2003, the Ministry of Education (MEC) implemented the program Inclusive Education: the right to diversity, with a view to supporting the transformation of school systems into inclusive educational systems, promoting a broad process of training managers and educators in Brazilian municipalities to guarantee the right of access for all to schooling, the provision of specialized educational assistance (AEE) and ensuring accessibility (Brasil, 2003). The students, who were already legally included in regular education, would need changes to their structures and the strengthening of the workforce that would support them in schools.

As a follow-up, the 2007 Education Development Plan (PDE) aimed to train teachers for special education, implement multifunctional resource rooms and make school build-



dings architecturally accessible (Brasil, 2007). The Program for the Implementation of Multifunctional Resource Rooms was launched by Notice No. 01 of April 26, 2007.

In 2008, the National Policy on Special Education from the Perspective of Inclusive Education was approved. In 2009, Brazil enacted Decree No. 6,949, the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The formulation of public policies aimed at guaranteeing the fundamental rights of people with disabilities has been incorporated into the political agenda in general. Thus, access to goods and services for all, with equal opportunities, became a demand for political agents (Bernardes, 2012). In 2010, Law No. 12.190 instituted the granting of compensation for moral damage to people with physical disabilities resulting from the use of thalidomide. And the Continuous Cash Benefit, defined by Law No. 8,742, of December 7, 1993, was amended by Law No. 12,470 in 2011, allowing the continued payment of the benefit suspended by entering the labor market, if the employment relationship were to be terminated.

In 2011, the Accessible School program was created to promote the accessibility and inclusion of students with disabilities, global development disorders and high abilities, ensuring their right to share common learning spaces, through accessibility to the physical environment, teaching and learning resources and communications and information (Brasil, 2014).

According to Andrade (2016), disability has shifted from a matrix of interpretation based on normality to a matrix in which social inclusion gains status as the dominant discourse and interpretation, in which actions and the resulting intentions are to change society so that it is accessible to all. A new model for interpreting disabilities is being created, which loses its character as an individual attribute and becomes a phenomenon that reshapes social actions, seeking to adjust the environment to the nature of these people.

Currently, there are public policies that guarantee access for people with disabilities to the most diverse social spaces, but their practice is still challenging, since inclusion takes place predominantly in the physical sphere. In these spaces, however, the stigma that accompanies these people remains, which leads to a kind of exclusion within inclusion, since, despite sharing the same environment, people with disabilities are still not seen as full subjects of rights, capable, in their own way, of carrying out the acts that give them an active position in society.

A reflection of this understanding is the National Special Education Policy of 2020. The document distinguishes between special education and total inclusion, characterizing the latter as “especially harmful for individuals with more severe degrees of long-term intellectual disabilities, because they continue to experience segregated experiences in the educational process” (Brazil, 2020, p. 17). There is provision for the creation of specialized schools and classes to contain this possible segregation, with the aim that the student will be provided with educational actions and knowledge aimed at their life project, taking into account their aspirations.

The idea of promoting social inclusion with physical exclusion, at any level, in order to avoid this very exclusion is a paradoxical alternative, since it does not prepare society to deal with the specific needs of people with disabilities. Furthermore, considering that public policies originate from social needs and state objectives, Mastrodi and Ifanger (2019), the belief that people with disabilities should, at any stage of life and at any level, be segregated from the educational process, will certainly be reflected in state actions for this public.

Specialized care can be offered in line with the full inclusion of this student in schools, jointly preparing all the actors in this process: family, institutions and society, guaranteeing

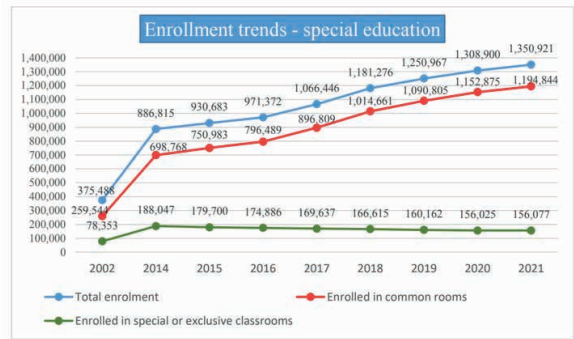
the social quality of inclusion. Citizens must not only look at the disabilities and limitations of these individuals, from a stigmatizing perspective, but also focus on their potential, collaborating in the insertion and inclusion of these people in all aspects: whether in education, work, leisure or other areas .

