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SCHOOL FOR ALL:



EXPERIENCES OF MUNICIPAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS
WITH INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES,
ASD, GDD AND HIGH ABILITY/GIFTEDNESS

School for all:

experiences of municipal public schools
with inclusion of students with disabilities,
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Technical coordination: Marlova Jovchelovitch Noletto, Director of the Programme Area; and the Education Sector at UNESCO in Brazil

Translation: Martin Charles Nicholl

Technical Revision: Mary Guinn, from the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean; National Office in Chile (OREALC); consultant Claudio Lombardi; Mariana Braga, from the Education Sector at UNESCO in Brazil.

Graphic design and editing: Communication, Public Information and Publications Unit of the UNESCO in Brazil.

Images: *Mais Diferenças* (electronically manipulated)



SAUS Qd. 5 – Bloco H – Lote 6
Ed. CNPq/IPICT/UNESCO – 9º andar
70070-912 – Brasília, DF
Mail: brasilian@unesco.org • www.unesco.org/brasilian
Tel: +55 61 21 06 35 00

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Carla Mauch

Wagner Santana



Brasília

UNESCO

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RESEARCH CREDITS

Overall Coordination

Carla Mauch

Wagner Santana

Primary and Secondary Data Gathering and Analysis

Coordination

Laerte Fernandes de Oliveira

Data Analysis

Thaís Pereira Martins

Data Processing

Gustavo de Freitas Bevilacqua

Bibliographic Review and Consultations with Experts and Entities to Select Municipalities

Meiriene Cavalcante Barbosa

Final Report

Carla Mauch

Wagner Santana

Field Research

Bianca Boggiani Cruz

Daniela Zanellato

Flaminia Propersi

Guacyara Labonia Guerreiro

Hugo Eiji Ibanhes Nakagawa

Leonardo Spicacci Campos

Meiriene Cavalcante Barbosa

Raquel Paganelli Antun

Thaís Pereira Martins

Wagner Santana

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Foreword

'Inclusion and equity in and through education is the cornerstone of a transformative education agenda, and we therefore commit to addressing all forms of exclusion and marginalization, disparities and inequalities in access, participation and learning outcomes. No education target should be considered met unless met by all. We therefore commit to making the necessary changes in education policies and focusing our efforts on the most disadvantaged, especially those with disabilities, to ensure that no one is left behind.' Incheon Declaration, UNESCO, 2015.

The Global Education for All movement begun in Jomtien 1990 and reiterated in Dakar in 2000. In 2015, in Incheon, it contributed towards influencing the agendas of governments to enable them to achieve important results in the provision of global education. That movement is based on the perspective that education systems under the leadership of government agents, must take responsibility for providing quality education to all citizens without any kind of discrimination or restriction in the offer made to specific social groups. Articulated with other national and international human rights treaties and agendas, the right to education asserts itself as a necessary condition for fostering justice, combating inequality and building just societies.

In that context, social and educational inequalities are intrinsically related. Studies carried out in Brazil on inequalities in access to education, in permanence in school, and in educational performance outcomes show that groups historically excluded from social and educational opportunities – such as people of African descent, indigenous populations, people from low-income sectors, rural populations, and people with disabilities – are those with lowest percentages of having access to school, the poorest chances of remaining in regular educational institutions, and furthermore, the least possibility that they achieve the least favourable educational outcomes.

This publication specifically addresses the educational inclusion of people with disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Global Developmental Disorder (GDD), and high ability/giftedness. *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (United Nations, 2006), ratified by Brazil and attributed constitutional status in 2009 (Brazil, 2009) is at the core of the efforts of the United Nations to contribute towards guaranteeing the rights of such group. The Convention, which was the first global human rights treaty of the 21st century, repositioned the disability issue in the light of social and cultural issues, which create barriers and limit access of people with disability

to their fundamental rights. It does so by casting a different eye on the issue and by identifying new demands for public policies based on the perception that people with disabilities are subjects with rights and not individuals whose condition imposes restrictions on their access to full citizenship.

In tune with the advancements recommended by the Convention, UNESCO in Brazil, in all its different action areas, has made every effort to contribute to the progress of that agenda. In the field of Education, we have reaffirmed our conviction that the presence of girl and boy students with disabilities, ASD and GDD, as well as gifted/talented learners in regular schools and ordinary classrooms together with all the other students represents far more than a right. The inclusive school enriches possibilities for the development of all, nurtures values, and strengthens a culture of peace, inclusion, solidarity and valuing diversity; principles that underlie the activities of UNESCO in Brazil and in the world.

