

Licenciatura en Inglés.

**“Democratizing Education.
Is Education for All possible?”**



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ANEXO 5 – Formulario

Publicación del Trabajo Final (Tesina de Graduación) en RI

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Democratizing Education. Is Education for All possible?

It is useless to tell men 'you are free' if they are not taught to be so. It is from the early days of childhood that a love of justice, self-respect and a sense of conscience that does not waver should be inspired.

Manso, Juana (1854)

ABSTRACT

The work presented here will show that democratizing education is possible. Inclusion is here to stay and this great step forward in Education will guarantee that every child receive the education that will make him/her independent and self-sufficient. Teaching disabled students is a crucial part of providing equal quality education. This requires careful, caring, respectful, thoughtful teaching and with this in mind, integrating students with special needs into the everyday classroom will present multiple but not unsurmountable challenges.

Every teacher and especially those teaching L2 must be prepared to meet the challenge of teaching a student with special needs and not only does this require special preparation and study but also a certain attitude and predisposition. A special needs student is like every other student in that he/she is part of the diversity that we must address in the New Classroom.

Above all, *education* should reflect the best of the human condition and as such it should enhance and strengthen the teachers' role. In Paulo Freire's view (2012:102), educators' success is based on true dedication and commitment and a belief that every child is unique and that it is an immorality to accept or ignore marginalization.

Key words: diversity – marginalization- new classroom -special needs – Education for All

INTRODUCTION

When speaking of General Education and Special Education we are making a division in what really ought to be part of the whole education process, because education is "only one", which must consider all students equally and, at the same time, take into account their individualities.

Although in recent decades there have been numerous and important changes in the educational policy with respect to people with special needs, there are still some adverse situations that hinder the collaboration, cooperation and sharing of knowledge among members of the staff in most educational facilities, and this delays inclusion from taking place effectively. This situation, where the theory is not completely put into practice, has a serious impact on

those students with special needs as well as their families and the community at large (as this deprives some people from being productive members of society, becoming instead a burden).

Among the wide diversity nationwide and present in all schools, it is important to emphasize that the population with special needs is an intrinsic part of society that deserves equal quality treatment and attention, and it should reflect society's awareness and empathy.

The concept of inclusion has only recently been more completely and broadly defined; to better convey the need to acknowledge differences with the conviction that, as a society, we are strengthened and enriched by them.

Therefore, for teachers or institutions to meet these new challenges it is not enough to consider a single methodology or teaching approach for the entire classroom. A diversity of strategies to address different learning styles and needs must be implemented. The answers must be sought and created in conjunction with Special Education professionals, and the entire school staff.

We are all different, special and unique and this diversity should be recognized and addressed by our Educational system. Appropriate criteria defining and addressing diversity needs to be effectively put into every day practice, in every school throughout the country. Recommendations with specific guidelines to address all the differences and needs of every student must be included in all areas of Education regarding curriculum planning, building designs for schools, teaching materials, equipment, and staff training.

The general accepted view is that general education and special education are on different paths, but when there is an understanding of all types of learning styles then it becomes clear that both are governed by basic principles of pedagogy that are the full development of human beings and skill acquisition.

When the singularity, the identity, the diversity of students is addressed through pedagogy that does not exclude them because pedagogy is used in a flexible and democratic manner, students with special educational needs will receive the quality education that all students deserve.

Historically, humankind has sought the solution to critical situations to achieve a society with fairer options. Today, the paradigms of integration, human rights, equal opportunities, and quality of life represent a step forward to achieve those noble and lofty goals. The proposal to provide equal educational opportunities to all citizens shows that the differences are secondary to the human biological specificity.

There is no doubt that human rights as articulated in international and national declarations are clear in relation to disabilities, and they have influenced the development of inclusive policies. These declarations have been translated into public policies to facilitate and also to enforce the exercise of the rights and duties of citizens based on the application of various pedagogical models. The analysis and implementation of these policies in the processes of integration and

inclusion of individuals with special needs is an unavoidable task to deal with the social change required.

This unavoidable task will be seen in the results of this research which will show that with adequate training, ESL teachers can provide quality education to all students whose needs are addressed theoretically but not in practice and especially to those who have special educational requirements.

The present research explores the importance of describing the new challenges that teachers face when speaking of diversity in the classroom. It aims to show the problems teachers find in making education more democratic and accessible for those with special needs, without causing a decline in the quality of education. My study will show that democratizing education is not only possible but also desirable and necessary.

Data was collected in two ways: with online surveys and in person interviews of parents, teachers and professionals, including principals of several schools (regular public schools and special education schools), and also the attendance to a conference. Then, data was analyzed and used to identify patterns of quantitative and qualitative aspects. The analyzed data was used to support the hypothesis.

The organization of this paper includes an Abstract, and an Introduction and General Objective followed by Chapter 1 that presents a historical background on how policies which consider the integration and inclusion of people with special needs have been created and passed in our country and others as well. Chapter 2 consists of Methodology and Materials. This chapter presents an understanding of the philosophical framework (holistic and social) within which this inquiry is considered. After that, a description of the method of research and its results is given. The following chapters refer to Conclusions -Chapter 3-, Discussion -Chapter 4- and Recommendations -Chapter 5-. This paper also includes a Reference List, a Glossary and Appendixes supporting the research content.

General Objective:

The objective of this study is to show that democratizing education is possible at all levels of education and especially in the area of Second Language Acquisition.

CHAPTER 1- INCLUSION IN EDUCATION.

1.- From its origins to the present time in Argentina

In the 1800s, Argentina did not have a unified school system; each province had the responsibility of providing education for its citizens, and this was one of the many complexities the growing nation faced.

From 1800 to 1852, after the emancipation from Spain as there were not enough professionals in education (teachers) the Lancasterian System was implemented by General San Martín who was one of its supporters. That system required students who monitored or helped others in order to compensate for the inequalities in the classroom. It was nevertheless an education that was focused on memorization and strict, unbending discipline.

Then, from 1850 to 1880, the National Constitution of 1853 established the right to educate and teach with a responsibility placed on provincial governments. At that time, women received formal education in public libraries. In 1859 José Marmol, who was a journalist, politician, librarian, and writer, introduced Juana Manso to Domingo F. Sarmiento. Later, when Sarmiento founded the first Escuela Normal Mixta, J. Manso became the first Headmistress in Argentina.

1.1. Juana Paula Manso

Juana Manso was a fierce defender of human rights and became a prominent figure giving lectures, and supporting women. She had to live in exile due to her revolutionary ideas at a time when there was great political turmoil. The International Bureau of Education, UNESCO published a document titled “Juana P. Manso (1819-1975)” (2005:3) expressing:

“(…)she wanted to abolish slavery and racism. Thus, she opposed prejudice and intolerance, which included tensions with regard to the eradication of the Indians—a current practice at that time. She also examined the need to overcome social conventions (…)”

This document also says (2005:6-7) that “(t)he isolation in which women found themselves and the stifling of their aspirations was not easily overcome. We can consider Manso to be a confessed feminist. The imposition of her aspirations had a repercussion on women’s position outside the family that was intended to be radical. She wanted to integrate them into the world of education. She aimed at strengthening female individuality, an attitude that was to generate new kinds of co-existence. Her struggle focused on extending women’s rights of participation in the field of education and in rejecting distinctions imposed on them by virtue of their gender.”

As many intellectuals at that time, she had ideas that were identified with the May Movement which was a step towards independence. That “spirit of May” brought ideas of emancipation, republicanism, enlightenment, sovereignty, opposition to slavery, progress, etc.

In 1840 she moved with her family to Montevideo (Uruguay), exiled under the regime of Juan Manuel de Rosas, who was governing the territory of the United Provinces of the River Plate. During Rosas' conservative government in Argentina, liberals were persecuted and many had to flee into exile. Subsequently, due to political pressure from Rosas, the Manso family moved to Rio de Janeiro, returning some time later to Montevideo. In Rio de Janeiro, Juana married and travelled with her husband around the United States and Cuba. Later, in 1853, she returned from exile to Buenos Aires, but without her husband.

As stated by Maria De Giorgio (Juana Manso: una mujer fuera de lo común (2013) paragr.14), "Juana brought in new ideas and experiences that she thought could serve to lay the groundwork for a better society. Unfortunately, this was not the case, and she was not welcome and viewed as an outsider. Who was that poor woman, coming from an unknown family, without her husband and with two daughters? Who did she think she was, bringing and trying to instill foreign ideas?"

Manso assigned herself the role of disseminator. She chose public readings and lectures as a way of participating in the ideas of her time. She was, perhaps, the first woman to give lectures in Argentina. Her public lectures on political and religious issues attracted unusual violence and irritation: throwing stones, requests to silence her on religious issues, accusations of heresy, etc.

Manso was one of the first women concerned about children's rights. When giving her lectures on the professionalization of teaching, she was also accused of being immoral and was presented with petition from educational authorities, requesting the cancellation of her lectures. Sarmiento describes the situation in a letter in *Annals of Education* (1867:225) when he says, "It is the lectures themselves that irritate. It is the first time that the practice of speaking in public on any subject at all has been introduced. Only the pulpit possessed this prerogative"

Juana Manso did not follow the style that women ought to follow at that time. She suffered from discriminatory pressures, and was described in terms of masculinity. Sarmiento also emphasized this view and in his book "Diary of Journey" (1944:31) he stated: "Manso, whom I barely knew, was the only man out of three or four million inhabitants from Chile and Argentina who understood my educational work and who, inspired by my thinking, set her shoulder against the edifice she saw was crumbling. Was she a woman?"

The final paragraph of the document (2005:14) depicts her whole work: "If we examine the characteristics adopted by education systems as they develop, we find numerous features which—although anonymously—reflect problems and proposals formulated by Juana Manso: the early development of nursery education; the professionalization of teachers; the need to avoid dogmatism in teaching; the spread of republicanism; tolerance and *respect for those*

being taught. Probably her most formative principle in the period when she lived was her conviction that emancipation of the nation involved the emancipation of its intellect, and this unleashed consequences that have often made her an object of condemnation.” (The italics are mine)

This woman who was against any kind of marginalization suffered from strong discriminatory pressures; she suffered greatly and died prematurely at the age of 55 in 1875. Because she was a woman, a freethinker, and a rebel, she was denied burial in a catholic cemetery and she was finally buried two days after her death in an English Protestant Cemetery. In her tomb, the following legend can be read: “Here lies an Argentine who, in the middle of the night of indifference that engulfed the country, chose to be buried among foreigners rather than to desecrate the sanctuary of her conscience” (Juana Manso: una mujer fuera de lo común (2013) paragr.23)

1.2. Domingo Faustino Sarmiento

Domingo F. Sarmiento also played a leading role. In 1847, when Sarmiento visited the United States, he was highly impressed by its society. Public education seemed to be possible, where a modern pedagogy was the connection between education and progress. He was surprised to see that local governments and civil associations had a central responsibility for education. He believed that everything coming from English-speaking countries was, beyond a shadow of doubt, the best. While in the States, Sarmiento met Horace Mann, who was the secretary of Board Education in Massachusetts. They became close friends and they agreed on the idea that long term educational processes were essential. Therefore, Sarmiento wanted the Latin-American society to change radically. Culture, native languages, ancient customs had to disappear. He also sustained that moral and academic training was of paramount importance to progress. He considered the Latin-American population “uneducated” and “savage”, and, of course, marginalized people were within that scope. As stated by Felipe Pigna (El Historiador. Biografía Domingo F. Sarmiento (n.d.) para.11) “Barbarism on the contrary was the countryside, backward rural life, the Indians and the gaucho”. According to Sarmiento, that dilemma could only be solved by “the triumph of ‘civilization’ over barbarism”. Also Sarmiento stated “We would like to separate savages for whom we feel an overwhelming repugnance from all American walks of life”. In a letter sent to Bartolomé Mitre, Sarmiento said: “(...)don’t try to save on the blood of the Gauchos. This is a necessary fertilizer to place at the service of the country. Blood is the only human part that these savages have”. F. Pigna explains that, unfortunately, progress did not arrive for all and many “Savages and Barbarians” paid with their lives or their freedom the “crime” of being natives or gauchos without a steady job.

Sarmiento's pedagogical ideas did not meet the development he projected. His ideal schooling system would have only served the "educated" population. And that population based on the North American model, merely lived in his mind.