The next section will provide general data, derived from the Census, on the enrollment of people with disabilities in basic education, portraying the numbers of inclusive education in the country for this niche.

**DIAGNOSIS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION IN BRAZIL**

The actions listed have contributed to an increase in the inclusion of people with disabilities in the school environment. The data, taken from the School Census (Inep, 2021), allows for the monitoring of special education indicators, such as access to basic education and enrollment.

The Census recorded an increase from 375,488 in 2002 to 1,350,921 in 2021, an increase of 359.77%. As for enrollment in regular education classes, there has been an increase of 460.37%, from 259,544 students in 2002 to 1,194,844 in 2021, as shown in the graph.



Graph 1 - Special Education data

Source: Inep (2021)

When looking at the current timeline, focused on the same indicator, there was progress between 2014 and 2021. Total enrollment rose

from 886,815 in 2014 to 1,350,921 in 2021, an increase of 52.33% over this period.

The data shows progress in the inclusion of people with disabilities in mainstream education, probably as a result of the change in the social conception of disability described in the previous section, which has led to changes in inclusion policies. However, the inclusion of these people in schools does not guarantee inclusion in fact and in law, since these students face various accessibility barriers in order to take part in everyday life school and be guaranteed specialized educational care that takes into account their specific educational needs.

Therefore, in order for people with disabilities to have access to an education with social quality, it is necessary to offer it from the perspective of Inclusive Education, noting that social quality in Education is presented as a right of access in the regular school, by ensuring that the subjects actively participate in decision-making, being part of the process. According to Flach (2012, p. 10):

[...] as social quality becomes effective through the practice of democracy, educational management needs to be democratic, enabling the real participation of the population in decisions on education matters, whether through active school councils, democratic elections for school leaders, or even social control mechanisms.

Therefore, it is only possible to guarantee the right to education for students with disabilities by observing the realization of the so-called social quality, which only occurs in the exercise of democracy. Thus, it must be present in everyday life and in decision-making, giving individuals the chance to plan and decide, taking ownership of what is desired in order to benefit them in their singularity and with the aim of building a better society, in which individuals have the autonomy to write their own history.

## **INCLUSIVE EDUCATION, PREMISES AND GUIDELINES**

In this sense, the term inclusive education presupposes the school's willingness to meet the diversity of students' needs in ordinary schools, which can be achieved through a school learning environment that has high expectations of students, a safe, welcoming environment that understands difference as a positive factor.

Inclusive education has been treated in terms not only of new teaching strategies, but more broadly: as actions that lead to school reforms, improvements in teaching programs and new social justice measures. Furthermore, inclusion presupposes a school that fits all people, rather than expecting a particular person to fit the school. Its premise is access, permanence and success in educational environments for people who have historically been excluded from the educational process. Thus, inclusion provides for radical, complete and systematic school inclusion, and provides for actions and policies that consider the radical nature of the problem, observing, among other things, the genesis of the issues that promote exclusion, in order to implement educational networks and programs to consider the diversity of characteristics and needs of each excluded group.

These actions involve planning, organizing resources and services to promote architectural accessibility, communications, information systems, teaching and learning materials, which must be available in selection processes and in the development of all activities involving teaching, research and extension.

According to Glat and Fernandes (2005), students with special educational needs were often excluded from basic education, and inclusive education brought a new look to this issue, which gained strength with the implementation of the Salamanca Declaration. The document provides for access for students

with special educational needs to mainstream schools, with the obligation for these schools to adapt to the needs of their students (Salamanca Declaration, 1994, n.p.).

This teaching approach avoids the segregation of students; however, in order to provide a social quality education for all, in addition to admission, teachers must be trained and the school must have the support to meet these specific needs. Inclusive education starts from the moment the student leaves home, as they often have great difficulty even getting to school.

At school, in order to meet specific educational needs (SEN) in special education, specialized educational care (AEE) is responsible for promoting a careful look at the singularities of people with disabilities, in order to identify, design and organize curricular and accessibility resources that tackle the barriers to the effective inclusion of students.