We hope this publication can contribute to assisting educational policy formulators, public and private administrators, researchers, social activists and all those who, like UNESCO, believe that inclusion must be the guideline for socially sustainable development policies, for the reinforcement of the ideal of justice and for the consolidation of human rights.

Lucien Muñoz

Director of UNESCO in Brazil

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Introduction

This publication is the result of a research project entitled Good Practices in Inclusive Education: the experience of Brazilian municipalities with the inclusion of students with disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Global Developmental Disorder (GDD) and of high ability/giftedness students (*Boas Práticas em Educação Inclusiva: a experiência de municípios brasileiros na inclusão de alunos com deficiência, transtornos do espectro autista (TEA), transtorno global do desenvolvimento (TGD) e altas habilidades/superdotação*). It is an initiative of UNESCO in Brazil carried out by the OSCIP *Mais Diferenças – Educação e Cultura Inclusivas* (More Differences – Inclusive Culture and Education Civil Society Organization of Public Interest) with the important collaboration of the Ministry of Education in Brazil through the mediation of its Division for Lifelong Education, Literacy Training, Diversity and Inclusion (SECADI).

The study set out to identify and analyse the practices of municipal public-school networks in Brazil concerning the educational inclusion of students with disabilities, ASD and GDD, as well as gifted/talented students. The initiative arose out of a will to subsidise and strengthen processes for the formulation and implementation of policies, programmes and projects aligned with the principles of the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (United Nations, 2006; Brazil, 2009) and the National Special Education Policy in the Perspective of Inclusive Education (*Política Nacional de Educação Especial na Perspectiva da Educação Inclusiva*) (Brasil. MEC/SEESP, 2008c). It is important to point out that those normative frameworks bring principles and presuppositions that have been reaffirmed in more recent documents such as the *Incheon Declaration* (World Education Forum, UNESCO, 2015) and the *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDG) (United Nations, 2015).

It will become apparent in the results of the study that there are considerable challenges to face throughout the country to ensure the right to education of students that are the focus of Special Education. Amid the many difficulties and challenges, various Brazilian municipalities are outstanding regarding their development and implementation of Inclusive Education in alignment with the principles and premises of the respective legal reference frameworks and the more recent national and international guidelines. Knowing and disseminating the experiences of municipal authorities represents a key step towards making the national inclusive education effort effective, which is essential to extend the right to education to all Brazilians.

Inclusive Education, a Basic Principle of Education for All¹

According to the Brazilian 2010 Census (IBGE), 23.9% of the Brazilian population has some kind of disability. A considerable part of such expressive contingent of more than 45 million people continues to be exposed to prejudice and discrimination. Their access to fundamental rights such as education, culture, work, health, communication and information continues to constitute a tremendous challenge to public policies in Brazil. Beyond the sphere of public policies, putting an end to prejudice and discrimination directed at persons with disabilities is an equally great challenge for Brazilian society.

The trajectory of Inclusive Education lies within the much broader context of the worldwide movement in defence of human rights. From the end of the 1980s on, and especially during the years 2000, the field of the rights of persons with disabilities has been marked in Brazil by the expansion of legal conquests. The main national reference framework has been the 1988 Constitution. The Brazilian Carta Magna advocates the promotion of the wellbeing of all, completely devoid of racial, sexual, colour, age or origin-related prejudice or any other form of discrimination. In addition, it guarantees the right to education for all as a fundamental condition for the full development of individuals, their preparation to exercise citizenship and their qualification for work.

In the years that followed the 1988 Constitution, Brazil closely aligned itself with the international movements striving to guarantee human rights. In that context, the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, declared by the United Nations on December 6, 2006 (UNITED NATIONS, 2006) is of outstanding, fundamental importance. In Brazil, the Convention was ratified by a higher quorum majority and accordingly acquired Constitutional status in the terms of Legislative Decree No.186/2008 and of Executive Decree No. 6.949/2009 (Brazil, 2009).

The fundamental importance of the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* lay in the fact that it placed the issue of disability on a new conceptual level insofar as it defended the idea of respect for differences and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity. It sought to stop treating people with disabilities merely in a medical-clinical perspective. Instead, it situated them as individuals who have the right to be in society, and to achieve that by guaranteeing their access to all social spaces and activities.