Sarmiento's literary work was marked by his political action, and in 1845, he wrote the following:

"¡Sombra terrible de Facundo, voy a evocarte, para que, sacudiendo el ensangrentado polvo que cubre tus cenizas, te levantes a explicarnos la vida secreta y las convulsiones internas que desgarran las entrañas de un noble pueblo! (...) Facundo no ha muerto ¡Vive aún! ; está vivo en las tradiciones populares, en la política y las revoluciones argentinas; en Rosas, su heredero, su complemento. (...) Facundo, provinciano, bárbaro, valiente, audaz, fue reemplazado por Rosas, hijo de la culta Buenos Aires, sin serlo él, (...) tirano sin rival hoy en la tierra".

This paragraph from "Facundo" shows Sarmiento's style. Sarmiento hated and admired Facundo at the same time. F. Pigna (n.d. para.12) sustains that Facundo was an excuse to talk about the gaucho, the caudillo, the endless desert; all elements which according to him (Sarmiento) contributed to the country's delay in progress.

1.3 The First Pedagogical Conference

As a first step taken to overcome this delay, Sarmiento and the Minister of Education, organized the 1st Pedagogical Conference of 1882. Educators needed to be educated in order to provide the quality of education that Sarmiento dreamed of.

The conclusions of the Pedagogical Conference pointed out the importance of free education in state schools, the need to establish minimum contents for the instruction of children between six and fourteen years old, also promoted the mixed-sex education, and the self-management of the economic resources of each school. According to La Biblioteca Nacional del Maestro (Hallazgos. Enseñanza para la Equidad (n.d) Parag.3), the Conference also voted a declaration which provided that "whatever the number of blind and deaf – dumb, requires the special attention of governments, the promotion of existing institutes and the creation of others aiming at the care of these unfortunate beings and to the training of special teachers for them". All its resolutions are often seen as a basis for the national school law 1420.

1.4 Law 1420 General Common Education of Argentina

The Law 1420 of General Common Education of Argentina addressed the demands of that First Conference. It was passed in 1884 during Julio Argentino Roca's presidential period. This law

summarized the basic premises of the educational Conference of 1882 and established that education had to be universal, common, mixed, free, compulsory, and secular. Although this law governed effectively Argentine education, revision of its contents was needed to continue with the intellectual, moral and physical formation beyond the students' first years of life. However, the bills proposed introducing modifications were thrown out one by one by Congress in the following years. (See Appendix II- Chronology of Education)

The accepted philosophy in the educational system supported by society between 1884 to 1916 was represented in the idea of "homogeneity". Morante, L., Misichia, B. & Valverde, F. (2009:29)'s research indicates that between the years 1884 to 1916 the State Educational System focused on the fundamental idea of "homogeneity", promoting an organized society in which the disabled became marginalized because they disrupted the uniformity of this "ordered place" (the classroom).

The Cuerpo Médico Escolar (School Medical Board) was created in 1905. This Board instructed parents and teachers on healthy living habits at home and school. Its purpose was to make a connection between the origins of disease with unhealthy living behaviours. Some of the recommendations made were: to keep a safe distance while reading a text in order to prevent nearsightedness (myopia); to correct inadequate body postures to prevent scoliosis; sunbathing to combat rickets, among other things. Puigross, A (1996:47-72) explains how that School Medical Board worked and established a clear limit between "normality" and "abnormality" going beyond Sarmiento's pedagogical ideas about "educated" vs "uneducated" people. It was necessary to align the school practices according to the recommendations made by the School Medical Board. That was carried out through the unification of the programs, activities, and working materials.

Between 1910 and 1930, most Argentine children were enrolled in school, and with girls now formally receiving education, the school population doubled, reaching almost 70% of children between 6 and 13 years. The "New School" began, having an enormous impact on the Argentine public education system.

This novel educational movement contained a diverse set of ideas and positions, whose common factor was the renewal of the practices in the classroom and school. It conceived the child as the center of the learning process, and it highlighted the democratization of the school and the pupil-teacher relationship.

While all this was taking place in Argentina, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was pronounced in 1948, stating the right to free and compulsory elementary education for all children. Its article 26 declares: "Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free,

at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms”

In Argentina, the new concept on how children were to be treated and educated grew and it was expanded in the different sectors of society and the public sphere. Children were now the center of family life, mothers completely devoting their time to caring for them and the State ensured their welfare. Childhood was considered the future of the nation. This was Peron and Evita's time (1945-1955). Peronism had a high impact on the social, political and economic life. Workers' social rights were at the center of the scene. In this context, Peronists gave a new meaning to the value awarded to the children. Under the slogan "the only privileged ones are the children" implied that social justice had put an end to inequalities, and that the State granted preferential attention to children in every sense of the word. The Peronists established a direct relationship, without mediation, with children and, in many instances, they were said to be a political tool. The "politicization" of children was developed in the educational system but also through other means; for example, Eva Perón's Foundation distributed gifts, organized soccer championships and field trips. In this context, the educational enrolment grew not only in general public schools, but technical schools (escuelas tecnicas) as well, and teachers participated as workers within the Peronist regime.

1.5 Women's Rights

Although much progress had been made, still much more was expected, especially regarding women's rights to education, work, and their participation in the political arena. Women were still marginalized.

In 1960, the UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education and in 1979, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women actively worked on the abolition of discrimination. According to its articles (1979:6-11), the Convention promoted equality between men and women; ensuring women's equal access to, and opportunities in political and public life, and also in education, health, and employment. For women to enjoy all their human rights and fundamental freedoms, all States Parties agreed to take appropriate measures.

One of the areas on which the Convention focused was *Civil Rights and the Legal Status of Women*. It included the right to vote, to hold public office and to exercise public functions; rights to non-discrimination in education, and the revision of textbooks, school programs and teaching methods.

But not only the rights of women were sometimes violated or not taken into account. The military dictatorship between 1976 to 1983 in Argentina, regulated schools which were ideal

areas for the control of the population; the defense of the homeland and teachers were considered the main pillars for the "national reorganization". This was a dark time for women's rights, exclusion and discrimination was flagrant. When Democracy returned in 1984, the Educational System was restructured as there was an urgent need to democratize the system. Authoritative practices within the school system began to be eliminated, giving rise to new experiences and pedagogical practices.

These new practices included what Paulo Freire called Critical Pedagogy. According to his work, the goal of education was not only the mere fact of transmission of knowledge. There is no longer someone who educates another but both do it in communion. According to him, education must serve as a tool to help the oppressed (see Glossary) to recover their sense of humanity. In his book *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970:54) he stated: "No pedagogy which is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed by treating them as unfortunate beings and by presenting for their emulation, models from among the oppressors. The oppressed must be their own example in the struggle for their redemption"

1.6 The Second Pedagogical Conference

The 2nd Pedagogical Conference was held in 1984 and it analysed the function of the educational system, and recognized the profound deficiencies that it presented. This Conference laid the groundwork for future educational transformation, and consolidated a democratic and educational culture.

This conference was extended to the whole civil society. The call was driven by law 23,114 on November 23, 1984 and its purpose was the debate, and the participation of society at all levels of education. This included students, teachers, parents, parent/teachers associations, trade unionists, and society as a whole through political parties and social organizations.

The Conference consisted of three bodies: local, national and jurisdictional. In each one, assemblies were organized. The last meeting was between February 27 and March 16, 1988. The presence of delegates from all jurisdictions worked in committees, analysing the complex realities of each place. There were 7 committees, each of them dealt with a given topic. Committee number 2 dealt with an issue entitled "Objetivos y funciones de la educación para la realización plena de la persona en una sociedad participativa y pluralista" and in its point number 1, named "El desarrollo Pleno de las Capacidades, Habilidades e Intereses de cada Persona" stated:

"(p)romover el desarrollo pleno del educando en todos sus aspectos trascendentales dándole posibilidades para superarse, preparándolo para el diálogo, la participación, el trabajo en equipo, la vida en sociedad para la convivencia, superando el individualismo para posibilitar el bienestar general en

una sociedad nacional e internacional más justa, promoviendo especialmente las acciones destinadas a atender a los sectores sumergidos; propiciar la formación integral y liberadora que comprende el desarrollo completo de la personalidad, dando así sentido pleno a la vida del educando que abarque el desarrollo de aptitudes y actitudes de dominio psicomotriz y de expresión estética temporo-espacial, el cultivo de actitudes que favorezcan el descubrimiento y la estructuración armónica, madura e independiente de la propia personalidad, y en vista de elaborar un proyecto de vida acorde con su vocación persona; la estimulación del pensamiento científico y la actitud investigadora, la formación del sentido crítico y problematizador en el análisis de la realidad, el valor dignificador del trabajo que lo capacite para el desempeño útil y creativo como factor de perfeccionamiento personal y social; educar a la persona en un sano contacto con las situaciones límites de la realidad de la vida; minusvalías, deterioro, enfermedad, muerte.

Es importante poner en claro que tendremos que garantizar una igualdad de posibilidades para todos, superando las barreras de origen físico, intelectual, en atención al discapacitado social (see Glossary), político, geográfico, cultural; de esta manera estaremos reconociendo el derecho que tiene toda persona a desarrollar plenamente sus posibilidades; no será masificadora, respetará y potenciará las individualidades condenando el individualismo y favoreciendo la integración social”

The text above thoroughly explains the objectives and functions of an educational system that fosters the full development of a person within a participatory and pluralist society. This also implies the full development of each person’s capabilities, skills and interests.

1.7 The Rights of the Child

It was not until 1989 that the UNESCO Convention on the Rights of the Child, in its Art 23 paragraphs 1 and 2 (1989:9) stipulated that “1. States Parties recognize that a mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance, and facilitate the child's active participation in the community.

2. States Parties recognize the right of the disabled child to special care and shall encourage and ensure the extension, subject to available resources, to the eligible child and those responsible for his or her care, of assistance for which application is made and which is appropriate to the child's condition and to the circumstances of the parents or others caring for the child.”

Overall in all, the Convention encouraged education within school and the family, and promoted diversity including every child, regardless of nationality race, sex and socio-economic group. It also considered indigenous or minority groups, handicapped children, displaced, and refugee children.

1.8 Inclusion and Equality within the Argentine Educational System

Throughout history, it can be seen that international level conferences have established a pattern for the social construction of proposals to understand diversity within education.

These international conferences were installed and enshrined progressively throughout the world. The conclusions of the Jomtien Conference (1990) and the Salamanca Statement (1994), both organised by UNESCO, posed the need to promote policies that favour a school for all and in which all pupils were offered an adequate response regardless of their physical or intellectual conditions.

In Argentina, the process of inclusive education suffered from a severe time lag that in spite of all the legislation has not caught up and the lag continues to this date.

In 2001, Argentina related the term “inclusion”, (See Glossary- Pag. 55) which was adopted by the Worldwide Conference on Education for All (EFA) in Jomtien, Thailand to educational quality. Morante, L., Misischia, B. & Valverde, F. (2009:30) referred to the lecture presented by education authorities at the conference: “New Paradigms in Special Education” (“Nuevos Paradigmas en la Educacion Especial”) in 2001 that stated that inclusion should be part of quality education “*no podemos dejar de vincular la educacion especial, la inclusion a los conceptos de calidad educativa*”.

1.9. World Conference on Education for All: Meeting basic learning needs. Background Document. Jomtien, Thailand (1990)

The central feature of the document mentioned above (1990:1) was to support human development, taking into consideration psychological and biological maturation of individuals within educational aspects. It also sustained that human development would contribute to the social and economic development of the country, where these considerations were applied. Education was seen as a human right because human development was at the core of educational processes. Thus, psychological, cultural, social, and economic aspects were considered for the first time as a whole to analyze basic education. This would provide societies with a vast potential preventing marginalization and allowing all persons to participate in a literate and technological world.

Regarding childhood, the document (1990:28) addressed the effective development of a child (not only psychosocial, but also health and nutrition) in order to provide better opportunities in basic education programs. Those programs should focus on long-term benefits rather than only immediate ones. And it pointed out (1990:44) that those programs “are especially strong for (...) disadvantaged children, who have a higher risk of physiological underdevelopment and who have limited access to and lower achievement in schools”.

Those ideas were organized around equal access to education, removing disparities. The document (1990:34) referred to these ideas saying:

“The learning needs of the disabled demand special attention. Steps need to be taken to provide equal access to education to every category of disabled persons as an integral part of the education system. In nearly every society, specific social groups have historically lacked the social conditions necessary to meet basic learning needs.”

In the section titled: “Promoting Equity” (1990: 55-56), the document describes inequities related to the disabled:

“Another major category of inequity is that of *disabled children and adults*. This group is a heterogeneous one with impairments ranging from mild or moderate to severe or profound; the more severely disabled are fewest in number. The needs of many disabled people can be met within existing services, as long as they are augmented by appropriate arrangements to support the special requirements of the child and the family. There is a need to demystify educational provision for disabled persons; the main barriers continue to be misinformation about their capacities. This misinformation leads to a gross underestimation of their potential to benefit from education of all kinds. Even though many developing countries face shortages of financial and human resources, education for all means that *all groups*, including the disabled, are entitled to a fair share of resources. Whatever the current conditions, assisting disabled individuals to reach their learning potential should be a part of the strategies for meeting the basic learning needs of all. Developing countries considering action in the education of disabled children, youth and adults should have confidence in their own initiatives and should not feel that their efforts must follow those patterns established by the industrialized countries.”

