

Inclusive Educational Practices and Armed Conflict in Colombian Eastern Antioquia*

[English Version]

Prácticas educativas incluyentes y conflicto armado en el oriente antioqueño colombiano

Práticas educativas inclusivas e conflito armado em Antioquia Oriental na Colômbia

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Abstract

Objective: The purpose of this article is to describe the characteristics and conditions of educational practices, including those involving 80% of the teachers at two rural schools in Antioquia, Colombia, which have been affected by armed conflict. **Methodology:** In keeping with the study's overarching goal, the hermeneutical research approach was used. To obtain a more complete picture of the phenomenon, in addition to the teachers' narratives and the conduct of a workshop, a survey was used. **Results:** The results document a disintegration between the disability categories and the armed conflict categories, which gives more relevance to the former. **Conclusions:** Despite having a national policy for inclusive education, there is a lack of awareness and appropriate application of inclusive education's normative framework in rural settings.

Keywords: inclusive education; education for all; disability; social exclusion (IRESIE); Armed conflict (Author).

Resumen

Objetivo: en este artículo se tiene como propósito describir las características y condiciones de las prácticas educativas incluyentes del 80% de los docentes de las escuelas rurales de dos municipios del oriente Antioqueño (Colombia), signados por el conflicto armado. **Metodología:** de acuerdo con el interés comprensivo del estudio, el enfoque de investigación fue el hermenéutico. Para obtener una visión más completa del fenómeno, además de las narrativas de los docentes y de la realización de un taller, se utilizó una encuesta. **Resultados:** en los resultados se documenta una desintegración entre las categorías de discapacidad y las categorías del conflicto armado, que da más relevancia a las primeras. **Conclusiones:** a pesar que se tiene una política de educación inclusiva nacional, no se cuenta con una sensibilización y apropiación en el contexto rural del marco normativo de la educación inclusiva y de su praxis.

Palabras clave: educación inclusiva; educación para todos; discapacidad; exclusión social (IRESIE); Conflicto armado (Autor).

Resumo

Objetivo: o objetivo deste artigo é descrever as características e condições das práticas educativas inclusivas de 80% dos professores em escolas rurais em dois municípios do leste de Antioquia (Colômbia), marcados pelo conflito armado. **Metodologia:** de acordo com o interesse abrangente do estudo, a abordagem da investigação foi hermenêutica. A fim de obter uma visão mais completa do fenômeno, para além das narrativas dos professores e de um workshop, foi utilizado um inquérito. **Resultados:** Os resultados documentam uma desintegração entre as categorias de deficiência e as categorias de conflito armado, o que dá mais relevância às primeiras. **Conclusões:** Apesar da existência de uma política nacional de educação inclusiva, existe uma falta de sensibilização e apropriação no contexto rural do quadro normativo da educação inclusiva e da sua práxis.

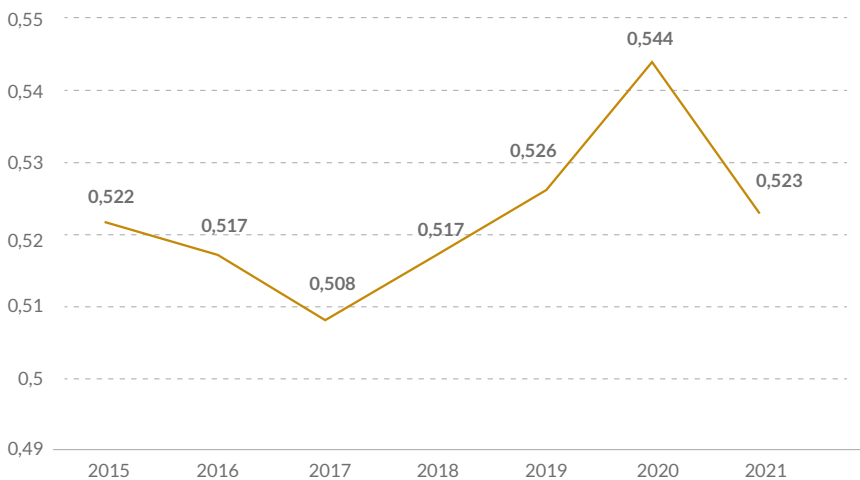
Palavras-chave: educação inclusiva; educação para todos; deficiência; exclusão social (IRESIE); conflito armado (Autor).

Introduction

The legislative framework for inclusive education in Colombia starts in the 1990s (Soto et al., 2016), influenced by the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (Unicef, 2006), the World Conference on Education for All —held in Jontiem, Thailand in 1990 (Unesco, 1990)— and the World Conference on Special Needs Education held in Spain (Unesco, 1994). In addition to the aforementioned, it is supported by Colombia's Political Constitution (1991), which declares that the country is a "social state of rights" (Art. 1) and states that "all people are born free and equal before the law, receive the same protection and treatment from the authorities, and enjoy the same rights, freedoms, and opportunities without any form of discrimination based on gender, race, national or familial origin, language, religion, or political opinion" (Art. 13). According to Laurido et al. (2021), this constitution implies that "education is a right acquired by all persons, without being subject to discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, sex, religion, disability, or capacity" (p. 29).

