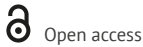


EDITORIAL

Inclusive education in Colombia*Educación inclusiva en Colombia*

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Inclusive education is based on the principle that all students, regardless of their background, abilities or disabilities, should have access to and participate in quality education on an equal basis.¹⁻³ While this concept is apparently straightforward, its implementation poses significant challenges and requires concerted efforts by various stakeholders.

By creating learning environments that embrace diversity and foster respect for all, inclusive education not only benefits students with disabilities, but also enhances the overall educational experience of other students. It also promotes empathy, understanding, and a sense of belonging among students, thus contributing to a more diverse and cohesive society.¹⁻³

Colombia, like many countries, has made progress in promoting inclusive education. The enactment of Law 115 of 1994⁴ and the adoption of the standards established in the World Health Organization's International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities⁵ have laid important foundations for promoting inclusive practices in schools.

Notwithstanding the above, for inclusive education to become a reality in the country, adequate planning is required before implementing public policies on inclusive education. This implies solving problems such as lack of infrastructure and resources, insufficient teacher training in inclusive pedagogies, and attitudinal barriers that perpetuate discrimination and exclusion. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that encompasses policy reforms, capacity building, and societal changes in attitudes toward disability and diversity.

In light of these opportunities and challenges, it is imperative that we, as a society, commit to making progress in inclusive education, as the implementation of such public policies requires investing in teacher training and in the development of the necessary infrastructure for the provision of support services for students with disabilities; fostering a culture of inclusion and respect for diversity at all levels of society; and promoting collaboration among various sectors of society, such as government agencies, educational institutions, civil society organizations, and the community in general.

In this regard, in this issue of the Revista de la Facultad de Medicina, Guerrero & Rojas-Romero⁶ analyze the role of speech-language pathologists in the educational context of Colombia in their article *Opportunities and challenges for speech-language pathologists to move towards inclusive education in Colombia*, and propose some actions to vindicate their role in inclusion and equity in education by removing environmental barriers and strengthening the capabilities of students according to their characteristics, as this promotes social cohesion and equity.

Guerrero & Rojas-Romero⁶ state that inclusive education is part of the fourth Sustainable Development Goal of the United Nations (Quality Education), which emphasizes the promotion of quality learning opportunities for all. According to the authors, in order to

achieve this goal, it is necessary to carry out structural reforms of the educational system, which means that there is still much to be done in Colombia to ensure that the entire population receives quality education that meets their needs.

It is worth noting that the article by Guerrero & Rojas-Romero⁶ focuses on the current state of speech-language pathology in the Colombian education system, reviews the scope and competencies of speech-language pathologists as experts in human communication that address the processes of hearing, speech and language, and analyzes how their role has been blurred as they have assumed the functions of a support teacher. Likewise, the potential of speech therapists in the promotion of communicative skills as learning tools is highlighted.

Finally, I urge readers to engage with the ideas discussed here and, as Guerrero & Rojas-Romero⁶ do, to join our collective efforts to promote inclusive education in Colombia since they will help us build a more inclusive, equitable and compassionate society, in which every individual has the opportunity to thrive and reach their potential.

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