This section of the document concluded (1990:58) stating that “disabled pupils and their families may require special help and alternative systems of instruction”.

The document also sustained (1990:36-37) that the scope and means of basic education need to be expanded. To achieve this expansion, four components are necessary to have an integrated system that fosters life long learning. Those components acknowledged diversity of children in general:

a- *early childhood care and initial education*. Families and communities mainly provide this.

b- *primary schooling*. Teacher's work is essential in the quality of primary schooling. Thus, the document (1990:49) also highlighted the importance of the "availability of educational materials, availability of equipment and facilities, administrative and supervisory activities, and summary measures such as expenditure per pupil". After completing the primary level, children should have the possibility of continuing their education.

c- *basic learning needs of youth and adults*. To increase cultural identity and heritage a variety of literacy programs should be available.

d- *education on social issues*. Regarding this last component, the document (1990:38) included all channels of information and communication and its goal was to provide direct instruction on "health, nutrition, family life, sanitation, child care, population, environmental protection, agricultural techniques, and drug prevention"

With respect to expenditures, the document (1990:52) held that school and systems administrators determined school effectiveness. There must be a logistical link with national authorities. They should act as facilitators making school more efficient. In that, the principal or head plays an important role (1990:52) by "establishing clear goals for individuals and creating a school climate conducive to learning achievement."

According to the World Bank (See Appendix I- Graph 1), the cost per student enrolled at different levels of public education was a percentage of the GNP (Gross National Product) per capita in three country groups (Industrial countries, All developing countries and Sub-Saharan Africa) in the early 1980s. Basically, public expenditure per student is the public current spending on education divided by the total number of students by level, as a percentage of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) per capita. Public expenditure (current and capital) includes government spending on educational institutions (both public and private), education administration as well as subsidies for private entities (students/households and other private entities).

Then, focusing on primary education, the expenditure per student (% of GDP per capita) in World was reported at 16.36 in 2008, according to the World Bank. (See Appendix I- Graph 2).

At the same time, the total of public spending on education (% of government expenditure) in World was reported at 15.58 in 2008, according to the World Bank. Public expenditure on education consists of current and capital public expenditure on education. It includes government spending on educational institutions (both public and private), education

administration as well as subsidies for private entities (students/households and other private entities). (See Appendix I- Graph 3)

Data obtained from The World Bank shows that for the same year -2008-, Argentina's expenditure per student on primary education was 15,9 (See Appendix I- Graph 18) and the government expenditure on public education was only 5,4 (See Appendix I- Graph 19)

In regards to The World Bank funds, it must be said that they have to reach the intended beneficiaries. Education policy research pays considerable attention to the productivity and efficiency of the educational sector, in particular, that of government expenditure in the sector. The World Bank determines how governments and families can best finance and allocate scarce resources to produce quality education and the skills that individuals need for success.

Coming back to primary schooling, teachers' performance in the classroom is essential and the document (1990:49) said that is critical to provide both pre-service and in-service training to ensure optimum performance. As a result, better learning achievement would be expected and undoubtedly, the effectiveness of teachers' work has a direct relationship with her/his academic training and her/his attitude towards the process of teaching and learning and firmly sustained (1990:50): "it is ironic, if not indefensible, that greater emphasis is not placed on the quality of instructional personnel at this level [*primary*]"

This paper also points out the significance of intrinsic and extrinsic factors, and how these affect a teacher's job and performance. Although in developed countries, salaries have begun to increase, in developing nations the base pay remains low. The combination of this extrinsic factor and/or poor working conditions may create an overwhelming feeling in teachers leading to a lack of intrinsic motivation. At this point, governments (1990:75) have to play facilitating roles in meeting the basic learning needs; and in doing so, it would help the most disadvantaged populations in addition to create incentive structures aiming "for motivating institutions, communities, and individuals to participate in and promote basic learning efforts"

1.10 The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (1994)

This statement and Framework for Action for the World Conference on Special Needs Education synthesizes the new ideas on special education and establishes a framework for action to be implemented at national, regional, and local levels. It sustains that the challenge is to promote a "school for all" (1994:3). All the children and young people of the world have the right to education, and it is the school system of each country that has to be adjusted to meet the needs of all children.

The guiding principle of this Framework for Action is that the schools should welcome all children, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or other conditions such as those who come from disadvantaged or marginalized areas.

Its article 18 (1994:17-18) on Policy and Organization expresses that " (e)ducational policies at all levels, from the national to the local, should stipulate that a child with a disability should attend the neighborhood school that is, the school that would be attended if the child did not have a disability. Exceptions to this rule should be considered on a case-by-case basis where only education in a special school or establishment can be shown to meet the needs of the individual child."

Exceptions to this rule must be provided only in cases in which it is necessary to resort to special institutions, and in its article 19 (1994:18) claims that " (t)he practice of 'mainstreaming' children with disabilities should be an integral part of national plans for achieving education for all. Even in those exceptional cases where children are placed in special schools, their education need not be entirely segregated. Part-time attendance at regular schools should be encouraged. Provision should also be made to ensure inclusion of youth and adults with special needs in secondary and higher education as well as in training programmes. Special attention should be given to ensuring equality of access and opportunity for girls and women with disabilities." An example of this can be taken from the interview with the Vice-Principal of Special School Nr.6. This teacher emphasizes the importance of integrating and socializing children with special needs, and helping students develop the necessary skills to communicate. She said that even though this is a difficult task, they (the school staff) have been able to acquire facilities and services for their children (ages approx. 5-15) such as a gymnasium, swimming classes, trips to different kinds of competitions, etc. Another example is the one provided in the classroom where Gustavo -one of the teachers in Special School Nr6- was teaching his students (ages 9-11) the characteristics of the traffic lights and its importance. He explained that one of the goals as defined by each IEP (Individualized Education Program) is to make these students as autonomous as possible, and one of the tasks is to walk around the city learning how to use the traffic lights, to take a bus or to go to the supermarket. (See Appendix V –Pag.81).

1.11 Ley Federal de Educación (Federal Education Law)

A year before the Salamanca Meeting, In Argentina, the "Ley Federal de Educación Nro 24.195" was passed in 1993. Its goal was to guarantee especial education for people with especial needs, and to provide a comprehensive education for immediate work for people without disabilities. This reform denied the existence of pedagogy of diversity that respects the uniqueness and differences of each person. According to Morante, L., Mischia, B. &

Valverde, F. (2009:30-31) this curriculum reform only reflected the construction of a unique and globalizing category leaving aside other improvements related to special education. The political aspect of this law went hand in hand with the political ideals of Menem's government: economic adjustments and absence of a government who takes care of the educative system. This law presents disability within a broad scope which does not pay attention to the genetics and epigenetics (See Glossary- Pag.55) realities of each disabled person. The lack of a pedagogy that respects diversity and takes into account each person's needs was the result of the intrinsic mechanisms of this Federal Law.

To sum up, this model of education left wide gaps between classes, caused dropouts, and social fragmentation, so the Federal Law of Education had to be revised.

It was then, when the Poder Ejecutivo Nacional stated "Year of the full integration for people with disabilities" (Decree No. 236/94), and highlighted the Government's responsibility to collect the priorities contained in the World Program of Action for people with disabilities. That program of action was established to ensure independence and full integration into the social and economic life of the community of people with disabilities.

The same year, Decree No. 1027/94 adopted the "System of Comprehensive Protection of people with disabilities". The bill, which instructed various national agencies in concrete and immediate actions, aimed at achieving greater integration and empowerment of people with disability in different areas, including the Ministry of Culture and Education of the Nation.

1.12 National survey of people with disabilities, ENDI (Complementary to the 2001 Census)

Between November 2002 and April 2003, the survey ENDI- Primera Encuesta Nacional de Personas con Discapacidad was done as a complementary survey of the national population census, households and dwellings in 2001. It was the first experience of this kind in our country and in Latin America. It aimed at quantifying and characterizing people with disabilities with regard to the development of their daily lives, taking into account their physical and social environment. The National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INDEC) made this survey with a sample of about 67,000 urban households around the country. The results indicates that 7.1 % of the Argentine population, equivalent to almost 2.200.000 people has a disability (See Appendix I- Graph 4)

The sex distribution of people with disabilities shows a slight female predominance: 53.6 % are female and the remaining 46.4 % are male. The age distribution shows that 11.7 % of people with disabilities are under 15 years old; 48.5 % are between 15 and 64 years old, and the

remaining 39.8 % (866,258 people) are 65 years old or more. (See Appendix I- Graph 5)

From this statistical work arises that frequently disabilities are in the following order: first, kinesthetic (32 %), then visual impairment (14%) , hearing (12%) and mental (12% .) (See Appendix I- Graph 6)

The figures from the survey are similar to those in developed countries, with which our country shares the average life expectancy. This must be highlighted because in Argentina there is a strategy of attention, and while the disability begins as a health problem, when it receives no attention it becomes a social problem. Here is where the school plays its most significant role. Supporting this idea Alberghucci, M (2006:3) says:

“It is a continuum of educational benefits, constituted by a set of services, techniques, strategies, knowledge and learning resources. It is designed to ensure a comprehensive educational process, flexible and dynamic to people with special educational temporary or permanent needs, provided through specific and varied organizations”

1.13 Ley Educativa Nacional Nro 26.206

At the end of 2006, the National Educative Law Nr 26.206 was passed. It established that education and knowledge were public benefits, and personal and social rights were guaranteed by the state. In contrast with the Ley Federal de Educación, this law clearly determines the role of the State and its irrefutable responsibility on educative matters which address the role of the family and society as a whole. Chapter VIII of this law develops the right, the needs and range related to special education and in its article 44 (2006:9) sustains:

“Con el propósito de asegurar el derecho a la educación, la integración escolar y favorecer la inserción social de las personas con discapacidades, temporales o permanentes, las autoridades jurisdiccionales dispondrán las medidas necesarias para: a) Posibilitar una trayectoria educativa integral que permita el acceso a los saberes tecnológicos, artísticos y culturales. b) Contar con el personal especializado suficiente que trabaje en equipo con los/as docentes de la escuela común. c) Asegurar la cobertura de los servicios educativos especiales, el transporte, los recursos técnicos y materiales necesarios para el desarrollo del currículo escolar. d) Propiciar alternativas de continuidad para su formación a lo largo de toda la vida. e) Garantizar la accesibilidad física de todos los edificios escolares”.

This law is the result of a process which started in 2005 during the government of President Kirchner and it was promulgated after the Ley de Educación Técnico Profesional (LETP) N° 26.068 and Ley de Financiamiento Educativo(LF) N° 26.075

1.14 “Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Optional Protocol”

In December 2006, the “Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Optional Protocol” was announced and in its Art.1 (2006:4) states:

“The purpose of this Convention is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and promote the respect for their inherent dignity.

Persons with disabilities include those who have physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society impaired on an equal basis with others”

Never had a United Nation convention assembled such a large number of signatories on the day of its opening for signature. This convention marked the beginning of a new understanding of people with disabilities. Social aspects, human rights and fundamental freedoms of disabled people were highlighted and discussed during the session.

Throughout its content, this document explains how people with all kinds of disabilities should be respected. Its article 8 (2006:8) defines the importance of awareness:

“1. States Parties undertake to adopt immediate, effective and appropriate measures:

- (a) To raise awareness throughout society, including at the family level, regarding persons with disabilities, and to foster respect for the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities;
- (b) To combat stereotypes, prejudices and harmful practices relating to persons with disabilities, including those based on sex and age, in all areas of life;
- (c) To promote awareness of the capabilities and contributions of persons with disabilities.

2. Measures to this end include:

- (a) Initiating and maintaining effective public awareness campaigns designed:
 - (i) To nurture receptiveness to the rights of persons with disabilities;
 - (ii) To promote positive perceptions and greater social awareness towards persons with disabilities;
 - (iii) To promote recognition of the skills, merits and abilities of persons with disabilities, and of their contributions to the workplace and the labour market;

- (b) Fostering at all levels of the education system, including in all children from an early age, an attitude of respect for the rights of persons with disabilities;
- (c) Encouraging all organs of the media to portray persons with disabilities in a manner consistent with the purpose of the present Convention;
- (d) Promoting awareness-training programmes regarding persons with disabilities and the rights of persons with disabilities.”