The Convention also formally establishes the right of persons with disabilities to education and among its principles, the establishment of inclusive education systems at all levels including lifelong learning. These fundamentals are also at the heart of the National Special Education Policy in the Perspective of Inclusive Education launched in 2008 by the Ministry of Education in Brazil, which defines the essential guidelines for the education systems with a view to assisting the federated entities (States, Federal District, Municipalities) to establish their own inclusive education policies.

¹ This text by Carla Mauch and Wagner Santana was originally published in the *Anuário Brasileiro de Educação Básica 2014*. São Paulo: Editora Moderna, 2014. [Brazilian Basic Education Yearbook].

One aspect that is present in both the Convention and the National Special Education Policy in the Perspective of Inclusive Education is their unequivocal conviction that all students with disabilities, ASDs and GDDs, and all gifted/talented students should attend regular schools. Underlying that principle is the understanding that segregating students with disabilities in special schools or classes is contrary to the principles of a school that shall be inclusive and for all; a school in which there is no place for students with disabilities will indeed be a school that segregates and discriminates.

The *National Policy on Special Education in the Perspective of Inclusive Education* orientates the systems regarding the basic conditions to ensure access, participation and learning on the part of the students with disabilities, those with GDD, and those gifted/talented in regular schools. It also indicates that, whenever necessary, those students shall be able to count on Specialized Educational Attention (SEA), a service designed to identify, elaborate and organise teaching and accessibility resources capable of eliminating the barriers to their full participation while considering their specific needs. Those activities are distinct from activities carried out in the regular classrooms and are not intended to replace them.

In that context, building inclusive schools for all constitutes a tremendous challenge that the educational systems must address. It implies the need for profound transformations in the social and cultural representations of the entire school community regarding persons with disabilities. Furthermore, it presupposes not only the re-signification of pedagogical practices, but also the roles of professional educators. In addition, it requires rethinking of materials, processes, spaces and time. The principles that guide Inclusive Education help to question and dislodge an artificial vision of heterogeneity among students, indicating, instead, that a school for all is a school for beings that are, at once, multiple and unique.

In that way, Inclusive Education induces education systems to rethink their notion of individual, of diversity and of fundamental rights, as well as their principles of participation and social and democratic coexistence. It means that everybody takes advantage of it: the school, the staff, the students and their families. Inside inclusive schools, a micro-revolution takes place, which can potentially contribute towards achieving important advancements for society.

However, there are still considerable resistances to a 'school for all' model that has no discrimination of any kind to students with disabilities. After all, the model that envisages Special Education in special schools for students with disabilities, whereby the emphasis is on the disability and not on the individual, and the principle involved is clinical and not pedagogical, has been in force for decades. Its persistence is not only supported by certain social and cultural points of view – that fail to incorporate the progress achieved in the international sphere in the field of human rights and education policies –, but also by economic interests clearly associated to institutions that have historically offered segregated education in special schools sponsored by abundant public financial resources, which they do not intend to lose.

That discussion, permeated by a frank opposition between the defenders of an inclusive school for all and those who believe that some if not all students with disabilities, GDD or those gifted/talented are not in a condition to attend regular schools, was notably present in the discussion and formulation process of the new *National Education Plan*. In December 2010, MEC forwarded its

draft proposal to the National Congress, when it was analysed by various standing committees in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. Ever since, the text of Goal 4² of the Plan, which specifically addresses education provision to students with disabilities, GDD high ability/giftedness, suffered a series of alterations that reflected the conflicting stances and interests involved.

At the root of the dispute is the main issue of introducing the term 'preferentially' in a text that declaredly establishes the goal of providing universal education for students between the ages of 4 and 17 with disabilities, GDD and high ability/giftedness in the regular public schools. The word 'preferentially' was inserted immediately before 'in the regular public-school network'. Thus, instead of guiding the education systems that they must necessarily accommodate the students in question in regular schools, the term 'preferentially' makes the procedure optional. With a single stroke, the text not only contradicts the *National Policy on Special Education in the Perspective of Inclusive Education*, but also the terms of the *Convention on Persons with Disabilities* duly signed by Brazil and incorporated to its Constitutional text (Brazil, 2009).