The actions proposed by the AEE are distinct from those carried out in the ordinary classroom, i.e. they are no longer applied in parallel - as before, in special education - but are complementary, and do not replace everyday life in the regular school. These activities include: teacher training; curriculum enrichment programs; teaching specific communication and signaling languages and codes; and assistive technologies. Some schools have resources that enable specialized care for students with SEN, such as multifunctional resource rooms or individual care.

An inclusive environment, as well as helping to consolidate previous knowledge relevant to society, from the perspective and needs of people with disabilities, can produce subjects, people capable of thinking for themselves and having respect for other human beings, for animals, for the city they live in, for public buildings, forming a society that is better for everyone (Mello, 1991).

As mentioned in the introduction, people



with disabilities in the country still face difficulties in gaining full access to education, from basic to higher education. It is essential to provide the student with access to the classroom, but not only that: the conditions for their permanence - enrollment, means of transportation, assistive technologies, trained teachers, accessible environment - are essential. The aim is to implement an inclusive educational model that allows students to succeed in their academic career, overcoming communication, architectural, transportation, economic, visual and hearing barriers, among others. This is a major national challenge, considering the inequalities in various areas (Freitas; Baqueiro, 2014).

Laws are essential, but they do not guarantee inclusion, as has been argued. It is necessary to promote the deconstruction of misconceptions, enabling the effective social participation of these people. This action must be carried out in a practical way, in the environments frequented by people with disabilities, also encompassing the people around them, teacher training, and the following proposal emerges.

## **RESULTS: THE EXPERIENCE OF SCHOOL 308 SOUTH**

There are public initiatives at federal, state, district and municipal level in the field of continuing teacher training, focused on special education and specialized educational care. Most of these actions are thematic and focus on types of disabilities (intellectual, visual, hearing, sensory, among others) and methodologies based on assistive technologies, which support teaching practice both in the regular classroom and in the multifunctional resource room.

These actions depend on the organization of education networks. In the Federal District, continuing education is organized primarily by the School for the Improvement of

Education Professionals (EAPE), which offers classroom and distance learning courses for teachers in the network, during their working hours. In addition, there are partnerships formed with federal universities, the University of Brasilia (UnB) or, in this case, the Federal University of Tocantins (UFT).

The experience reported on has been taking place since 2014 at Escola Classe 308 Sul, which currently serves 389 students in the early years of elementary school. Last year, it had 19 students with disabilities and autism with a report in the process of school inclusion and 12 in the diagnostic phase. The extension project, Inclusive Education: ways of doing things, is part of the school's political-pedagogical project and its premise is to provide continuing training for its teachers (during working hours). A study group on Inclusive Education has been formed within the school, which reflects weekly on theoretical and practical issues to promote the inclusion of students with disabilities.

The project began its activities with 16 teachers, including the pedagogical team and teachers from regular classrooms and the multifunctional resource room. Meetings were held in the mornings and afternoons, on Wednesdays, at the time of the teachers' collective meeting, and on a weekly basis, with the agenda being the demands that arose, such as children with disabilities arriving at the school and many doubts about their adaptation and curricular suitability.

The studies focused on the categories of diversity and difference and on case studies of the types of disabilities and disorders that the school was dealing with at the time. From 2014 to 2016, studies were carried out on the works of Paulo Freire and the categories autonomy and awareness; Edgar Morin, with the categories human identity and multifaceted being; Howard Gardner, with the theory of multiple intelligences; Emília Ferreiro and Magda Soares, with the categories of the psy-

chogenesis of written language, literacy and literacy and Capovilla, with the phonic method and the categories diversity and difference and learning maps. During this period, the project organized the Week of Struggle for People with Disabilities with the teachers, as a way of working with the school's students on diversity and difference.

At the time, part of the school became full-time. So the students went to Escola Parque 308 Sul in the morning and to the class school in the afternoon. The school was challenged to become two in one. A part-time school in the morning and a full-time school in the afternoon. As a way of making the most of the students' time at school, the multiple intelligences were discussed and studied in the classes through the brain workshop, and the content, which until then had been restricted to teacher training, was brought into the classroom.