Later, in June 2008, this international convention was passed in Argentina as Law 26.378. It aimed at protecting human rights of disabled people.

1.15 “Educación Especial, Una Modalidad del Sistema Educativo en Argentina” (Special Education, A Modality of the Argentine Educational System).

Later, the Argentinian Ministry of Education published “Educacion Especial, Una Modalidad del Sistema Educativo en Argentina” (2009). This document is the result of regional and national meetings on Special Education. It aims at reflecting on Inclusive Education and establishing a connection among the National Educative Law, the public policies in education and processes of change throughout educative practices.

Its final annex (Annex IV) describes the educative goals for 2021. These goals were discussed during a convention in El Salvador in May 2008 by Ministers of Education from all over Latin America. Topics such as poverty, inequities, culture and access to education were first debated considering each country within this continent. Ministers arrived at some conclusions which are at the core of the fundamental basis of education. In this context, the goals are:

- 1- to engage society through education
- 2- to educate on diversity
- 3- to extend early education
- 4- to provide quality education
- 5- to ensure that all students achieve the basic competencies
- 6- to increase access of young people to the teaching
- 7- to connect education to work
- 8- to educate throughout the entire life
- 9- to promote teachers’ professional development
- 10- to connect universities along Iberoamerica through knowledge and investigation
- 11- to increase the expenditure on education

CHAPTER 2 –METHODOLOGIES, MATERIALS and RESULTS

2- A HOLISTIC POINT OF VIEW

A holistic point of view relates to or is concerned with complete systems rather than with individual parts. Different fields apply this methodology. For example, in medicine each cause of illness is treated in each individual, considering his/her uniqueness; providing natural and safe alternatives which focus on the whole person and having a balanced approach which encompasses the patient's mind and body, offering the broadest possible perspective. This approach highly differs from the traditional way of medicine, in which many specialties are organ-based, meaning that symptoms and diseases come from a particular organ and are treated as units.

Another interesting field that applies this methodology is architecture. Holistic Architecture is designing a home or business incorporating unique design elements; environmentally sustainable/green products and energy into a cohesive wholeness to produce a physical, spiritual and emotional well-being into the design. The use of the components of responsible design produces a healthy home, referring to the health of the people in the home. Then, we add the energy aspect that assists the mental, emotional and spiritual immune systems along with the physical immune system, producing a balance. This new view is totally different from just building a house or shop

2.1 What is “Holistic Learning”?

The integration of this theory to education emerged in the mid-1980s, being the response to the established, traditional and fragmented learning style.

In education this view is applied when different learning styles are addressed in the process of education in order to attend to the learning needs of the whole person. It involves all the different parts of what constitutes the way we are, we feel, we think. The mind, the body and the spirit are all part of the same being and when these factors are considered in the classroom, students function at a higher level: they remember better, they produce more and their self-esteem is strengthened. So, the holistic approach in education takes into consideration the whole person and hearing, seeing, and doing are part of the process. Ana Karakusevic (Holistic Learning, 2014, Home Section .Parag 3-4) states that holistic learning is a methodology which aims at enhancing the resourcefulness of human beings, linking abilities rather than breaking them up.

The purpose of this kind of education is to provide students with the necessary tools to face academic and living challenges, and to help them become independent and happier human beings. As a result, children progressively develop their self-respect and self-esteem as essential values; these become part of their social growth, helping students develop healthy and productive relationships. Resilience is also developed and strengthened within this context, as it is fundamental to overcome difficulties and challenges. Resilience is an individual's ability to

adapt to stress and adversity. In other words, resilience is learning to deal with challenges, to overcome them successfully; and it is also a way to regulate emotions and make social interactions effective. This occurs when students learn in a supportive, challenging and involving environment, in which their innate potential is nurtured. Finally, in holistic education students learn that there are values which transcend academics and that there is much more than the simple acquisition of a degree and material possessions because the whole being, the whole person is multi-faceted and infinitely complex.

2.2- Professionals using this methodology in classroom settings

Scott H. Young (Holistic Learning E-book, nd, Parag. 8) goes further and sustains: “Holistic learning is the opposite of rote memorization. Instead of learning through force, your goal is to create webs of information that link together.” Within this method, teachers of special need learners do not break learning into skills. In this way, new information is taken and adapted; students do not even realize they are learning; and they can weave new concepts in webs of information as they are led to discover. On the other hand, the teacher acts as a facilitator rather than a controller. In order to facilitate learning, teachers must teach meaningfully, considering that not all students learn at the same pace. Flexible pacing is of paramount importance because learning is a system that requires bearing in mind each individual learner. If a lesson is too slow some children can get bored and the other way about. However, when individuality is considered in the new classroom, diversity rather than a problem turns into a welcome challenge that makes learning more dynamic and agile.

Marva Collins, a renowned educator must be acknowledged as she revolutionized teaching in her community by pointing out just how weak the public school system was in addressing the enormous diversity. Students were often labelled as learning disabled when, in reality, there were other underlying reasons and individual needs that were not considered and hindered learning. . Marva Collins (Wikipedia Marva Collins(n.d)), was born in Monroeville, Alabama on August 31, 1936. She became one of the most influential teachers and education activists of the 20th century. Working to gain equal access to quality education for African-American students, she started her own school in Chicago and founded a style of education that came to be known as the Collins Method.

Her methodology promotes students’ participation and critical thinking. Considering the latter, she says (Marva Collins Seminars, Inc.(2011) Educational Program and Philosophy section) “(t)he ability to reason, to analyze logically, will survive long after the student's retention of memorized fact is lost”.

In her webpage (Marva Collins Seminars, Inc.(2011)) she sustains: “(t)here is a brilliant child locked inside every student”. She develops this idea in her book “Ordinary Children and Extraordinary teachers” (1992:14-21).

In her book, she reflects deeply on teachers’ attitudes and how they affect children’s learning. Collins believes that remembering how teachers used to feel when they were young creates a good rapport between them and their students. Understanding students’ feelings eliminates “the image of demi-gods” (1992:15) that sometimes teachers have and this understanding gives the possibility of seeing beyond the academic performance, giving learning a humanistic and compassionate outlook that will survive long after the curriculum content is forgotten.

Regarding social and educational problems, Marva states that teachers need to know about a lot of things in order to help students to make the most of what they are and this is the battery of tools that make learning a rich and satisfying experience for both student and educator.

2.3- How the brain works

Our brain does not work as a computer filing system but as a network of interconnected neurons. Holistic learning is not an ordered system; every concept is linked to another. However, it is commonly accepted that the left and right hemispheres of the brain have different functions. The left hemisphere is used for analytical operations, written and spoken language, and logical processes. The right hemisphere is involved with visualization, synthesis, and creativity. Some people have skills that indicate that they operate in one hemisphere more than the other.

Although more recent brain imaging techniques have shown that the notion of a differentiation of brain functions into left and right halves may be far too simplistic it is still clear that formal education systems have tended to emphasize a rather narrow range of brain capabilities. Current research has shattered all previous notions about the nature of human intelligence. Patricia Kuhl (2010: 720), for instance, explains the effect of the impact of social interaction on language learning through the development of her “Social Gating Hypothesis” By “gating” she suggests that “social interaction creates a vastly different learning situation, one in which additional factors introduced by the social context influence learning”

In addition, the work of Howard Gardner (1993) has identified multiple intelligences. As cited in Richards, J & Rodgers, T (2001:115):

“Gardner notes that traditional IQ tests measure only logic and language, yet the brain has other equally important types of intelligence. Gardner argues that all humans have these intelligences, but people differ in the strengths and combinations of intelligences. He believes that all of them can be enhanced

through training and practice. MI [Multiple Intelligences] thus belongs to a group of instructional perspectives that focus on differences between learners and the need to recognize learner differences in teaching. Learners are viewed as possessing individual learning styles, preferences or intelligences. Pedagogy is most successful when these learner differences are acknowledged, analyzed for particular groups of learners and accommodated in teaching”.

Following this line of thought, the neurolinguistic researcher Dickinson, D (2000, parag.5) sustains that “everyone can learn” and teachers need to understand how to create environments and use strategies and tools to make this learning possible. As it was described in the previous section, the law guarantees that children receiving special education will have free and appropriated public education. The idea that everyone can learn is organized around what Ranson (1994:116) claims in Arnold, J (1999:280) about personal growth. He says that education must be seen from a more holistic/integrative perspective in order to construct meaning.

This model must be at the heart of inclusive education. Therefore, inclusion must be seen as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies. Inclusion is concerned with providing appropriate responses in formal and non-formal educational settings. When both, teachers and learners see this welcoming of diversity as a rewarding challenge rather than a difficulty then inclusive learning/teaching will have achieved its objective.

3- FROM BIOLOGY TO SOCIOLOGY: DEMOCRATIZING EDUCATION

The cognitive functions attached to each hemisphere are still thought to be the same. Therefore, a person with a cerebral disability may have affected some micro-anatomic subsystems within each cerebral region. Paradis (as cited in Gomez-Ruiz, M. 2010:451-452) claims that there should not be qualitative differences but quantitative ones in learning a L2, in other words many different cerebral mechanisms are used in the process of verbal communication. It is highly possible that the representation of the language may be different and differ from brain to brain, using different regions from both hemispheres. It must be understood that the neuroanatomic system is not enough to explain how people learn a language.

According to Maturana (1970:9), living systems are units of interactions; they exist in an ambience and they cannot be understood independently of that part of the ambience within which they interact. When a living system learns, it is because there have been inherent and subtle changes in its organization

In his work "Biology of the social phenomenon" (1985:1), living beings are explained in terms of their relationships and not on the properties of their biological components. This holistic conception provides a historical-evolutionary vision. He continues saying that "the individual human being is social and the social human being is individual" joining the relationship between nature and culture. An example of this can be seen in the Barilochense newspaper article "El Cordillerano" dated September 9 2014, which shows how a General Education School and a Special Education School were integrated throughout a whole day in order to carry out some cooperative activities. (See Appendix III – Pag.68)

Maturana (1985:12) delves deeper into socialization. Maturana points out that humans are inherently social entities and every social system is based on love. Humans are not able to live without the support of a society and there is no genuine socialization without love. Being social means being involved with others and love is an intrinsic part for this interaction to be successful and enriching. Another proponent of this view is Ana Maria Aiazzi (2007:2) in her article "Teaching as a matter of love" she writes "a person who really loves can really care for someone else. And pupils can perceive if teachers really care for them or not, as well as detect if a teacher has a sincere passion for teaching. And if a teacher is professionally competent but emotionally detached from his/her pupils, he/she will not be able to involve them and they will not learn anything durable from him/her. I mean, they will just study to pass their exams and learn what they need to know in that particular moment, but what they learn will only be instrumental and stored in their memory in a superficial way, so easily forgettable." She also sustains that love is not included in any curriculum and it is sometimes a taboo word when talking about teaching. Along her article she never talks about love as kissing and hugging students, she refers to this feeling (2007:3) as "accepting each of them [students] as unique individuals"

Paterno (2008:3) goes further and says that one of the paramount characteristics of human beings is the willingness to learn. Teaching and learning occur throughout every person's life, so curiosity, motivation, thinking, feeling, and acting should be integrated as a whole. Paulo Freire (2012:37-40) opens an inspiring and ethical viewpoint regarding education. He believes that one of the primary tasks of the critical pedagogy is the overcoming of the unjust reality. It is a question of understanding human dignity and assuming the ethical responsibility of producing changes and also understanding that changes are needed to create culture and history. Changes compel us to assume risks because men and women are much more than adaptable substances in this world. People are here to make this society fairer and substantially more democratic and the following is an example of how a citizen can be instrumental in the democratic process. An article in the "El Cordillerano" newspaper on July 19th, 2014, reports on how a mother and a judge worked to overcome the unfair reality of a girl with Down Syndrome.

(See Appendix III – Pg. 66). This girl needed the assistance of a Special Teacher, so her mother, by means of a constitutional protection, succeeded in making the Ministry of Education of Rio Negro Province provide the assistance needed.

All members of society at all levels both academic and non-academic must take part in this social transformation. Promoting human rights, fostering tolerance, respecting the dignity of all people are vehicles through which excluded adults and children can improve their life chances and as stated by UNESCO (2000:3) “widening responses to the full diversity of learners”.