It is therefore, of the utmost importance to take a stance in favour of a School for All understood as a space for equality, plurality, equal opportunity; learning, and socialisation among those that are different; and considered as a space where all can enjoy the same rights, together, without any kind of discrimination whatsoever.

Selecting the Municipalities

Federal public policies in the field of inclusive education – strongly boosted after the publication of the National Policy on Special Education in the Perspective of Inclusive Education – created normative frameworks, references for implementing federal educational programmes for the states and municipalities, in addition to expanding financing. These measures have undoubtedly contributed to developing inclusive educational systems throughout Brazil.

This study sought to portray that scenario and to learn more about the experiences and challenges faced by municipal public schools in achieving educational inclusion of students with disabilities, ASD, GDD, as well as gifted/talented ones in regular schools and classrooms.

The decision to work with municipal public schools was made because they respond for the highest percentage of school enrolments in basic education of the students in question. It was also decided to consider the experiences of public school networks rather than those of individual schools to investigate the solutions and alternatives found by their administrative entities in articulations with the school units and other actors involved in the processes of implementing inclusive education policies. The idea was to understand those processes in the light of a systemic vision that would consider the various spheres in which the policies are formulated and effectively put into practice.

² The text that was eventually approved for Goal 4 is the one that now written in Act No. 13.005, dated June 5, 2014, which is known as National Education Policy (*Política Nacional de Educação*). It reads as follows: "Universalize, for the population in the 4 to 17 age group with disabilities, Global Development Disorders, and gifted/talented students, access to basic education and specialized educational service, preferentially in the regular school network, with guarantees of inclusive education, classrooms with multifunctional resources, specialized classes, schools or services whether public or by contractual agreements" (Brazil, 2014). It is noticed that the word 'preferentially', which created much controversy, was maintained in the final version of the text.

The following activities were carried out to select the municipalities to be included in the study:

- Bibliographic review of the literature on municipal experiences with inclusive education in databases of theses and dissertations, works submitted to awards, congress proceedings, specialized publications, etc.
- Consultations with specialized organizations in the field of inclusive education regarding good practices in municipal public schools. The following actors responded positively to solicitations in that sense and identified good practices: the Ministry of Education in Brazil, the *Todos Nós em Rede* network (University of Campinas), as well as experts in inclusive education from the following Brazilian Federal Universities: Campinas (Unicamp), São Paulo (USP) and Ceará (UFC).

Based on the sources mentioned above, 100 experiences were identified (15 municipalities were mentioned more than once) from a universe of 5,570 Brazilian municipalities. Data and information were gathered on the 100 municipalities, including educational data and information regarding the situation of persons with disabilities in each municipality (sources: IBGE and INEP/MEC).³

The selection of the ten municipalities that would take part in the study was made at a meeting attended by representatives of UNESCO, of MEC and of the *Mais Diferenças* organization. The main indicator considered was the inclusion index, which is the percentage of students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and gifted/talented ones enrolled in regular schools and attending regular classrooms of the municipal public-school networks. Most of the initially selected municipalities had informed the 2013 School Census of the total numbers of such students that were enrolled in classrooms of regular schools. The analysis of the inclusion index was combined with an assessment of other indicators previously identified based on the advice given by the various sources that had been consulted (experts, administrators, studies, publications, etc.) and on other information that had been gathered (bibliographic analysis, award-winning projects, etc.)

The selection carefully considered to include municipalities from all regions of the country. It also carefully chose cities of varied sizes with distinctive characteristics (small, medium, large, with urban and rural areas, part of metropolitan regions and capital cities) to ensure as much diversity as possible among their profiles. In the process, it became possible to learn more about inclusive education experiences being unfolded in different regional, social and economic contexts.

Considering all the above criteria, the group of institutions involved in the project (UNESCO, MEC, *Mais Diferenças*) selected the following municipalities:

³ 2010 Census (IBGE): Estimated Population in 2013; 2013 School Census Data: number of students in regular classrooms of the municipal network; number of students with disabilities enrolled in regular classrooms of the municipal network; school inclusion index; total number of students enrolled in pre-school education, primary and lower secondary education and adult education in the municipal network; number of students with disabilities enrolled in regular classrooms of pre-school education, primary and lower secondary education and adult education in the municipal network; proportion of students with disabilities in regular classrooms of pre-school education, primary and lower secondary education and adult education in the municipal network; number of exclusively specialized schools in the municipal network; number of students enrolled in exclusively specialized schools in the municipal network; number of special classes in regular schools of the municipal network; number of students enrolled in special classes in regular schools of the municipal network; number of schools in the municipal network; percentage of municipal network schools with students with disabilities enrolled in regular classrooms; percentage of schools with accessibility; number of teachers with specialized education qualification; number of teachers teaching the Brazilian signs language (Libras); number of municipal network schools offering Specialized Educational Attention (SEA); 2011 Basic Education Development Index (IDEB); numbers of students per type of disability, GDD, gifted/talented students.