The workshop was developed with the intention of students understanding how they learn and how their colleagues with disabilities learn, demystifying the paradigm of single learning and reflecting on the idea that everyone can learn. The following questions were addressed, among others: How do we learn? How does our intelligence develop? These are questions raised by students and are still being worked on today.

In 2017, the brain workshop began working with UniSER students, who were on the Political-Social Educator in Gerontology course and whose prerequisite was experience. Space was then made for the intergenerational activity at the school, in which the older students from the course came to the school a few times a week, in shifts, to take part in the brain workshop and participate in school projects: Fun Playtime, in which they played with the students and taught them games from their childhood; Storytelling, in the reading room; Literary Bag, supporting the teachers in selecting stories for the students to take home and

read with their families; Inclusion Week, in the first month of school, to welcome diversity and difference in the school; Family Party, put on by the course participants, offering themed workshops for students and parents to take part in; Week of Struggle for People with Disabilities, in which they carried out actions focused on diversity and difference in the school. Due to the pandemic, the participation of the elderly in the project was halted. However, new projects were introduced with the same vision, such as Saúde Conectada (Connected Health), with the aim of promoting the role of inclusion in the face of innovation and other challenges.

Studies continued in the context of online education. The project developed studies with teachers according to real demands, addressing issues involving remote teaching, online education, active methodologies and individualized care for students with disabilities and autism.

It worked on the premise that there are obstacles inherent in teacher training in relation to students with disabilities and autism. There is a movement for new perspectives - so widespread in the theoretical field - to take shape and come to life in the practical sphere, stimulating progress in their training as educators. However, this change wasn't immediate; it took three years for the school's teaching staff to take ownership of the project and incorporate it into their practice, and another two years for the actions in the classroom with students with disabilities to show significant results.

This is because the teacher's academic training is not based on static knowledge, but on pedagogical knowledge, which allows for constant evolution and whose need for practical improvement means that reality is taken into account. Teachers understand knowledge as a principle that encourages them to reflect on the historical context in which they find themselves - inclusive education. Teachers act

as agents promoting change, since the essence of knowledge lies in its questioning nature, in which they seek, through questioning, to integrate knowledge that leads to the deconstruction of models - a basic premise for transforming human relationships.

Continuing education aims to overcome the obstacles that still permeate current education. These obstacles make it impossible to implement article 205 of the 1988 Federal Constitution, since the teaching and learning process is not yet based on the student's condition as a human being in formation. It is only through studying and understanding the human condition (Morin, 2014) that knowledge is correlated with the world. Thus, it is important that continuing education advocates the idea that [...] "knowledge of human complexity is part of knowledge of the human condition; and this knowledge initiates us to live, at the same time, with complex beings and situations" (Ibidem, p. 49).

The project promotes reflection on the theoretical and practical references relating to Special Education, which support teaching practices and the construction of pedagogical processes, strategies and interventions for students in the school environment, since according to Nóvoa (1992), "[...] teacher training consists of conceiving the school as an educational environment, where working and training are not separate activities". In this sense, Mäkihonko (2020 apud Renafor, 2021, p. 3) states that it is necessary for teachers to learn in their training to be flexible and capable of implementing "intelligent activities in new situations", so that students are served with a focus on their peculiarities, with the aim of achieving social quality. With this in mind, it is centered on the perspective that the continuing education of teachers in Basic Education is a permanent and constant process of improving the knowledge necessary for the activity of educators (França; Pinho, 2021).

By working with the main mediators in the educational process (teachers and pedagogical staff) and the actors surrounding people with disabilities (students and society), the inclusion process becomes not only quantitative, but qualitative, since understanding the learning processes of people with disabilities generates a change in mentality, which no longer considers disability to be just a limitation.

By promoting the understanding that there is not just one way of learning (Gardner, 1995; 2010) and that people with disabilities, and others, learn in different ways, function in different ways, are different - and complex - beings (Morin, 2014), the paradigm linked to people with disabilities changes and, consequently, the treatment given to them. We begin to see beyond the limitation; we begin to see the potential that needs to be fostered, to understand that these people simply have a specific way of learning and expressing themselves and that, because of these characteristics, they need specialized care in order to enjoy all the rights that are guaranteed to them. It's about raising awareness in order to include (Mantoan, 2013).