Throughout the time, diversity in the classroom has been enhanced by means of more democratic attitudes and practices. It has passed from the mere “educated and uneducated” to a more medical view, and from that, it has had its springboard to what can be considered “Democratized Education”: an education in which all members of society play their part or participate as we can see in the examples above; an education in which human rights are protected, aiming at the core of every human by means of love and respect as Aiazzi stated previously; and an educative system which addresses to all students’ needs. However, and due to the lack of the full implementation of updated policies, there are still cases, such the one mentioned before, in which a judge had to intervene. Another way in which this democratization has not reached its full potential is the lack of permanent training for all teachers. All teachers need to be trained in addressing diversity and in this way the concept of the equal enforcement of the law that democracy has as one of its principles, would be finally applied. Democratizing education is possible when all students receive equal quality education and when all teachers are prepared to provide it, and as in all healthy democratic systems the ties among its participants are strengthened by their interactions and these enhance their productivity, and in the case of the classroom, having a democratized learning environment enhances the learning process in general.

MATERIALS AND RESULTS

The field work was based on: 1) Surveys to ESL teachers, 2) Surveys to parents, 3) Surveys and interview with professionals 4) Conference 5) Classroom observations, 6) Interviews with principals. These interviews and surveys were carefully prepared with a holistic point of view, considering that addressing students with special needs involves group work and not only the work of the Special Teacher. Qualitative and quantitative aspects were considered.

3.1- Surveys to ESL teachers

This survey was made by e-mailing ESL colleagues. I described my work, I attached the survey, and I invited them to submit their answers. I also explained that their answers were going to be treated confidentially. There were 44 replies out of 137 sent out and these were analyzed (See Appendix V – Pag.106-228).

The results showed that most of the teachers had already worked with students with special needs (30/44 or 75%- See Appendix I Graph 7); almost every teacher is interested in having some specialized training (42/44 or 95% - See Appendix I Graph 8).

Another interesting result is that most teachers considered that there is not enough collaborative work to support students with special needs. (27/44 or 61% -See Appendix I- Graph 9); and what is more, most of them considered that they are not seen as equal partners in the instructional process of teaching (31/44 or 70% - See Appendix I Graph 10).

However, ESL teachers are given the same information about procedural and curricular issues as special teachers (22/44 or 50% – See Appendix I Graph 11)

Another aspect to consider from these surveys is that some teachers who said to have worked with students with special needs, worked as usual or made modifications in curricula, seating arrangements, choice of materials etc, according to their own criteria. This can be inferred by reading the comments made at the end of the surveys: *“there are trainings but the implementation is hard”*; *“Once I had a student with hearing difficulties. Nobody told me what to do. I only sat him near me”*; *“Teachers work alone”*; *“This year I have a girl with some visual impairment. Her Special teacher told to write on only part of the board. The light reflected on the other parts of the board affects her residual vision”*; *“I mainly work using my common sense”*; *“I have a student with TGD. He has a Special Teacher. I don’t know what to do. I just teach the usual way”*; *“i realized I need training as I didn’t do anything specific”*; etc (See Appendix V- Pag 111-114-117-120-128-13-134)

These comments led me to conclude that most teachers work in isolation, have little support, seem to be unaware of the available help at the district level and apparently they are resigned to work in the traditional classroom, with few or no changes; to work with what they already know is their “security blanket”.

3.2- Parent Surveys

These consisted in e-mailing all my students’ parents (past and current ones). I attached each survey and I explained my work. I invited them to submit their answers and I told them that their answers were going to be confidential. I received 67 answers out of 178, which were analyzed (See Appendix V- Pag. 228-299) .

The results showed that 11% (8/69) of the families has a child with special needs (See Appendix I – Graph 12).

As regards the educational service provided by schools, 48% (33/69) of the families feel satisfied; 38% (26/69) feel partially satisfied and only 14% (10/69) are not satisfied. (See Appendix I -Graph 13)

Families also expressed their opinions about how much inclusion helps children socially. The results show that 45% (31/69) think inclusion is partially helpful; while 41% (28/69) considers inclusion as helpful and 14% thinks that inclusion does not help children socially. (See Appendix I Graph 14).

The surveys also show the families' opinion on how much inclusion is at the expense of their children academic performance: 58% (40/69) says that inclusion has a partially detrimental effect on their children academic performance; 26% (18/69) says that inclusion negatively affects children academic performance and 16% (11/69) thinks it does not affect it. (See Appendix I -Graph 15).

An interesting result is the one that not all families know how much academically prepared are teachers to deal with diversity in the classroom. 61% (42/69) says that they do not know if teachers are equally prepared; 24% (16/69) says that some of them are prepared; 14,5% (9/69) says that a few of them are prepared and only 0,5% (2/69) sustains that most of them are prepared. None of the families say that all teachers are equally prepared (0/69) (See Appendix I -Graph 16)

Finally, 65% of the families (45/69) consider that it is necessary that the whole school staff were trained specifically to provide equity and quality in education; 34% (23/69) believe that it is partially necessary and only 1% thinks it is not necessary to trained all teachers. (See Appendix I Graph 17)

3.3 – Survey and interview with professionals and attendance to a Conference (Awareness Conference on Inclusion of Disabled Children and Youth). (II Jornada de Concientización y Difusión. Inclusión Escolar de Niños y Jóvenes con Discapacidad)

The survey, the interview and the conference gave me a great insight and reaffirmed some of my beliefs. In the first place, it is imperative that students with disabilities can receive education in the same place as the rest of the other students, to share spaces as well as experiences. This was the widespread opinion throughout the Conference but it is also the pillar of Humberto Maturana's work (1985:1) when he says "Human beings are social entities". This is the reason why as teachers we must provide learning opportunities for all students because everybody has the right to equal, non-discriminatory, quality education; adjusted to the needs of each student because education which aims at homogeneity at all cost does not have good results.

There were also convergence opinions as regards the process of inclusion. The psychologist, M.E Rivas, Lic. Mady Casco, lectures and the public in general participating at the Conference all claimed that the process of inclusive education is far from complete. It is important to point out some aspects that hinder the school integration. Among them are: first, excessive number of pupils per classroom is overwhelming for teachers who have to respond to all students needs equally. A participant at the conference expressed what she observed with her own child said *“yo cuento un poco lo que yo veo. Un nene que tiene autismo, divino, y la maestra esta, pero no esta preparada. Entonces tiene 22 chicos cada uno con un aprendizaje diferente, el mío por ejemplo todavía no lee. Entonces esta sobrepasada”*. (See Appendix V- Pag.100) ; second, absence or poor planning. Rivas explaining poor or no-planning of older teachers threatened by change said *“las maestras viejas, o por lo menos con las que yo estoy familiarizada tratan hasta de repetir la planificación, que no se la firman en muchos lados, para solo cambiar una hoja, y repiten la planificación año a año, son maestras con una estructura muy armada, cualquier cosa las desequilibra”* (See Appendix V- Pag.91); third, the absence of education support services. The professionals at the conference explained how bureaucratic the system usually is *“ nosotros en octubre ya empezamos a trabajar con los niños que entraran en proyecto de integración y se hacen los pedidos de maestros de integración . Lo que pasa que los niños a partir de la ley de proyecto de integración entran directamente a la escuela común. Entonces nos pasa que en marzo aparece un nene que le hicieron recién la declaración y no tenemos los recursos. Entonces hasta que se hace todo ese trámite. Nosotros también trabajamos con las obras sociales y con maestros de apoyo a la inclusión de obras sociales y hay muchas dificultades también desde la parte privada. Porque nosotros sabemos, por lo que nos cuentan que a veces cobran con hasta 4 o 5 meses de retraso, entonces a veces nos pasa que a mitad de camino nos quedamos sin maestra privada”* (See Appendix V- Pag 102); fourth, rigid criteria assessment. The topic of how methodology was changing throughout time was also discussed. The traditional medical/scientific point of view expanded to a more social view which requires a flexible curriculum. This new curriculum in turn demands open-minded teachers. (See Appendix V- pag 101)

Another salient point of coincidence is the one presented when talking about an inclusive school: what does this really mean? An inclusive school is not limited to the special-needed population, but is geared to a much larger group, formed by children, adolescents and young people who for various reasons, have different learning styles. To cater for all these needs, it is necessary to assume the heterogeneity of the group by implementing additional devices, and developing strategies for a more personalized education. At the conference it was said that *“Por eso las adecuaciones curriculares son el proceso para tratar de responder a las necesidades de aprendizaje de cada alumno. Son estrategias de planificación y actuación*

docente. Nosotros decimos que a veces uno propone una adecuación curricular para un niño y la maestra de grado la toma para todos. (...). Tomar la adecuación curricular como un puente y para que cada vez tenga menos dependencia” (See Appendix V – Pag. 101)

In inclusion, the center of attention is the transformation of the organization and the educational response of the school to welcome all children and young people to succeed in learning. The merit of the inclusive schools is that, in addition to being able to provide a quality education to all students, it is able to change the attitudes of discrimination, to create empathy in communities, and therefore, collaborate in building an inclusive society. At this point Freire’s work must be acknowledged (2012:59): “The importance of our tasks has to do with the seriousness with which we carry them out, with the respect that we have when we do them and the respect for those who we do them for, with the loyalty to the dream that these tasks represent. This has to do with the sense of ethics that must “soak” these tasks, with our competence to carry them out, with the emotional balance with which we do them and the courage with which we fight for them”

And of course in order to build a more inclusive society, to work with responsibility and with courage for our dreams and the dreams of others, training is necessary. In the interview with Rivas, she said “*si es fundamental [las capacitaciones], pero a todo nivel. A nivel docente, a nivel equipos tecnicos, el recurso especifico tambien se necesita” (See Appendix V- pag.89)* “*Silvia Mendoza: Esto de capacitarse no es que te va a traer una solucion magica... Rivas: pero te va a abrir la mirada. Hay que capacitarse. En todo” (See Appendix V – Pag. 94).* Also, Mady Casco thinks that teachers should have training opportunities to better serve students with special needs (See Appendix V- Pag.298) and the professionals at the conference as well “*Los que participaron el año pasado de la jornada recordaran que todos manifestaban de la necesidad de aprender en este área que es inclusión, integración, focalizando siempre el tema de la discapacidad. Nosotras en Buenos Aires hemos dictado en varios momentos los temas de estas jornadas. Hacemos capacitaciones constantes con el plantel que tenemos alla”.* (See Appendix V- Pag.96)

The general principle that should govern in the inclusive schools is that all children should learn together facing their difficulties and individual differences while focusing and nurturing their strengths. Curriculum must be adapted to the different rates of learning of the students and ensure quality education. Students must receive all the additional support needed to ensure that this education is also effective. This notion was explained by Rivas who said “*en esto también tiene que ver que discapacidad se pone en juego. A ver... a veces uno hace hincapié en la discapacidad, yo trato de hacer hincapié en las capacidades, pero es difícil” (See Appendix V-*

Pag.90). Lectures also expressed “No es solamente este cuadro que tiene, porque tiene un montón de otras posibilidades. Y entonces lo que uno hace es hacer funcional esta falencia y las limitaciones funcionales son de un momento que están para esta situación particular pero pueden avanzar en otra instancia. Entonces las limitaciones se superan, se atenúan con los apoyos necesarios. Y nosotros lo que hacemos siempre es apuntar a la calidad de vida.” (See Appendix V -Pag. 97). They concluded this idea saying “empezamos trabajando con integración escolar y después pasamos a un concepto mas abarcativo el de inclusión educativa. Poder tomar de un niño no solo la limitación sino todas las capacidades que tiene a parte de esa limitación. Trabajamos desde ahí permanentemente.” (See Appendix V- Pag. 97)

The main challenge for the inclusion of students in schools consists in changing attitudes to keep an equitable education for all. If not, many problems may arise. Accounting for this, Rivas said “pero tienen que estar [el alumno incluido] de una manera que le permitan a los demás aprender. Porque sino se pierde esto: focalizados en esta cuestión de que hay que incluir descuidas al que no necesitas incluir. Y pierde en esto: en calidad educativa, en autoestima. Todo el día le están dando bola al otro y yo me siento que soy nada. Siento que no me necesitan y me empiezo a invisibilizar. Y esto no esta bueno por eso la inclusión tiene que ser tan natural como para que todos puedan disfrutarla y que conozcan a los chicos con síndrome de Down. Pero tenes que tener las herramientas para que Juan y Pedro que no tienen síndrome de Down reciban atención, sino no es justo para ellos. Básicamente me parece que es ahí donde falta el equilibrio. Tenes maestros que se abocan a tratar de solucionar este tema y hay maestros que lo único que pueden hacer es tratar que no se peguen” (See Appendix V- Pag.94). The professionals at the conference also accounted for this “también todos los padres de esa sala tienen derecho y hacer fuerza y pedir un reunión con la supervisora y hacer fuerza para que el recurso llegue en algún momento, prontamente, porque no es la inclusión de ese niño solamente sino la del todo el grupo. Todos los papas tienen derecho a pedir por el bienestar de esa sala” (See Appendix V – Pag.102)

The last point I want to mention is the one related to everybody’s participation in the process of inclusion. Much of the work in favor of inclusion is provided by schools. However, this is not their entire responsibility, but that it is up to all of us: the state, society and the entire educational system. In this long process, breakdowns can be found, Rivas stated “Por un lado la apertura y por otro lado todo esta bajada de leyes que dicen que es obligatorio que el chico discapacitado tenga acceso a la escuela común y la ley de inclusión dice que mientras se pueda y no sea severisimo el niño tiene que estar integrado. El tema es que a veces es una integración medio a presión” (See Appendix V- Pag.91). And also “Las escuelas siguen discriminando, las escuelas siguen buscando esa cuestión del grupo homogéneo. Todo igual.