However, the particular conditions of the country showing the inequity suggested by the Gini coefficient is a feature that is maintained. This coefficient stood at 0.523 in 2021 (DANE, 2022). After having gone from 0.522 in 2015 to 0.517 in 2016 in the national total, it shows a rising trend and exposes its maximum peak in 2020, reaching a value of 0.544. These values, being closer to one than zero, reveal greater inequality, as shown in Figure 1.

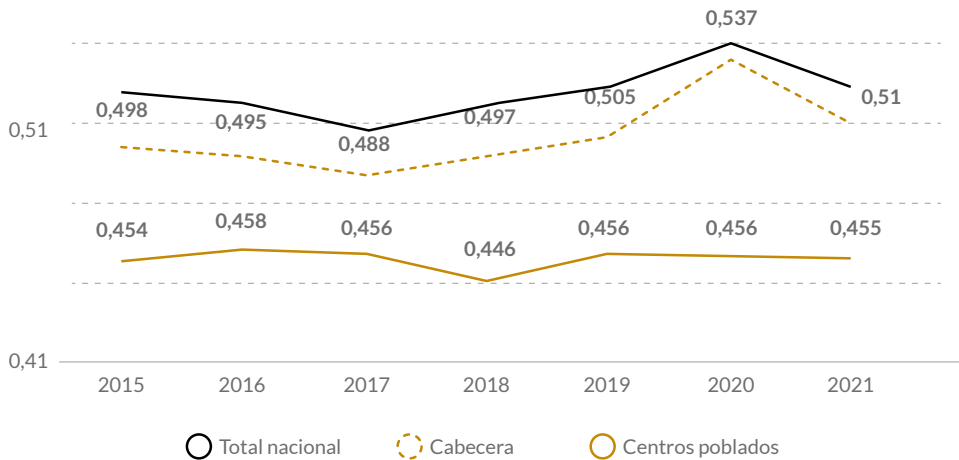
Figure 1. Gini Coefficient (National Total) in Colombia, 2015 to 2021.



Source: DANE (2022).

According to DANE (2017), there are significant differences in the Gini coefficient of municipal capitals and dispersed rural areas. For the former, it decreases, going from 0.498 in 2015 to 0.495 in 2016. For the latter, it increases, from 0.454 in 2015 to 0.458 in 2016, indicating greater inequality. For 2021, these values are maintained. The coefficient 0.455 was recorded in populated centers, while in the rural area it stood at 0.51, approaching 1, which denotes an increase in inequality with respect to 2015 (DANE, 2022). In addition, between 25% and 30% of the country's 48,202,617 million residents live in poverty. This, combined with the armed struggle that has raged for the past 60 years, has left many groups vulnerable on social, economic, and educational fronts. Exclusion has been a recurring problem (Figure 2). It is important to note that in Colombia, 24.2% of the inhabitants live in rural areas and 80% of the territory is rural (DANE, 2020).

Figure 2. National Gini Index, Head Municipality and Population centers in Colombia Between 2015 and 2021.



Source: DANE (2022).

To address the social risk generated by the described situation, the Colombian government has worked on formulating and implementing public policies that guarantee the restoration of the rights of this segment of the population. Thus, the struggles for social inclusion and, therefore, educational inclusion emerge in the landscape, where theoretical, investigative, and pragmatic advances have been achieved. Likewise, legislation is established by the *Ley General de Educación* of

1994 and the decrees and resolutions that regulate it, in which an educational policy for inclusion has been consolidated. An inclusive educational policy that allowed reporting for 2015, showed 140,939 students with special educational needs (NEE) enrolled in the formal education system and registered in the Integrated Student Enrollment System for Basic and Secondary Education (SIMAT). In 2018, there were 180,743 students with disabilities registered throughout the country, which represent less than 1% of the 48,258,000 inhabitants for that year (Fundación Saldarriaga Concha, 2018).

Nonetheless, despite the advances in inclusive education, in rural areas, the conditions of social, economic, and educational vulnerability are constant. These are exacerbated by the armed conflict, which generates situations of displacement and new vulnerabilities that add to these communities in more risk situations (IFRC, 2006; Turvill & De Dios, 2009; Twigg, 2014; Wisner et al., 2004).

In this regard, Bilak et al. (2015) argue that:

Displacement in Colombia is still driven by the armed conflict, which continues despite the ongoing peace process. There has been a decrease in hostilities between government forces and the FARC, and peace negotiators reached a partial agreement on drug trafficking in 2014. However, violence and insecurity continue to be common. Numerous abuses, including the recruitment of minors, sexual violence, the deployment of landmines, extortion, and the targeting of human rights defenders and land restitution advocates, have forced many people to leave their homes. Forty-eight percent of internally displaced persons are between the ages of six and 26, and many still live in areas still affected by the conflict. (p. 17).

Such is the case of the rural areas of Cocorná and San Francisco (Antioquia), municipalities that due to their strategic location were subject to the armed conflict during the last years of the 90s decade and the first years of the 21st century. The impact of the armed conflict in this area led the department of Antioquia to rank it as first in the country in terms of the number of victims of antipersonnel mine (APM) and unexploded ordnance (UXO) accidents. Between 1990 and July 2013, APM and UXO accidents in that department resulted in 2,324 victims, constituting 22% of the country's total victims (Correa & Pastor, 2010; Franco, 2013).