It is essential to preserve and maintain the rights of people with disabilities (a term used here in a broad sense), which can be achieved through state policies that make urbanization, accessibility, health, education, sport and culture plans feasible, with targets and actions.

It is up to the state to promote policies that provide quality of life for this population, by implementing laws that guarantee their rights as citizens, including the right to become productive and participate in the community, strengthening the fight for inclusion.

The current trend is for Special Education to ensure that all students with disabilities not only have access, but also remain in school, removing barriers that impede this process in mainstream education. Actions in this area are made up of a set of educational resources

and support strategies available to students with disabilities, giving them different options for care, depending on their needs.

It is therefore up to schools to propose options to support the development of students with disabilities, analyzing whether the school environment is suited to their peculiarities, offering sound resources, classrooms adapted to the needs of these students and, perhaps most importantly, whether the people who make up the school are aware of a student with different learning conditions. It is the duty of the teacher and all school professionals to encourage the student's development on a daily basis, providing interaction between the two and teaching the class, other students and staff to constantly respect differences and otherness.

The invitation to inclusion is always attractive, but it often gets lost in well-intentioned proposals that turn out to be highly selective and contrary to the original intention, generating isolation and even the formation of ghettos. Important advances produced by the democratization of society, greatly leveraged by human rights movements, point to the emergence of less exclusionary social spaces and alternatives for living together in diversity.

It is important to understand that the debate on inclusive policies still focuses on the socio-political organization needed to make it viable and the individual rights and needs of the target public. The discussion becomes more complex when we encounter the contradiction of capitalist society, which demands solutions to sustain and make viable its own plurality, but is not an inclusive society - far from it. We know how institutions created to regulate the coexistence of men tend to reinforce discrimination and create territories that classify and hierarchize citizens precisely on the basis of their differences. People with disabilities, such as syndromes, have historically been seen as social pariahs based on a set of more or less constant inequalities that end up defining their place in society: the place of exclusion.

A culture's ability to deal with the heterogeneities that make it up has become a kind of criterion for evaluating its stage of evolution, especially in times of fundamentalism and intolerance of all kinds. From the perspective proposed here, social inclusion is no longer a concern to be shared between government officials, specialists and a small group of citizens with some kind of difference, but a unique issue for society. The school is no different. As an institutional territory expressive of the culture in which it is inserted, it must keep up with the new times and better deal with the diversity of the public it has to serve. An audience full of specificities which, if they are not respected, welcomed and attended to in their differences, will never make the school one of the possible spaces that contribute to building a just society.

### **CONTEMPORARY INTER-INSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVES FOR INCLUSION AND THE PROTECTION OF RIGHTS**

Faced with the persistent challenges of school inclusion, it is essential to plan future paths that combine inclusive education with technological innovation, information security and territorial justice. In this sense, emerging initiatives such as the Cyber Intelligence Center (NIC), linked to the expansion planning of the Federal University of Goiás - Cidade Ocidental Campus, and the Connected Health project, signal concrete possibilities for transformation. The NIC is an interdisciplinary structure dedicated to analyzing data and protecting information systems, with a focus on detecting digital threats, combating disinformation and supporting the formulation of safer and more inclusive public policies. In the educational context, this type of center can support the creation of accessible digital environments, protect sensitive data of students with disabilities and offer technical

support for educational managers to understand and tackle technological barriers to inclusion.

In its next stages, the Connected Health project proposes the use of assistive technologies and telehealth strategies integrated with educational practices, expanding access to basic rights by connecting schools, territories and intersectoral care. By linking education, health and cyber intelligence, these initiatives point to a future in which inclusion is not restricted to enrollment, but involves belonging, participation and full autonomy in society's digital and physical environments.

### **BY WAY OF CONCLUSION**

By way of conclusion, a basic aspect that permeated the presentation of the historical notes of Educational Policies for Special Education and the perspective of Inclusive Education in the article is highlighted: the importance and complexity of the term inclusion, in the sense of recognizing the advance of a misconception about the educability of these children. With the predominance of a biological and clinical paradigm, resulting from the hegemonic influence of integration, there is a growing process of reframing basic concepts, such as: diversity, difference, equality, equity, integration and the term inclusion itself, linked to the perspective of accessibility.