No lo digo por un chico con discapacidad lo digo por el chico que nosotros llamamos de desarrollo social. Que son chicos que vienen desde situaciones muy complejas y demas. Las escuelas no acompañan. (...)En general son expulsivas las escuelas. Hay muy poca escuela o jardin que yo conozca que sea inclusiva. Hay escuelas donde el director dice: 'si no viene con el integrador las cuatro horas no lo acepto'" (See Appendix V- Pag. 94). At the conference this problem was also mentioned "Y trabajamos la inclusión educativa pero sino viene con la acompañante no entra . Entonces ahí, hay una institución que da cuenta de no estar preparada para alojar a ese niño" (See Appendix V – Pag. 104)

3.4- Classroom observations

The task to observe classes was not easy, although I started asking for this at the beginning of September. I was not either given the possibility to talk to the principal at the Special School Nr 19 in Bariloche in which the secretary, to whom I explained who I am and what I was doing, asked in several occasions if was a member of the ETAP (Equipo Técnico de Apoyo Pedagógico). These attitudes leave room for many questions which will be answered in the Discussion Section.

I had the opportunity to observe classes at Special School Nr 6. The Vice-Principal and the teachers had an open and warm attitude towards my work. Even though, it was not the ideal context for teaching a second language, as most of the children had severe mental disabilities; I experienced how much those teachers work in order to make their students as autonomous as possible in all aspects of life. This can be seen in the extract taken from the observation of Gustavo's group:

"G: (...) ¿le podemos dar abrazo a cualquier persona en la calle?"

Alumnos: no...

G: podemos saludar, eso sí. Hola señor, hola señora, hola seño, pero puedo ir a abrazar a alguien en la calle?"

Alumno: no... podemos ir de la mano

G: ¿pero de quién? De la mama, del papa, del maestro. No de cualquier persona. Se acuerdan que estudiamos. ¿De quién era el cuerpo? Solo nuestro. ¿Quién lo puede tocar?"

Alumnos: nosotros...

G: nosotros, y ¿Quién más?"

Alumnos: y la mama

G: y la mama. Nadie puede tocar nuestro cuerpo. Eso ya lo estuvimos estudiando"

(See Appendix V – Pag.81)

Another interesting example is the one taken from Fernanda's group. While talking to me, she continued giving directions to one of the students in the classroom:

"F: mucho no trabajo con eso, con el tema de los iconos. Si para algunas cosas: lo cotidiano, ir de compras, el icono del supermercado, o sea, el foco: la autonomía y la independencia porque son chicos que recién ahora, por ejemplo Jennifer recién ahora se levanta los pantalones cuando va al baño... si hay que motivarla porque si vos la dejás así puede estar así hasta las doce del mediodía. Ella no demanda. Ella sigue las directivas. (Dirigiéndose a Jenny) ¿Terminaste? Bueno, levántate y lava tu taza. Dale. (Dirigiéndose a mí) Entonces todo fue desde los objetivos que fueron esos: la autonomía y la independencia y el trabajo, pura y exclusivamente repetitiva en cuestiones específicas que hacen a la cotidianidad y trabajar a partir de esto: que no sea algo impuesto. Antes no podía darles opciones porque el grupo estaba desestructurado y no podía darles opciones. La idea es que ellos sean lo más autónomos posibles y que puedan elegir y decir esto si esto no". (See Appendix V- Pag.80)

The interview done with the kindergarden teacher provided with relevant information of students' interaction in the classroom, which is an essential part of the socialization of special-need students *"yo veía que los chicos le hablaban y la miraban a la boca y haciéndole un tipo de ayuda oral, para que ella pudiera comprender. Porque ellos me veían a mí, de alguna manera me imitaban, se ponían al frente y hablaban de la misma forma". (See Appendix V- Pag. 74)*

Another example of interaction in the classroom, presented during the conference shows, once again, the importance of socialization *"Hubo que hacer un trabajo para que también su grupo de aula pueda jugar con ella. More también tiene una dificultad al hablar, no se le entiende. Entonces como que no la entendían y se iban. Entonces fue "Bueno, ¿no la entendés?, preguntale otra vez, señalá". Bueno, todo un trabajo con el grupo. La verdad es que fue muy lindo lo que se fue logrando. Luego hubo un cambio de docente porque la que estaba se enfermó y también ella la aceptó. Esa nueva docente también generaba como cuestiones de unión y no hacía diferencia de nada". (See Appendix V- Pag. 104)*

At the St Katherine's Institute we adhere fully to the philosophy of inclusion addressing individual differences and needs of all students within the framework of Second Language Acquisition. In order to do this our staff is well informed regarding legislation related to Education and trained in the latest methodologies.

Our facilities include easy access for those with reduced mobility, specially equipped restrooms, comfortable classrooms and adapted equipment and materials. (See Appendix VI- Pag. 310-312)

We provide individualized instruction as well as a curriculum and evaluations that are adapted as the need arises.

Every effort is made to offer appropriate services in the least restrictive environment possible.

St Katherine's aim is to help all English Language learners achieve self-sufficiency and success in Second Language Acquisition.

The following are two examples of inclusion at our institute. In the first case in an intermediate English level group, a boy with Asperger Syndrome has been welcomed warmly by all his classmates from the very beginning. He was accepted naturally and although he is quiet and has a sullen expression, he is also responsive and smiles timidly when the other students recognize his creativity when writing; or when he has been absent and is again welcomed and his mates ask him if he has been ok. This is a clear example of how inclusion can succeed when limitations are not the focus but rather strengths and abilities. It is very interesting to point out that the group was never concerned with his disability; he was accepted naturally as one of the group.

In the second case, a boy with orofacial dyspraxia and low cognitive performance wasn't received in his elementary level group as warmly as the other one was in his group. In this case, I had to intervene at the beginning of the year when some of the girls giggled when he dared to express his ideas. I waited until one day he was absent and talked to the group. From that moment on, they started to recognize his great effort in overcoming his limitations. So, I must say that it was a question of appreciating his effort rather than understanding his problem.

3.5- Interviews with principals

Two Principals were interviewed: one from Special School Nr6 whose name is Silvina Diaz and the other from School Nr71, Eduardo Cuenya. Many aspects of both interviews seem to be intertwined and in agreement that inclusion is education for all. The first example presented is taken from the interview with Silvina Diaz. She said: *"Y los últimos 10 años los trabaje en apoyo a la inclusión como maestra integradora. Fui una de las primeras en empezar a trabajar con un niño con autismo severo, integrado todo el tiempo en la escuela común y la verdad es que es un caso que lo escribimos. Hoy tiene 10 años está integrado, esta alfabetizado, va todos los días a la escuela de su barrio va a los cumpleaños, lo invitan a jugar y cuando nosotros lo conocimos con 4 años, sin lenguaje con una conducta absolutamente autista, pensábamos que era imposible. Y ahí por ejemplo te cuento como te dije antes, es un caso que pudimos articular con la escuela del barrio que lo recibió, que tuvo ese tiempo de espera con él".* (See Appendix V- Pag.77). It can be seen that if the child with autism is now taking part in parties

and is playing with his mates, that means that the limitations were blurred and education for all has taken place as a whole. The two following examples that support this idea are given by Eduardo Cuenya *“es un compañero mas y lo que tratamos de transmitir de verdad, es que todos somos diferente. Que hay algunos que tienen una discapacidad y requieren de nuestra ayuda, de nuestro acompañamiento”*. And finally, he adds *“Es un enorme trabajo y sumamente enriquecedor para el grupo. Vos estas formando. Cuando hay una situación de inclusión no solamente estas permitiendo la inclusión a ese nene que esta en el aula, sino al resto del grupo a entender y a convivir”* (See Appendix V- Pag.84-85)

Another node is that inclusion involves society participation. Diaz said *“la sociedad está cada vez un poquito más preparada, un camino que nosotros venimos abriendo desde que en las veredas pueda haber una rampa. En Bariloche tenemos muchos niños con discapacidad motora y sillas de ruedas y no pueden ir al cine porque el único cine que hay no tiene un lugar para una silla de ruedas. Este es el ámbito social que nos presenta hoy. Pero de a poco nosotros lo vamos transformando. Hoy nuestros chicos van una vez por semana a natación a Pehuenes, hemos logrado el espacio. Tienen su gimnasio. Desde el área municipal nos están ayudando para que podamos cubrir las competencia afuera, viajar a El Bolsón, a el Valle. Pero cuesta mucho trabajo, cuesta mucho trabajo y la verdad es que es un proceso largo. Que es posible es posible, que no todos los niños con necesidades especiales son iguales eso lo tiene que ver la sociedad también. Cada uno tiene sus características y sus necesidades, no todos tienen las mismas y entonces algunos tienen más facilidad para conectarse con el afuera que otros”* (See Appendix V- Pag.77). And Cuenya also talked about this saying *“son como los 3 lugares, lo profesional, lo grupal y desde la comunidad. Es la manera de que lo enseñamos nos tiene que trascender. Yo el otro decia cuanto y de que manera entendemos la escuela, que ha sido siempre y a lo largo de la historia, transformadora de la sociedad. (...)esa escuela tuvo una función clave en la sociedad y fue transformadora de la sociedad. Hoy, nos encontramos con un mundo que nos transforma a nosotros como escuela y la realidad cambiante de todos los días, las problemáticas sociales, económicas, nos transforman a nosotros. Y hay que encontrar la manera de adaptarnos a este mundo nuevo, pero seguir también sin perder la función transformadora que tiene la escuela. Nosotros trabajamos con la inclusión para la sociedad, para hacer y construir desde la escuela una sociedad mas justa e inclusiva. Que van a hacer con estos chicos que egresan y sus familias que hoy vienen y son parte de la escuela”* (See Appendix V- Pag 85).

Both Principals sustained that training is a fundamental pillar. Diaz refers to this saying *“hace 5 años que se abrió el instituto de formación docente en Bariloche con la carrera de docente en educacion especial, antes no existía en la zona, digamos. Entonces teníamos mucha falta de*

docentes con títulos específicos en educación especial. Ahora se están empezando a cubrir los cargos con docentes la mayoría con título específico” (See Appendix V- Pag.75-76). And Cuenya asserts about this idea too “primero pasa esto: desconocimiento general y temor porque uno no sabe como abordarlo. Por otro lado pasa generalmente que como la maestra de grado pasa mas horas con ese alumno es ella la que recibe mayor apoyo junto con las maestras de apoyo a la inclusión”. He finishes this idea saying that “Yo creo ahí nos quedan asignaturas pendientes en ese sentido. Es un reclamo que uno hace a la escuela especial, a nuestras autoridades superiores en cuanto a mayor formación, mayor capacitación y mayor presencia de otras instituciones, por ejemplo la escuela especial 6, para trabajar así como en pareja pedagógica. Eso es como central. Pero después hay otra cuestión desde lo personal y desde lo profesional: como cada uno de nosotros puede asumir la situación de estar con un niño en situación de inclusión... siempre que empezamos el año nos encontramos con un grupo, ese grupo es un desafío y como entenderlo también como un desafío, como todos los demás, con complejidades particulares, pero si no me cierro, sino pienso que esto es algo que yo no puedo hacer, si entiendo que el rol del maestro de hoy no es el mismo que el del maestro de hace” (See Appendix V- Pag. 84-85)

Another topic in common refers to cooperation, inclusion must be cooperative work. Diaz provides evidence saying “Los mejores resultados que hemos obtenidos fueron cuando los trabajos fueron articulados: con terapeutas externos con los fonoaudiólogos, los kinesiólogos y educación y poder mancomunar ese trabajo y articularlo y ahí se han visto los mejores resultados” (See Appendix V- Pag.76) The School 71 Principal reflects on this “*día a día vamos evaluando que ese trabajo es mas rico cuando lo hago con otro. Cuando la mirada le enriquece al otro el vicedirector, la pareja pedagógica, el compañero cuando abro el aula y deja de ser un espacio aislado. Y en los caso de alumnos con proyecto de inclusión con determinadas discapacidades el aporte es riquísimo del docente que esta preparado, que estudio en la carrera de docente especial y que tiene conocimiento específico” (See Appendix V- Pag.83). And he adds “el equipo directivo, los directivos que no tienen que ser exclusivamente “evaluadores de lo que pasa”, sino que tienen que acompañar en la tarea, ayudar en la formación del otro” (See Appendix V- pag. 87)*

A remarkable concept that was expressed by Diaz is related to patience (See Appendix V- Pag.77). She sustained that is important to considerate students' pace in learning.