In the same vein, the Directorate for Integral Action against Antipersonnel Mines reports that "[...] Five departments account for 53% of the APL and UXO events, as follows: Antioquia (17%), Meta (16%), Caquetá (9%), Arauca (6%) and Norte de Santander (5%)" (Daicma, cited by Orejuela, 2017, p. 32). The

rural areas of Antioquia are directly affected by mines against people since they serve as a barrier to protect areas under territorial control, a deterrent to illegal armed groups, and a mechanism to protect illicit drug cultivation. In addition, the non-state armed groups' use of APM and UXO made it difficult for the victims to receive assistance.

The Antioquia Department's eastern and northern zones are the areas with the most accidents reported by APM and UXO. According to Fundación Mi Sangre (2015), the subregion of eastern Antioquia registers 46.7% of mine victims in Antioquia. Between 1990 and July 2013, the municipality of San Carlos had 79 victims, followed by San Francisco with 54, Cocorná with 44 victims, and Granada and Argelia with 38 combined.

Children and teenagers are the demographic segment of the affected civil population that accounts for the greatest number of victims.

According to the Presidential Program for Action against Mines (PAICMA), in the period of 1990 to July 2013, 1,034 underage victims were recorded. Of these, 23% (233) were girls, 76% (791) were boys and the remaining 1% (10) had no information. Of the total number of underage victims, 811 (78%) were injured in the accident, and 223 (22%) died. (Convenio 483 MEN.UNICEF.NRC.COL, 2023, p. 28).

In an attempt to reduce the exposure to risk and the violation of the rights of children and young people due to the impossibility of accessing education, in 2005 the Ministry of National Education (MEN) issued the Educational Policy Guidelines for Vulnerable Populations and the guidelines for education in emergencies. This also recognizes that there are some student populations that, at some point and as a result of the armed conflict, have had to leave their homeland behind and resume their educational process from an urban center or other safe place. In the same year, the general regulations for the educational attention to vulnerable population and victims of the internal armed conflict are published, in which it proposes the attention to the vulnerable population from the inclusive education approach (Tapiero, 2018).

The current study inquired of inclusive education among teachers at rural schools in the towns of Cocorná and San Francisco in eastern Antioquia as part of the previous picture. Their answers show that this proposal in the mentioned areas is incipient, and inclusive education has as its main focus the population with disabilities. It leaves the vulnerable population of the armed conflict invisible, therefore, the differential approach is not implemented as an inclusive practice to achieve the transformation of classroom environments and the implementation of the current regulations of inclusive education. The exclusion of children and

young people who have suffered direct or indirect harm as a result of the armed conflict in Colombia is due to the vulnerability of their circumstances, which include poverty and displacement, among other things.

Conceptual Referent

Conceptions of Inclusive Education

In Colombia, inclusive education has been strengthened in a process of more than 20 years of awareness of educational institutions, teacher training, parental and research processes, where the concern has revolved around educational practices, attitudes of peers and parents, and success of the inclusive education process, among others. Progress in the country has made it possible to include, according to the 2015 SIMAT, 159,000 children and young people considered with special educational needs (SEN) in the classrooms of the country's different institutions; in this, students in situations of vulnerability or social risk as a result of other situations or conditions are also recorded.

Similar to the rest of the world, the meaning of the term "inclusive education" is still unclear in Colombia. In this vein, Echeita and Ainscow (2011) express that "The confusion that exists within this field arises internationally, at least in part, because the idea of inclusive education can be defined in many ways" (p. 29) and add that "it is not surprising that in many countries progress is disappointing and there exist, in this regard, contradictory educational options and policies" (p. 29).

In the country and in the world, the term is still tied to the concept of disability or SEN with which inclusive education began to be approached (Benomir et al., 2016; Boer & Munde, 2014; Ahmmed et al., 2013). This placement in disability persists despite having made progress in programs such as *Inclusive Education with Quality* (2010) —with which inclusive education was actually implemented in the country— that proposes the recognition of "the characteristics and particularities of diverse and vulnerable population groups, which are cared for in educational institutions" (MEN, cited in Vélez, 2013, p. 273). Children and young people affected by violence, those separated from armed groups outside the law, reinserted and minors at social risk should also be taken into account (Vélez, 2013).

The conception of disability reduces the philosophy of inclusion that, as proposed by Azorín et al. (2017), should advocate for:

[...] the expansion of the capacity of schools to improve the response to diversity (Arnaiz & Azorín, 2014; Black-Hawkins, Florian & Rouse, 2007). Consequently, the concept of inclusion is related to all students, whether or not they have special educational needs (SEN), with the barriers they experience in the educational and social environment, and with the forms of marginalization, exclusion and low performance to which they may be exposed (Ainscow, Booth & Dyson, 2006; Alcántara & Navarrete, 2014). (p. 1022).

However, in practice, the transformation of educational institutions revolved around the inclusion of the population with disabilities, and in some cases, the population with exceptional abilities and talents; as can be demonstrated by the territorial entities (Correa & Suárez, 2021; García-Cepero & Iglesias-Velasco, 2020; Soto & Arcila, 2017). The *Guidelines for Educational Attention to the Vulnerable Population and Victims of the Internal Armed Conflict* of the MEN indicate a position of inclusion that also transcends the bias of merely disability, since they state that this means attending the students' common and specific needs with quality and equity.