- Barreiras – State of Bahia
- Betim – State of Minas Gerais
- Erechim – State of Rio Grande do Sul
- Florianópolis – State of Santa Catarina
- Florianópolis – State of Santa Catarina
- Maracanaú – State of Ceará
- Oiapoque – State of Amapá
- Porangatu – State of Goiás
- Rio Branco – State of Acre
- Vitória – State of Espírito Santo

Methodological Aspects

Given the diversity of the objectives presented and the complexity of the issues associated to educational policies and their implementation, the methodological decision was to combine quantitative and qualitative methods to conduct the research. It was apparent beforehand that it would be necessary to investigate spheres of administration and monitoring, as well as the school units themselves. Furthermore, it would need to obtain the perspectives of the families, the communities and other actors with some form of participation in the educational process, such as the Office of the Public Prosecutor, the Office of the Public Defender, and other bodies of the public administration structure.

While quantitative approaches make it possible to visualise macro trends, the qualitative approaches make it possible to capture deeper meanings of micro trends or unique aspects, such as: multiple expressions of the educational experience found in relation systems and the dynamic structure of a given municipal public schools network. The two approaches are complementary.

A field study was undertaken in each municipality, as well as questionnaires were distributed to be filled out in the schools. Data gathering took place from November 2014 to March 2015.

The aspects investigated were:

- institutional and organizational aspects of inclusive education in the municipality;
- the promotion of a culture of inclusion;
- the development of inclusive pedagogical practices;
- the implementation of SEA;
- progress and challenges in invigorating public inclusive education policies.

There were defined fundamental categories to be observed and analysed for each aspect investigated in the different phases and stages of the inclusive education policies. Based on those categories the main sources of information and the data gathering strategy were defined.

There were used various strategies and combinations of strategies in the qualitative approach in an effort to obtain detailed information on the implementation of the inclusive education policy in each municipality. Among the strategies, there were individual interviews, focal group sessions and participative observation.⁴

The quantitative approach involved structured questionnaires for staff in the schools to complete them on their own. The heads of the Departments of Education in the respective municipalities were responsible for distributing the questionnaires to the schools. In some municipalities where staff had access to good IT infrastructure the questionnaires were made available for people to complete them online.

To ensure equal opportunities on the participation of the survey, some questionnaires were produced in special formats to facilitate for professionals with disabilities. It must be pointed out that there were certain questions in common included in all the scripts for the in-depth interviews and focus groups and in the self-filling questionnaires, but there were also specific questions as well. The purpose of the questions in common was to investigate the perceptions of different actors regarding a given issue. The specific questions were based on the principle that a given actor had access to information or perceptions that others would not necessarily have, depending on the strategic position the actor occupied in relation to the investigating topic.

The strategies used and the actors consulted are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Strategies and sources for data gathering

Type of Action	Strategy	Information Source
Quantitative	Self-filling Questionnaires	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers in regular classrooms • SEA teachers • School principals • Pedagogical coordinators • Non-teaching school staff
Quantitative	In-depth Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of the Municipal Department of Education • Those responsible for the area/sector/department of inclusive education in the municipality • Those responsible for Inclusive Education Reference Centres in the municipality (when they existed) • Local actors considered to be important in the implementation of the inclusive education policy (when identified)

⁴ *In-depth interview* is a kind of interview designed to explore a given issue by compiling information gleaned from the responses of interviewees. It is a qualitative technique that seeks to broaden, deepen and relate the responses obtained. It is not to quantify them or obtain a statistical representation. *Focus groups* are small groups guided by a moderator. They seek to reveal and discuss opinions, perceptions and ideas about a given topic. It is based on the premise that the combined efforts of different people can produce relevant and distinct information from the sum of the information obtained from individual answers.