On the other hand, Cuenya talked about the teacher's job, stating that sometimes they DO make mistakes while looking for the best strategies to be applied. (See Appendix V- Pag.87-88).

However, looking at the mistakes should not be seen as something pejorative, it must be part of the reflective attitude towards the teaching strategies.

CHAPTER 3- CONCLUSION

EDUCATION FOR ALL. A CHALLENGE

Based on the results obtained, flexibility and collaborative work must be at the centre of any inclusive school. Inclusion should be a process which addresses and responds to the diversity of all learners, considering all children at all levels: social, cultural, emotional, physical, academic, and any other level involving aspects which are affected by educational processes. Inclusion promotes personal growth for all students and encourages learners to become skilled, independent, and responsible.

Inclusive schooling caters for all children, responding to the diversity of learning needs. This way, however, requires permanent revision and practices of methodological approaches, understanding that teachers are not dealing with problems or disabilities but with special needs-children.

Inclusive learning environments enrich learning settings and enable teachers and students to feel comfortable with diversity as students are not judged according to just one ability but are regarded as having multiple capacities and talents.

Diversity welcomes inclusion and vice versa. It can be said that after decades of exclusion, children in Argentina are finally learning to live with and cope with differences in the classroom. This new thinking is producing substantial changes in society and disabled students are starting to be accepted as equal partners.

Teachers who see and welcome inclusion, as a challenge to improve their own teaching, work to create supportive school environments. At this point, we are compelled to ask: *Why has inclusive education not been fully implemented?* In order to begin answering this question we should remember that although Argentina has inclusive policies in education, Education For All (EFA) is not a reality as yet due to a number of factors analyzed throughout the paper and discussed in the corresponding chapter. The reality is –according to the survey- that EFA is not fully implemented as not all those involved in education are trained adequately to address diversity. On the other hand, and as it is mentioned in *Educación Especial, una modalidad del Sistema Educativo en la Argentina* (2009:28):

“The methodology to address inclusion should deal with the situations in a not coercive way. The educational system that is governed by the principle of inclusive education should work in an articulated manner and not as is often the case: special education separated from regular education (...) For this situation to

change, it is necessary to overcome the fragmentation of the political and hierarchical levels of decision”.

All systems, even those overtly committed to education for all, have a tendency to exclude, sometimes directly (for example those institutions which do not provide school facilities: accessible classrooms or toilets; computer access, etc), and sometimes indirectly (for example, when professional development workshops are only given for Language or Math teachers and other cultural areas of teaching like English are left aside).

In this sense, I must, again, refer to my own experience as the principal of my language school, St Katherine Institute. In 2012 we were authorized as an international test center. The exam company we represent provides exams which they say are for everybody, and this company also sustains that all needs are considered. It was last year when we presented 2 candidates with disabilities: one with Asperger Syndrome and the other with an intellectual disability and a serious orofacial dyspraxia. I had to submit medical reports to inform about their disabilities (See Appendix IV) which were translated and sent both by e-mail and by post. Unfortunately, the boy with intellectual disability and dyspraxia failed (he got a 59% out of the minimum 60% required for people without disabilities). I inquired about the correction and if his condition had been considered. I was not given a timely answer until one day I received a phone call from the representative of the agency in Buenos Aires who told me that the student's listening performance was weak. She asked me to write a letter explaining why in my opinion they should give this candidate a passing mark. I wrote the letter and after reviewing the case my student was given a passing mark. I received the notification (e-mail) of this decision from the company's office in Buenos Aires. (See Appendix IV- Pag. 70).

Inclusive education's central aim, as part of democratized education, is to address and overcome all barriers to full participation of all learners and teachers, providing effective and equal opportunities for successful learning throughout school education. Each teacher should participate in a range of flexible professional development activities becoming critical and reflective practitioners. Good professional development should be negotiated/agreed with teachers rather than imposed by the school principal or education authorities. Professional development should be recognized and formally accredited. This will help teachers become more flexible and innovative, ready to prepare her/his lessons taking into account a range of approaches and using available material and technologies. In short, diversity is not only a challenge but an opportunity to grow.

Once again Paulo Freire's (2012:51-57) view must be addressed. He emphatically called for action and said:

“One of the primary tasks of critical radical liberating pedagogy is to work for the legitimacy of the ethical-political dream of overcoming the unjust reality. It is to work on the authenticity of this struggle and the possibility of change; it means working against the force of the dominant fatalistic ideology that encourages the immobility of the oppressed and their adaptation to the unjust reality, necessary for the movement of the oppressors. It is to defend a teaching practice in which the rigorous teaching of content is never implemented in a cold, mechanical and falsely neutral manner. (...) That is why all educational, liberating practice, which values the exercise of will, of decision, of resistance, of choice, the role of emotions, feelings, desires, the limits of the importance of awareness in history, the ethical sense of human presence in the world, an understanding of history as a possibility and never as a determination is substantially hopeful and, for that reason precisely, it creates hope. ”

There is still a long way to go before we can say that *democratizing/inclusive education* is a reality and fully implemented and that it provides opportunities for ALL learners to become successful in their learning experiences. However, and as the research shows, there is a high percentage of teachers and families who firmly believe that everybody needs to be involved; the majority of the teachers consider that it is important to be adequately trained in this area, and that they would like to have specific training in order to provide quality education. This is a real challenge.

A film that made a profound impression in the way I think and see the world is “The Butterfly Circus”. It reaffirmed the magnificence of each person and my own conviction that, although as teachers we do face difficult situations in the classroom unlike the ephemeral existence of the butterfly, we do have time to learn, grow, and appreciate the struggles that men and women undergo daily; unlike the butterfly, our existence is far from ephemeral and it comes with the decision to either face life as a burden or as a joyous challenge.

There is always room for transition that is to say moving away from mechanical and traditional ways of teaching towards a more holistic, resourceful and inclusive methodology. There is also room for hope and by this I do not mean idly waiting for something good to happen, I am referring to a proactive attitude. To teach with hope involves hard work and love, two fundamental ingredients that will enable us to see the magnificence of each student in our care. This will help us discover how much we are able to do as well as to develop our capacities as educators. We must be ready for an extraordinary metamorphosis which makes us leave the limits of the cocoon and permit us to spread our wings into the challenges of diversity. Policies,

laws, and economic support may help us, but there is nothing like the willingness of enhancing others' aptitudes and to help them to develop those that are hidden.

This paper leaves open the possibility for permanent research and further reflection depending on each teacher's interests or concerns. It also restates the idea that working with any kind of special needs- students requires a whole educational process without any fragmentation. Our unavoidable task is to be trained and ready to face the challenges. These challenges are described by Paulo Freire (2012: 146-150) and I feel totally identified with his ideas:

"To think, to speak, to feel, to perceive, to give a destination to our liberated hands, to understand and communicate, to compare, to assess , to evaluate, to choose, to take new paths, to decide, to grasp, to learn, to teach, to be able to do or not do things, to plan, to live socially, all of these pointed out in the being who was capable of doing it the undoubted importance of his conscience . [...] (T)o know that the change is difficult but possible. [...] I am present in the history and in the world, and I hopefully fight for the dreams, for the utopia, for hope, with a view to a critical pedagogy. And my fight is not in vain"

Across decades, even centuries, we see a common thread that runs through the thinking of famous men and women who left their mark in education. Juana P Manso in the 1800's and many years later Paulo Freire could very well have been our contemporaries as their words articulate the same ideas, the same dreams that we preach today, while continuing to struggle with similar issues, still unresolved, but nevertheless a little closer to becoming a reality.

There is much to do yet, and although public education has come of age in this country, it is not quite accomplishing the noble goals stated in recent legislation. It appears that we are always waiting for somebody else to start and this is the best way to postpone, to delay making important decisions, to remain in the comfort zone where nothing changes. Where do we go from here? How do we put action into lofty words?

Last but not least, as teachers we must remember that pre conceived ideas lead to prejudice and discrimination with the end result that affects children's perception of themselves, self-fulfilling prophecy.

My findings confirm and support my hypothesis that there is a fundamental need to democratize education addressing individual differences in order for each child to reach his/her own individual maximum potential.

My research, classroom observations, surveys, interviews and direct teaching experience, documents that I have read show that what children experience at a young age leaves a profound effect that either fosters or impedes learning. As teachers, we have an obligation to learn and recognize those methods and strategies that full foster and encourage learning.

We must not forget that above all our role exceeds the instruction of academic subjects; we teach for life, as Einstein said “Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learned in school”.

To conclude, it is important to reiterate that the basic principles of a democratic system are based on the participation of all citizens, equal application of law and rules, and the protection of human rights. These principles are the backbone of the educational system and as such must be fully applied in the new classroom. Paulo Freire clarified this concept (2012: 56-57) “(...) There is no struggle without a tomorrow, without hope. One of my dreams (...) is to challenge ourselves, parents, teachers, workers, students to reflect upon our roles and to assume responsibility as we should, building and improving democracy”. As I have already stated throughout the paper and I come to the end of a long journey of research, reading and interviews I realize more and more that I have just touched the tip of the iceberg in an area that is still largely unexplored. My concern and also my future plans include continuing to work in order to make my dream of democratizing education true.

CHAPTER 4- DISCUSSION **EVERYBODY IS INVOLVED**

To further understand the role of everybody’s involvement, this section explores the actors that have an essential role in supporting special needs learners. Firstly, it discussed documents that have broadened the consciousness of inclusion. This, links with the role of the State, then it examines the role of the teacher and finally the family’s role.

Education is the fundamental basis upon which the survival of the human race and development of a nation depend. When questions come up regarding how much it costs to provide education for all children, what ought to be asked instead is how much does it cost *not* to provide education for all children. The goals presented in Jotiem in 1990 are still relevant and necessary. In this document (1990:33) it can be read: “An expanded vision commensurate with the extent of the basic learning needs of children, youth, and adults can be conceived in terms of the following components:

- Universalizing access to learning and promoting equity;
- Focusing on learning;
- Broadening the means and scope of basic education;
- Enhancing the environment for learning;
- Strengthening partnerships.”

However, according to The Dakar Framework for Action (2000:12) “millions of people are still denied their right to education and the opportunities it brings to live safer, healthier, more productive and more fulfilling lives”

Education has a fundamental national repercussion, as in order for people to become productive and free thinking citizens, they should be allowed to develop their personal potentials, integrating them into society and achieving intellectual autonomy. In this sense, governments should work so that nobody is excluded from the general educational system, giving the necessary support that a child with special needs requires, facilitating his/her inclusion in mainstream schooling.

To broaden the scope of basic education the role of the state providing sufficient financial resources is crucial, because there is a direct correlation between poor learning outcomes, and the lack of serious commitment and involvement of the State. This is evidenced by the existing inefficient mechanisms of cooperation between education and the state leading to poor or no teacher training or professional enhancement.

Policies to implement inclusive education, which is the change process, will tax even the best trained, most capable and dedicated teachers. Teachers in the schools who are called on to deliver EFA need to be motivated to accomplish the demands of families, multigrade teaching, differentiation of curriculum according to individual needs, teaching prejudice reduction and teamwork within the same classroom, inter-professional case discussions outside the classroom about individual education programs for each child, etc. The complexity and scale of the human and professional task must not be underestimated, it cannot be considered as just a simple add-on. In this connection, the role of the government must be of great commitment and it should be involved not only in the passing of laws and other documents but also in the administration and management of education in general and inclusion in particular, for example: establishing standards, providing professional development workshops for all teachers, making service delivery of education more responsive to the needs and demands of parents and children and also guaranteeing continued financial support for these programs.

Every child has the right to equitable access to appropriate learning and quality education that will enrich life experiences. Appropriate learning environments with trained professionals that provide equal quality education will foster respect at all levels. This requires an extensive and participatory analysis of the state, school and community in order to develop and apply innovative learning approaches.

Education for All is education for life and it must provide skills for living in this globalized century, being the teachers' role of paramount importance. Their position in changing classroom practices is irreplaceable. They must facilitate relevant and quality learning and to do this, teachers need to be prepared to carry out their duties among diversity; developing students' values and helping them to reach their full potentials. All this is only possible if academic training linked to research and innovation is provided for teachers to become critical and reflective practitioners.