From this last theoretical location, the concept of inclusion is expanded under the postulates of the differential approach; which is understood as the principle to understand diversity (*Ley 1448 de 2011*). The concept of inclusion, where the pursuit for equity is central, has been strongly strengthened in recent years, as proposed by Ainscow, 2019.

Inclusive Practices

As Ainscow (2019) puts it, inclusive practices are those that make it possible to transform the learning environments of students by visualizing their differences and democratizing the participation possibilities. Inclusive practices respond to three dimensions: culture, politics, and educational practices in relation to the entry, permanence, and promotion of all members of the educational community in school life. The first promotes respectful, motivating, and inclusive environments where all members of the educational community feel welcomed. The second allows the implementation and transformation of pedagogical practices and curricula into flexible and, therefore, equitable practices. The last elements have to do with the implementation of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

with the aim of responding to the needs of the diverse population, providing strategies designed from the diversity and learning styles of the students.

Armed Conflict, Vulnerability, and Education

Throughout the Colombian homeland, due to the armed conflict of the last 50 years, thousands of people have had to endure an event that has put their lives or physical integrity at risk or danger, and therefore, have been considered victims. In this way, from the theory that "they are people who have been subjected to some kind of catastrophe in their life trajectory, which implies the need to rebuild themselves as individuals" (Casado-Neira, 2014, p. 361).

Similarly, *Ley 1448 de 2011* in its third article considers as victims people who have suffered damage, individually or collectively, due to events that occurred as of January 1, 1985 "as a consequence of violations of the International Humanitarian Law or serious and manifest violations of International Human Rights norms, which occurred during the internal armed conflict."

The consequences of violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) are evident in individuals, their families and communities. These are physical, emotional, mental, and economic, among others, and is a common situation among the inhabitants of the rural areas of Cocorná and San Francisco. This is how the State in Law 1448, as proposed by DANE (2020), introduces for the first time the need to review this accumulation of situations and conditions from the differential approach of having a higher level of disaggregation and clarity of these conditions, and from there to be able to propose inclusive policies traversed by the differential approach that has been understood as an ethical precept of the intervention (Gómez, 2019), which is based on the principle of equity and seeks to make human rights visible. As a result:

[...] creates a need, stipulated by law, to have information at higher levels of disaggregation for public and private decision-making. The adaptation of public entities to the differential care needs recognized by law also generated more inclusive discourses in a transversal manner in the State, and with this, the data could not be abandoned, while the production of official statistics is also a service provided by the state. (DANE & SEN, 2020, p. 7).

Many of these conditions are woven into the daily lives of children and young people in rural eastern Antioquia. These are towns that, in addition to suffering the armed conflict —where different groups (FARC-EP, EPL,

Self-Defense military groups and the national army) have interacted— still live in contexts surrounded by APM-UXO. This continues to be considered a true attack because they not only put their physical and mental integrity at risk, but also hinder their access to other goods and services of a natural and social nature, such as water and schools, among others. Thus, inclusive education cannot be limited to disability alone; it must be conceived as a "process that helps to overcome the obstacles that limit the presence, participation and achievements of students" (Unesco, 2017, p. 8).

Methodology

The research process was carried out with primary and secondary school teachers from the official institutions of the municipalities of Cocorná and San Francisco, in response to one of the objectives of the study called "Reconstruction of the local memories of direct and indirect female victims due to Antipersonnel Mines (APM), unexploded ordnance (UXO) and improvised explosive devices (IED), belonging to the victim organizations of these devices in the municipalities of Cocorná, San Francisco, San Luis, eastern Antioquia" sponsored by Colciencias and the National Center for Historical Memory (CNMH) (Soto, 2015). The aim was to "design together with the Victims' Associations methodological tools for the process of memory reconstruction and life project, based on their current situation, involving elements of both physical and psychological rehabilitation, and psychosocial inclusion" (Soto et al., 2016, p.15).

Within the psychosocial rehabilitation component, at the suggestion of the victims belonging to the associations, an approach was made to educational institutions, and in particular, to teachers were approached and inquired regarding the inclusive educational practices they use to serve this population. For this, and in accordance with the comprehensive-descriptive interest of the study, the research method used was hermeneutic. A survey was applied in order to get closer to knowledge and to obtain a more complete vision of the phenomenon, in addition to the conversation with the teachers. The research was carried out in two phases.

The first phase had to do with the qualitative moment, which methodological horizon was hermeneutics that supports the possibility of "[...] directly relating the question of the scientific nature of social studies with the possibility of an objective understanding of an essentially subjective reality" (Bauman, 2003, p. 16). The interest was to understand the logic of the inclusive educational practices

of the teachers of the rural schools of the municipalities affected by the conflict: Cocorná and San Francisco, in the department of Antioquia.