It is believed that an inclusive policy, in the field of Special Education, must deal with the deinstitutionalization of exclusion, whether in the school space or in other social structures. The construction of inclusive policies that aim to be effective and long-lasting must focus on the network of relationships that are fostered through institutions, since the discriminatory practices they produce go beyond the walls and regulations of the organizational territories that show them.

Finally, the feeling that must be imbued when seeking to understand Special Educa-

tion policies from the perspective of Inclusive Education can be represented by the game of happy, from the book *Polyanna*: in which her father teaches her the logic of the game, in which we must be happy with what happens, because it could be worse.

The reference to the passage in this story can be expressed as: How nice! We're happy with what we've seen so far, because it would be worse if the actions promoted, especially after LDBEN, were not in line with international debates on Special Education; it would be worse if, without the legal apparatus, families who want their children with some kind of disability to attend the same school as their siblings had no arguments against the system's refusal, as has historically happened with the disabled; it would be worse if it depended on the adherence of education systems to implement the school inclusion proposal, as has happened with other proposals throughout our country's school history; it would be worse if these subjects were relegated to the same conditions of segregated care, without an alternative choice; it would be worse if the school, the system, society, didn't have to face issues that have always been latent and that are now evident in the regular common network, in the street, in public and private spaces when dealing with disability; it would be worse if, even if it were considered by some to be an occasional policy or a fad, the issue of Special Education from the perspective of Inclusive Education wasn't the subject of research, production and publications in recent years and still in conflict.

So let's be happy! But never complacent.



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## NOTES

i In this article, the reference to the term disability includes associated disorders and sensory impairment -the case, for example, of people with autism, who, according to the Berenice Piana Law, § 2, are considered people with disabilities for all legal purposes.

ii Several studies report that the concept of social quality is polysemic (Silva; Nascimento, 2020; Tedesco; Rebelato, 2015). Thus, the concept addressed in this study must be delimited: the effective exercise of rights already acquired, that is, when the subject actively participates in decision-making, being part of the process, building their own history as a person with rights.

iii The ASAP movement arose from the mobilization of families of children and young people with Down's Syndrome, which has been consolidated in the country since the 1960s and has contributed to the struggles for the rights of people with disabilities and their social recognition to this day.

iv In the Republic, it was renamed the Benjamin Constant Institute

v Today, the National Institute for the Education of the Deaf -INES.

vi It was only renamed in 1936. At the time, the hospital was called Asylo São João de Deos (Fiocruz, 2013)

vii It was intended for ex-combatants who had been mutilated during the war.

viii Thalidomide is a drug that works as a tranquilizer and was used as a treatment for morning sickness in pregnant women in the 1960s. However, at the time, there was no knowledge that the drug would be harmful to the formation of babies.

ix This stigma is most evident in people who have some kind of disability, retardation or cognitive (mental) disorder.

x Nowadays, many movements of people with disabilities have used social networks to foster discussions and create spaces for awareness-raising, tackling the stigma of disability and discussing issues such as ableism.xi In this article, the term accessibility refers to various types, classified as follows: attitudinal, communicational, architectural, instrumental, digital and assistive technologies, according to Sasaki (2009).

xii These include the black population, indigenous people, quilombolas, the street population, people from the forest and the countryside, riverside dwellers and settlers, among others.

xiii Regulated by Decree 7611 of November 17, 2011.

xiv At the federal level, RENAFOR -the National Network for Continuing Teacher Training -offers a range of distance learning courses on the Moodle-MEC platform. Among the thematic

courses currently on offer are those offered to all basic education teachers in partnership with public universities, such as the AEE Improvement Course in Intellectual and Multiple Sensory Disabilities, which caters for 1,000 teachers from all over the country.

xv The Parque School in Brasília (DF) was created with Anísio Teixeira's idea of Integral Education. Since it was set up in 1960, it has offered activities for elementary school children in the areas of music, theater, visual arts and physical education. It currently caters for elementary school children (early years) after school hours, as a form of full-time school in the Pilot Plan of Brasília -DF.

xvi University of Aging.

xviiThe use of the term old in this study is understood as coming from the process of growing old, without a jocular or prejudiced tone.