A crucial point to take into consideration, as reflective practitioners, is that all students do not learn at the same time or in the same way. This is difficult to see or understand because we live in a society which is always in a hurry; we run to school, to work, to play, even resting is part of a schedule. When working with students with special needs we often forget that they have a different pace and require that we slow down the frenzy. We might feel frustrated at first because we cannot accomplish the goals and objectives 'according to plan', this is part of the challenge: to walk at a different pace and understand that not everything can be measured by the same yardstick.

As a result of my field work, some questions have come to my mind, for example: How much confidence do teachers have in regards to their work with special children? Do they feel they are doing a good job? When I was trying to schedule interviews with the principal at a special School, their main concern was if I was a member of ETAP. Was it because they are afraid of disruption considering these are very fragile children? Why did so many teachers make excuses and avoided talking to me? Why were they reluctant to let me visit their classrooms? I concluded that a lot of the work is carried out by professionals who are guided by their own gut feelings, instincts, some common sense but with very little academic support. I think, this could be the reason why they probably do not feel confident enough to be observed by a stranger.

There is still a long journey ahead for educators, as it was said before, and there is much to be done. This study touched on several issues regarding democratizing education but it has not addressed all the concerns that teachers deal with every day and that affect the process of teaching and learning.

More specific studies are needed in areas that are not yet completely understood or disseminated such as: labeling students, pathologizing differences in childhood (See Appendix V- Pag.310). This topic was presented and briefly discussed at the Conference and a video was showed. This video pointed out that while labelling children we are leaving aside the essence of each human being. As regards this, Untoiglich (2013: 217) says "Without doubt diagnostics are required, but they should not be put ahead of the child, they must enable the construction of strategies and they can never be assembled only according to observable

behaviors, without taking into account the multiplicity of factors that can cause certain behaviors”.

Another topic to be discussed further is how realistic and healthy these changes in education can be for the group that a teacher is working with. We can argue that when a teacher is able to see a need in his or her classroom and moves to address it, by implementing strategies to help a student, and then is also able to recognize whether those strategies or methods implemented are successful. In that moment, we can assume that the teacher shows a true commitment with democratizing education. In this way, the whole group benefits.

However there is still a long road ahead and in this context of reflecting upon our roles as teachers we must also consider how children and adults face diversity. I have noticed for example that adults at times reject or show disdain towards those who are less talented, less able or slow. The behavior that I have observed is evident when during a class or workshop people with their body language express anger or boredom and often drop out of class. When asked why they stopped coming, they have almost always expressed that they are too busy and do not want to be held back by those who make them waste their valuable time.

Finally, we must also consider the reality that each of us face and not become trapped by idealistic expectations impossible to fulfill. Each teacher is faced with a different reality and this also will define his/her teaching approach and how he or she is able to perform under each circumstance. A teacher who is able to see that he/she cannot provide the necessary assistance but knows how to acquire help is the one who does a doable and realistic job in the new classroom.

Undoubtedly, coping with children with special needs is not a simple task. Resources provided by the state or special agencies plus the effective support of the family contribute to deal with adversities considerably. When a child is diagnosed with a disability, parents always have an overwhelming feeling of depression, anger, denial, fear, guilt, etc and this invariably implies an emotional breakdown. When or if the family is able to overcome these feelings (at times professional help is necessary), they can focus on the necessity of giving their child an optimistic view of the future; to strengthen the child's potential helping him/her to overcome weaknesses. Problems may also arise when a child with special needs has siblings and this must be considered as well. In this case the difficulty lies in how parents can pay attention to their special needs child without losing sight of the family's capacity to cope with this challenge. How to find ways to treat all the other children equally and fairly is not an easy task and acceptance and cooperation is whole-family work.

The assistance of other families in similar situations or organizations that are family oriented is extremely helpful. These groups have been essential in showing how important it is for the family of a disabled child to become involved and fully understand their child's disability in order to recognize the child's potentials which are not always in plain view or easily observable.

The National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY) in its article "Parenting a child with special needs" (2003:15) transcribes a mother's experience; she says: "*This experience we did not choose, which we would have given anything to avoid, has made us different, has made us better. Through it we have learned the lesson of Sophocles and Shakespeare—that one grows by suffering. And that too is Jessy's gift. I write now what fifteen years past I would still not have thought possible to write; that if today I was given the choice, to accept the experience, with everything that it entails, or to refuse the bitter largesse, I would have to stretch out my hands—because out of it has come, for all of us, an unimagined life. And I will not change the last word of the story. It is still love*"

CHAPTER 5- RECOMMENDATIONS

POSSIBLE STEPS FORWARD

Learning/teaching methods need to be revised and adapted. Firstly, changes in curricular content with associated pedagogies need to be implemented. Then, personnel need to be retrained with real hands on implementation of the theory learned. Finally, physical aspects of school and classroom environment must be revised and improved such as: signs (e.g.: emergency escape, toilets; etc.); school facilities (e.g.: furniture; heights; etc.) and access (e.g.: entry and exit points; ramps; etc.)

Curriculum

Reviewing school plans is necessary so that they ensure inclusion of all students. Inclusive curriculum content can focus on different aspects such as: values, attitudes, learning and teaching strategies, etc. However, curriculums must be flexible enough to be adapted to any child. When revising and adapting it is necessary to make well thought out decisions, to think about how to cater for all students needs in the new classroom. In this sense, daily planning is a must. Teachers need to consider three important aspects: students' capabilities, content and outcomes. These aspects will determine how teaching will be carried out. Sometimes, all students will be involved in the same activity, other times different objectives for groups or individuals will need to be settled. On the other hand, to interrelate objectives is a complex task as teachers must have each student's capabilities in mind. As it was mentioned in Chapter 2 Howard Gardner's work is a valuable guide to consider the different variables:

a- Personal aspects. It involves both intrapersonal and interpersonal skills. It includes the ability of being aware of oneself and being empathetic; to work independently or in groups. These skills can be developed through collaborative/cooperative work, problem solving activities or setting goals as a whole group.

b- Linguistic aspects. It refers to the use of language in creative ways for a wide range of purposes. This aspect strengthens the ability to make and convey meaning, to talk about experience, to express emotion, etc. Teachers' work will be based on creative writing, debating, reading, and analyzing literature.

c- Rational aspects. It aims at thinking logically to make sense of the experience and solve problems. This ability includes understanding relationships; clarifying ideas or feelings, reasoning critically, etc. Teachers' work will be established in order to make students recognize codes; identify similarities and differences; order sequences; present ideas, etc.

d- Creative aspects. It consists of the musical and spatial abilities developed by H. Gardner and it aims at being creative using imagination. This also includes the ability of exploring alternatives, transforming, and generating by means of devising possibilities. Teachers can work out this aspect by means of all kinds of art (drama, music, paint, etc.)

e- kinesthetic aspects. It refers to the capacity to manipulate body and space, conceptualizing orientation and movement. It responds to rhythm, distance and speed and coordination. Teachers address this aspect when organizing activities which include dancing, games and sports

Human resources

School systems need to consider minimizing wastage of resources and using them optimally in making education cost effective. Wastage is more than just material waste, it also includes the waste of human resources which are of paramount significance and often overlooked when teachers are not working in the role that best suits them. When everybody is functional to his/her role it's because they are in the right position (eg. A teacher who feels comfortable working with kinder garden children is not in charge of older students), that means that the right candidate is occupying the right post. When people are working at what they do best and they are comfortable in the role they have been assigned everybody benefits and the school can best fulfill its goals for inclusive schooling. Strategic human resources also imply developing strategies that will help motivate employees to greater productivity and output. The development of several types of workshops with salary credits for attending them is an effective way to both train and motivate school staff.

It is necessary to adopt a holistic perspective of each individual in society. Identifying capacities is the first step as it was explained above. Therefore, explicit strategies to address diversity is required. Some ideas include recognizing difficulties and failures and working together to

overcome these problems. For that reason, collaboration among school staff is essential. Working collaboratively also develops supportive school environments where processes are as important as results. And these processes involve parents and community, fostering understanding and support. Within these processes, developing a 'Curriculum for All' means developing a curriculum that caters for all students with different capacities in the classroom. Developing a differentiated curriculum for students with special needs, with individualized instructions welcomes diversity and involves a great deal of work

Access and facilities.

Schools and all other public buildings should provide access for all citizens with ramps, special pathways and restrooms.

Investing in the improvement and modernization of buildings needs to be seen as part of an ongoing programme for accessibility, this includes: designated car park spaces; assistive technology such as induction loops and library facilities.

Above all, there must be a solid commitment of all staff to monitor the services provided in relation to quality and equity; to provide effective and appropriate support to students with a range of impairments and guidance to families regarding disabilities issues.

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GLOSSARY

Articles: A paragraph or a section in a legal document that is numbered; these numbers make it easy to find information, and to write and talk about it.

Community: A group of people who live in the same area. It also means people with the same interests or concerns.

Convention: An agreement between countries to behave a certain way. Conventions about human rights are promises between governments that they will treat the people who live in their countries in a particular manner. A convention sets standards or rules that must be followed to protect human rights. Conventions can also be called treaties, covenants, international agreements or legal instruments. When a country ratifies a convention, it often changes its own laws so that the goal of the convention can be reached. Conventions put a legal obligation on governments to do all they can to respect the rights in it.

Declaration: An international document that lists the standards that are required for countries to follow on a certain human rights issue. A declaration does not put a legal obligation on governments to follow what it contains. This is an important way in which it is different from a convention (see explanation of Convention above).

Disability – a barrier to participation of people with impairments or chronic illness, arising from an interaction of the impairment or illness with discriminatory attitudes, actions, cultures, structures, policies or institutional practices or processes.

Discapacitado social/ Socially handicapped. It should be noted that the Special Education as formal discipline is discontinuous, more related to the charity and the medical treatment than with pedagogy. Special Education has been treated as a subarea of the education. As a result, Special Education is presented as that education, which includes the treatment of the special students that are "set aside" from the characteristics considered as normal.

Discrimination: Unfair treatment of a person or group for any reason such as belonging to a certain race, religion, sex or having different abilities.

Economic: Everything to do with the money system and financial matters.

Epigenetics. It is the study of changes in gene expression caused by certain base pairs in DNA, or RNA, being "turned off" or "turned on" again, through chemical reactions. In biology, and specifically genetics, epigenetics is mostly the study of heritable changes that are *not* caused by changes in the DNA sequence; to a lesser extent, epigenetics also describes the study of stable, long-term alterations in the transcriptional potential of a cell that are not necessarily heritable. (Source: Wikipedia)

Education refers to the provision of learning opportunities in a purposeful and organized manner through various means including, but not limited to, schools and other educational institutions

Education For All. It is a global movement led by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), aiming to meet the learning needs of all children, youth and adults.

Formal education refers to education provided through the schools and similar established institutions for education and training; it generally conforms to a prescribed curriculum leading to some form of certification.

Human development refers to the concept which views the general well-being of humans as the focus and purpose of development action; it involves the application of learning to improve the quality of life.

Indigenous people: People whose ancestors belonged to a particular area or country before invasions and colonization. They are descendants of the original people or occupants of these lands. Indigenous peoples are sometimes known as first people or native people.

Learning opportunities refer to a wide range of educational activities organized with the intent to promote or facilitate learning .

Oppressed People Those considered as things/ dehumanized

Optional Protocol: An add-on to an existing convention which deals with things not covered fully by the convention. It is another kind of international agreement, like a treaty. It is connected to a convention.

Rights: Things that every person has that describe what she or he is entitled to. For example, everyone has the right to life, to choose their religion, and to be protected from violence. These rights are written in an international document called the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) which was agreed by the United Nations in 1948. All people have the same rights and all rights are equally important. The UDHR clearly says that girls and women and boys and men have the same rights.

Stereotypes: Commonly held beliefs about roles of girls and women and boys and men in society, based on traditions and customs. For example, in some countries, there is the stereotype that girls and women should stay at home and not go out to work, or girls and women should not play sports, or boys and men should not do household work, and so on.

United Nations: An organization of almost every country in the world. Governments meet at the United Nations in New York and work together for peace and a better world.

DISCLAIMER

All the information and data included in this paper is the result of research, personal observation and interviews. I am aware that laws are dynamic and that the terms used are constantly changing to provide better and more just definitions. I ask the reader to have an open mind attitude and in the case that a certain term or statement is found to be inappropriate or offensive to please let me know so that I can make the necessary corrections. My objective is to present here the broadest possible vision and as such I am open to suggestions and corrections of errors.