Cocorná and San Francisco are municipalities that belong to the eastern Antioquia subregion. Figure 3 shows the delimitation of regions devised by the Planning Administrative Department and which is done in areas divided from “[...] the consideration of variables related to environmental, physical-spatial, economic, cultural and social aspects” (Forests and Diversity Group, 2017, p. 13). Through Ordinance 41 of November 30, 1975, the department was divided into nine subregions: East, Magdalena Medio, Northeast, Bajo Cauca, North, Urabá, Southwest, West and Valle de Aburrá (Osorio, 2015).

Figure 3. Location of Eastern Antioquia.



Source: https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oriente_antioque%C3%B1o#/media/Archivo:Colombia_-_Antioquia_-_Oriente.svg

In turn, the eastern subregion was divided into four zones or microregions: reservoirs, moorlands, forests, and highlands. The forest area —where the municipalities of Cocorná and San Francisco are located, in which this analysis is concentrated— has an area of 1,035 km². This represents 12.8 percent of the total territory of Eastern Antioquia. For 2011 it had an estimated population of 32,423 inhabitants (Antioquia departmental government, 2011, p. 24). This area

also has a special natural wealth and is part of the Rio Samaná Norte and Rio Claro-Cocorná Sur basins, with extensive areas of primary forests and exotic fauna. These riches, plus its strategic location, make it a very attractive area for all the armed groups involved in the armed conflict in Colombia —paramilitaries, guerrillas and criminal gangs (Bacrim)—. During the last years of the 1990s and the first years of the 21st century, the impact of the armed conflict in this area was unprecedented.

Narration became the central technique to get closer to knowing and understanding the inclusive educational practices of the teachers of the rural area of the two municipalities. This led to ways of conceiving, defining, and naming what happens in reality. In this sense, Zapata (2009) indicates that:

It is precisely the narration that describes the multiple transformations of personal identity, offering in turn, not an environment of chaos and darkness, but on the contrary, the possibility of collecting in a single story the breadth of transformations and descriptions that develop a personal, group or institutional identity (p.762).

The main focus of interest consisted in revealing the conceptions that teachers had about children and young people who were victims of the conflict, and the situations that they have had to experience. Also, of interest was understanding the way in which classroom practices have been constituted in these regions, where displacement and fear have been constant, as well as determining the knowledge that these actors have about inclusive education policies implemented in the country for more than 20 years. For the teachers' approach, a workshop was used as an approximation technique to discover in depth and understand in conversation the stories that have been built in the lived educational experience. This workshop was organized in five moments, as can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Workshop on Work as a Teacher in the Rural Area of a Municipality Affected by Violence.

Moment 1	Moment 2	Moment 3	Moment 4	Moment 5
Awareness	I know my students and my work context.	I know the pedagogical model of my institution, the PEI and the study plans.	I know what the country understands by inclusive education.	I narrate the training needs that I have.
Self-knowledge Activity	I describe the SEN of my students according to the context where I work today.	I characterize the pedagogical model of the institution where I work.	I explain what I understand and know about inclusive education, the available supporting material and what is done in the classroom.	I state the training needs that I consider would improve my performance in the classroom.

The second phase corresponded to the application of the survey. The sample was selected randomly and all the teachers were invited to participate in the conversation. —Twenty-six teachers in total attended. This number corresponds to 80% of the teachers of the official institutions of the rural areas of the municipalities of San Francisco and Cocorná, while the population corresponds to 28 teachers (Note that Escuela Nueva's focus on rural schools in Colombia, due to the dispersion of the rural population, leads to an average number of teachers being a maximum of two teachers per institution).

The data collected at the quantitative moments, through the survey, were stored in an Excel spreadsheet and processed through the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, version 21 for Windows). These were analyzed using absolute frequencies and percentages, and were presented in frequency tables showing the percentage of responses for each category of the variables included in the study.

Results

The results were organized according to the two phases of the methodological design: the qualitative and then quantitative phase.

Quantitative Phase

The context of the research project: vulnerability and the lack of educational opportunities for children and young people in rural areas of the two municipalities most affected by armed conflict in eastern Antioquia. This led to approaching to teachers, to inquire about inclusive practices of educational institutions in the region from the perspective of changes in culture, politics, and educational practices. Thus, an interaction with the professors by a workshop titled “My work as a teacher in rural area of a municipality affected by violence” which aims to know the perceptions of student. (Phase 2).

The frequent questions determined that the traditional cultural perception of the student has changed. They are perceived as direct or indirect victims of the armed conflict; this situation has affected their lives forever. Those changes deal with the transformation of family structure for the father, mother, siblings or any close relative. Thus, the roles as son or brother change and those family members have to assume a new role to support or to be the leader of the family. This equates to a direct or indirect victim of the armed conflict.

The geography of the land changed as the roads to school became vacant lands with the risk having anti-personnel mines or other explosive devices planted that threaten the lives of the residents constantly. In terms of the economy, teachers consider that the displacement and the inability to work the land due to the anti-personnel mines has increased poverty in the area and children and young people have become direct victims of these things.

Forty percent of teachers think that issues related to emotional and mental aspects of students are related to consequences of the war. Those things had driven students to severe mental depression or caused them to drop out of school. Most of the teachers new in the region argue about not having enough tools to face this commitment successfully. Neither did they have the support of the Secretary or Ministry of Education.

In terms of politics, the inclusive practices that teachers report are based on being flexible with scheduled arrival and departure times due to the extended distances to attend the educational institutions. Likewise, the teachers make use

of the flexible Colombia's Unitary School curriculum proposal, as a resource that is flexible and allows students to advance according to their level.

However, in the municipalities of San Francisco and Cocorná, teachers feel that they lack the training and lack the tools and needed support for attending the diverse situations the students face, not only to the ones with any disability — addressed through traditional approaches— but also for those children and young people who have suffered from forced displacement, physical abuse, domestic violence, forced labor and have been direct or indirect victims of armed conflict.

That statement is based on several factors. The first has to do with the characteristics and conditions of the students in those regions of the rural institutions in contrast to the inclusive education concept. Although the teachers exposed situations such as displacement, physical abuse, domestic violence and forced work, those situations were not the core of their answers. Despite an interaction of that qualitative time expressed, all the students from those institutions revealed that directly or indirectly they are victims of conflict, a situation has changed their lives. The teachers understand the inclusive practice-based disability, as they have experienced it in the institutions they have worked in before.

The second issue is that they understand that the proposal for an inclusive educational institution stated in Decree 1421 of 2017 strengthens the role of the teacher as support and assigns tasks of assistance and transformation of educational institution to foster inclusive education as a help for students with (traditional) disabilities. The idea is to have more supportive teachers attending institutions and reinforcing students in particular areas and implementing teaching strategies for these populations, because the students have diagnoses of mental, psychological problems, attention deficit which come mostly from violence experiences.

In this case, it could be stated that an effective transition from the praxis between Decree 366 of 2009 and Decree 1421 of 2017, the goal of which is to direct the educative service for the population with disabilities (within inclusive education) in accessibility, continuity, and quality. The ultimate goal is to break down the frontiers of education and promote meaningful learning and quality with equity, and a framework of justice in the educational institution.

In the studied region there is only one teacher for support who assists four or five institutions from their headquarters. To support headquarters means being there four or five times a month, thus, the teachers have to go to health centers to ask for guidance in dealing with this population. This assistance is clinical but not pedagogical, thus the teacher does not have the tools to work in the classroom. This is seen from the following excerpt of an interview with one teacher:

I arrived in this town and no one told me that I should take care of myself with the displacements, or that the roads might be mined. They did not give me support when I arrived at the classroom and I found several children who had mental retardation, they had lost limbs or they had displacement problems. I asked for help and they told me there was not any, that if I needed to report a child's case that I should go to the health center. When I arrived there, they just told me that they could diagnose the children but that I should just look for ways to teach them. The Government forgot us, here we work as we can and do the best, we can with the resources we have to help our students. (Personal communication, March 2015).

This situation has caused teachers to feel they do not have the right knowledge or tools to help students to build or strengthen a life project, or to provide them quality education. In addition, the lack an Institutional Educational Project (PEI), designed to take the needs of the most vulnerable population groups into account. There is nothing to consider inclusive practices in favor of a transformation of the institutional context, since in PEI the necessary reasonable adjustments are not being made or oriented to the several levels it involves (a manual of coexistence, mission, vision, protocols of assistance to vulnerable population, among others) so that the process of educational inclusion can be significant. The most vulnerable population cannot access it with quality or quantity. One teacher interviewed states:

Our PEI is only an ornament for the institution, because many of us do not know it and it is not designed according to our students' reality. I have been working in this town for 10 years and I have never been told what the pedagogical model I should work with is. Now you believe that it will help us solve the problems we have with our students who have special educational needs. (Personal communication, March 2015).

Lastly, teachers know about pedagogy, since the answers to the open question in the survey on the pedagogical approach allows determining that less than half (44.4%) clearly know the active approach of The Escuela Nueva, the proposal as a flexible model of MEN (Ministry of National Education) for rural areas.

Quantitative Analysis

Twenty-six teachers were surveyed (see Table 2). Half of them teach in preschool and primary school, 38.5% exclusively in primary school, 7.7% are preschool teachers, and only one of them (3.8%) was a support teacher (Decree 1421 of 2017). The teachers are not dedicated to a specific level in primary education because they are multigrade teachers in a rural area, and in Colombia the New School Model is used in these areas. It is a pedagogical flexible model that aims to strengthen the educational coverage. It is remarkable that in the sample there was only one support teacher from the comprehensive care unit (UAI) program, for the rural area of two municipalities. In accordance with the Colombian inclusion policy, this teacher is in charge of supporting the educational institution in the curricular, administrative, and classroom transformations that must be carried out to assist students who need it; likewise, it must train other teachers and teaching directors.

Table 2. Classification of Teachers According to the Level in which They Perform Their Duties.

Level at which the teaching work is carried out	N° of teachers	%
Preschool	2	7,7%
Basic Primary	10	38,5%
Preschool and Basic Primary	13	50,0%
Teacher of support	1	3,8
Total	26	100,0

Source: document from SPSS software platform.

Teachers gave a positive response when asked if there were any SEN students in their classes. Table 3 reveals the three main reasons. First and foremost, cognitive disability is emphasized because 52% of the teachers' reported children with this problem in their classroom. Second, 36% of respondents said that one of SEN population is affected by emotional factors. Last, 20% of teachers reported attention deficit as a cause of the children's special needs; so, it could be stated that two out of every ten teachers in San Francisco and Cocorná assist

students with this condition. Motor disabilities (8%) and auditory or psychic disabilities (4%) occur in lower presence in children with SEN in rural areas of the municipalities in Eastern Antioquia.

Table 3. Characteristics of Students with SEN. Institutions in the Rural Areas of San Francisco and Cocorná-Antioquia. Colombia, 2016.

Type	Yes		No	
	N°	%	N°	%
Attention Deficit	5	20,0	20	80,0
Cognitive Disability	13	52,0	12	48,0
Motor disability	2	8,0	23	92,0
Emotional problems	9	36,0	16	64,0
Hearing impairment	1	4,0	24	96,0
Visual impairment	0	--	25	100,0
Psychic problems	1	4,0	24	96,0

Source: document from SPSS software platform.

Teachers interpret the educational needs of students who have had to live the conflict in the following manner: students with emotional problems (36%), attention deficit (20%) and psychic problems (4%). The fact that they add up to 60% shows how much the armed conflict has indirectly affected kids in the two municipalities of rural districts.

Table 4 shows that 68% of the teachers in San Francisco and Cocorná did not receive any training on topics related to assisting SEN. However, eight teachers report having been trained (32%), 62,5% did not report the topic they were trained on. Digital accessibility, rhythms of learning, and disability were the training courses mentioned by the other three teachers.

Table 4. Teacher Education in the Processes of Caring for Students with Special Educational Needs. Institutions in the Rural Areas of San Francisco and Cocorná-Antioquia. Colombia, 2016.

The processes of caring for students with special educational needs have been the focus of teacher education.	N° of teachers	%
Yes	8	32,0
No	17	68,0
Total	25	100,0

Source: Document from SPSS Software Platform.

During the interviews, the pedagogical approaches were discussed with the teachers from San Francisco and Cocorná who revealed a misunderstanding of pedagogy and an association with teaching strategies: flexibility, developmental processes, and rhythms of learning, among others. These results are depicted in Table 5.

Table 5. Pedagogical Approach Adopted by the Institution to Address Student Diversity. Institutions in the Rural Areas of San Francisco and Cocorná-Antioquia. Colombia, 2016.

Pedagogical approach adopted by the institution to address student diversity	N° of teachers	%
Active-learning approach	8	44,4
Flexible approach	5	27,8
Humanistic approach	2	11,1
Inclusive approach	1	5,6
Rhythms of learning	2	11,1
Total	18	100,0

Source: Document from SPSS Software Platform.

Similarly, Table 6 shows that only 7.7% of teachers count on collaboration from the support teacher of the Comprehensive Care Unit program (UAI), or from some health professionals or health institutions for the SENs. This statistic should alert educational authorities because these institutions help students who fall under the inclusion figure; however, if there is a lack of tools to make sure this attention is effective, little is done to fully integrate these students into school life and society because of their unique characteristics. According to one of the teachers, these supports consist of assistance from the IPS (Institutional Health Service Provider) support teacher, family police station, whereas another teacher reported the presence of a mental health counselor and/or psychologist.

Table 6. Support for Inclusive Educational Processes of Students from Institutions in the Rural Areas of San Francisco and Cocorná-Antioquia. Colombia, 2016.

Do the support teacher, health professionals, health institutions, or someone from the UAI program help you with the integration processes of the students with special educational needs?	N° of teachers	%
Yes	2	7,7
No	24	92,3
Total	26	100,0

Source: Document from SPSS Software Platform.

Qualitative Analysis

Discussion of Results.

The language of rights is crucial to public debate because it emphasizes the idea of an urgent claim based on justice. To say that people have a right to something means that they have the authority to demand it immediately. As a result, reparation for children and youth in displacement entails the restoration of their rights as well as their acceptance into society. (Nussbaum, 2006, p. 288).

There has been a particular interest in children and youth and their education. The latter is seen as one of the fundamental rights of this segment of the population in the search for redressing the rights of the population victimized

by the armed conflict from a differential approach. Thus, in the last decade (2005–2015), the Colombian State's policies have tried to lessen the impact on the education of young generations from a differential approach resulting in a prolific regulatory framework.

In 2005, the Colombian MEN issued the educational policy guidelines for vulnerable populations naming the risk situations that accompany children's and adolescents' educational development as one of the vulnerable groups that deserve priority attention, along with those affected by violence —populations in situations of displacement, including minors disengaged from armed groups outside the law and school-age children of demobilized adults—. After coordinating and articulating efforts to ensure children's and youth's access to education during times of conflict or natural disaster, the National Roundtable for Education in Emergencies emerged in Colombia, led by UNICEF and co-led by the Norwegian Refugee Council (CNR) and the MEN and the guidelines for education in emergencies were issued. Student populations that have been forced to leave their homes as a result of the armed conflict and continue their educational process in an urban area or another safe place has been acknowledged. As these guidelines show, this situation is thought to be temporary.

The MEN published "General Guidelines for Educational Attention to Vulnerable Populations and Victims of Internal Armed Conflict" in 2014, with the funding of the Refugee Education Fund. From a differential approach, it includes vulnerable populations such as children and young people from ethnic groups, Afro-descendants, displaced people, and those with disabilities.

As a milestone in the history of inclusive education in Colombia, these guidelines take up the proposal for educational attention for vulnerable populations affected by the armed conflict. As a result of debates held to address the educational rights of the disabled population, the world experienced a milestone when inclusive education emerged. Eadsne (2011, cited by Chiner & Cardona, 2013), when talking about inclusive education, states that:

Inclusive education is a concept that allows students with diverse needs to be placed and receive instruction in regular schools and classrooms. It can be understood as the presence (access to education and school attendance), participation (quality of the learning experience from the learners' perspective) and achievement (learning processes and outcomes across the curriculum) of all learners in mainstream schools. (p. 2).

This implies that, in terms of educational normativity, inclusive education must be distinct in its proposal of education for all —where inclusive education emerges— and not only from and for the population with disabilities. According

to the figures presented, Colombia must prioritize this issue; thus, despite the lack of knowledge revealed by teachers in the rural areas of the two municipalities where this research was conducted, this has been implemented in Colombia for more than ten years, indicating that progress has been made.

The enrollment growth rate for the disabled population has been considerable. Since 2005, the Ministry has directed the allocation of budget resources for the implementation of the inclusion program for the SEN population, achieving an increase in the allocation of resources in 2010 distributed to the territorial entity by transfer, based on the number of children with disabilities or limitations who were attended. This positive outcome can be attributed, among other things, to the design, development, and implementation of flexible educational methodologies that aid in meeting the specific needs of a vulnerable and diverse population with quality and applicability. These models apply school-based and semi-school-based strategies in both rural and urban areas, depending on the students' age and educational level. These alternative learning processes include psychosocial care, school retention monitoring, and home tutoring for students at risk of dropping out. (MEN, 2014a, p. 28).

In this regard, inclusive education could be defined as the process by which a society values education as a critical issue for the development of all citizens and a matter with far-reaching consequences for the future of a community. But reality is different. Despite the fact that Law 1618 of 2013 in Article 11 and Decree 1421 of 2017 establish real inclusion by fostering access, permanence, quality, meaningful learning and teaching for the diversity of all children and young people in school, many teachers in the eastern Antioquia municipalities, particularly in Cocorná and San Francisco, are unaware of the necessary tools for the appropriate attentions to be paid to disabled populations.

Conclusions

Colombia has made progress in inclusive education, as revealed by the increased enrollment of vulnerable students. This is evident in the 2015 SIMAT report of 130,840 students with disabilities and 9,537 students with exceptional abilities and talents; it is also evident in the "Education for All Report: Teaching and Learning: Achieving Quality for all" (Unesco, 2014). However, the process of inclusion is just getting started in rural and remote municipalities. Despite the fact that the

country has identified the various circumstances that lead to educational exclusion and implemented policies for a gradual coverage plan, phenomena such as armed conflict change and complicate the picture.

This vulnerable group of students in these rural areas should lead to the implementation of continuity strategies in their training processes, providing those who teach these groups with the necessary tools for the students to strengthen their life projection and more fully utilize education, especially in the post-conflict period, where education will be a decisive factor in achieving peace.

The Ministry of National Education's regulations on education in emergencies, as well as the Policy Guidelines for the Educational Attention to the Population Affected by Violence (2014) should be implemented in tandem with the inclusive education proposal designed for Colombia. Inclusive education will be impossible to achieve if teachers report the lack of professional support to attend this type of population, the lack of resources, and the need for in-depth teacher education sessions on school inclusion, among others.

Teachers continue to demand teacher education on topics such as learning disabilities, cognitive disabilities, digital accessibility, exceptional abilities or talents, diversity, child neglect, sexual abuse, and classroom inclusion strategies. They also request teacher education in reading and writing strategies, classroom strategies for students with cognitive disabilities, sign language, hyperactivity, and aggression management, as well as SEN strategies and protocols, the creation of public attention routes, and other topics that will enable students develop properly.

The responses of teachers revealed that they lack adequate materials to meet the needs of students and support their educational process of diversity. When these findings are compared to those of other studies conducted around the world, there is a clear clamor from everyone: "The need to provide adequate resources to inclusive classes is never been more critical. In addition, there should be an increasing effort in promoting inclusive education" (Ali et al., 2006, p. 43).

Particularly in these rural areas where there are children and young people who need special attention because this landmine zone houses mine victims and their families. While many of these children and young students are not direct victims of landmines, they are indirect victims and should be treated differently. As a result, inclusive education offers the possibility to address the wide range of situations and conditions encountered by students from rural areas, direct and indirect victims of conflict, who will be reintegrated into society and are in the school stage.

The need to improve inclusive education from a variety of pedagogical and social perspectives is evident. In this regard, the difficulties have been focused on those attitudinal barriers caused by a lack of knowledge of classroom diversity. This has prompted educational communities to rethink education and transform the thinking of directors and teachers in the interest of innovation to meet the requirements of educational policies aimed at designing institutions for all. This, in turn, has become a challenge, necessitating a continuous contextual analysis to identify those barriers that may be excluding access and permanence, and to make the necessary reasonable adjustments in terms of infrastructure, didactics, resources, and flexible methodologies to enable the development of an inclusive education with quality and applicability for students.

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