Participant Observation is a research technique in which the observer endeavours to accompany the daily routine of the study 'object' for a certain period.

Quantitative	Focus Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family members of students with and without disabilities enrolled in the municipal public schools • Coordinators of the different schooling levels (pre-school, primary and lower secondary education and adult education)
Quantitative	Participant Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Schools • Inclusive Education Reference Centres in the municipality (when they existed)
Quantitative	Documental Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidelines and regulations governing inclusive education in the municipality

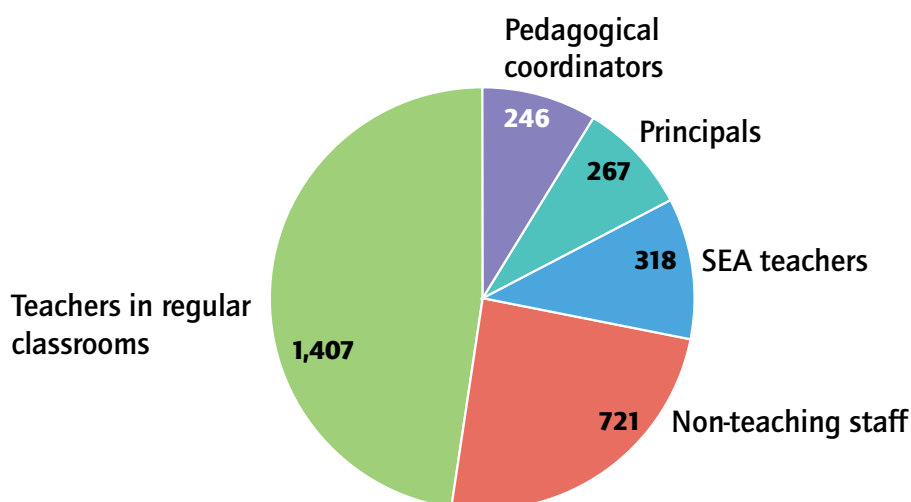
Source: *Pesquisa Boas Práticas em Educação Inclusiva: a experiência de municípios brasileiros na inclusão de alunos com deficiência, transtornos do espectro autista (TEA), transtorno global do desenvolvimento (TGD) e altas habilidades/superdotação* (Good Practices in Inclusive Education Research Survey: the experiences in municipal public schools in including students with disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), General Development Disorder (GDD), as well as gifted/talented students)

For Documental analysis purposes, the researchers requested municipalities to supply the following whenever they existed:

- flow charts of the Municipal Department of Education organogram;
- municipal inclusive education policy;
- guidelines for attending to the needs of students with distinct kinds of disabilities, ASD, GDD, as well as gifted/talented students;
- guidelines covering architectural, pedagogical, communication and information accessibility in the schools;
- guidelines on human resources specifically for special/inclusive education (posts and functions, career plans, salary scales, etc.);
- formal agreements drawn up between the Municipal Department of Education and other organizations working with persons with disabilities, ASD, GDD, and gifted/talented students;
- guidelines covering policy-pedagogical projects (including information on inclusive teaching practices, accessible teaching material, SEA, evaluation and others);
- regulations on SEA in the municipality (with information on the structure of service provision, periods of attention provision, partnership arrangements with other institutions, financing modes, structure of multifunctional classroom and others);
- any other documents related to inclusive education in the municipality.

In the quantitative stage of the research 2,959 questionnaires were collected from the ten participating municipalities distributed as follows:

Chart 1: Number of respondents to the questionnaires distributed to the schools



Source: Pesquisa Boas Práticas em Educação Inclusiva: a experiência de municípios brasileiros na inclusão de alunos com deficiência, transtornos do espectro autista (TEA), transtorno global do desenvolvimento (TGD) e altas habilidades/superdotação (Good Practices in Inclusive Education Research Survey: the experiences in municipal public schools in including students with disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), General Development Disorder (GDD), as well as gifted/talented students)

The questionnaires were distributed by the respective Municipal Department of Education and the participation of respondents was voluntary. Accordingly, they formed a sample that is not statistically representative of the categories of education professionals in the schools. Even so, considering the verified adhesion to the survey, the quantity of responses and the expressive numbers achieved for each investigated group, it is possible to gauge from the results how strongly certain trends, perceptions and points of view are present in the surveyed public-school networks.

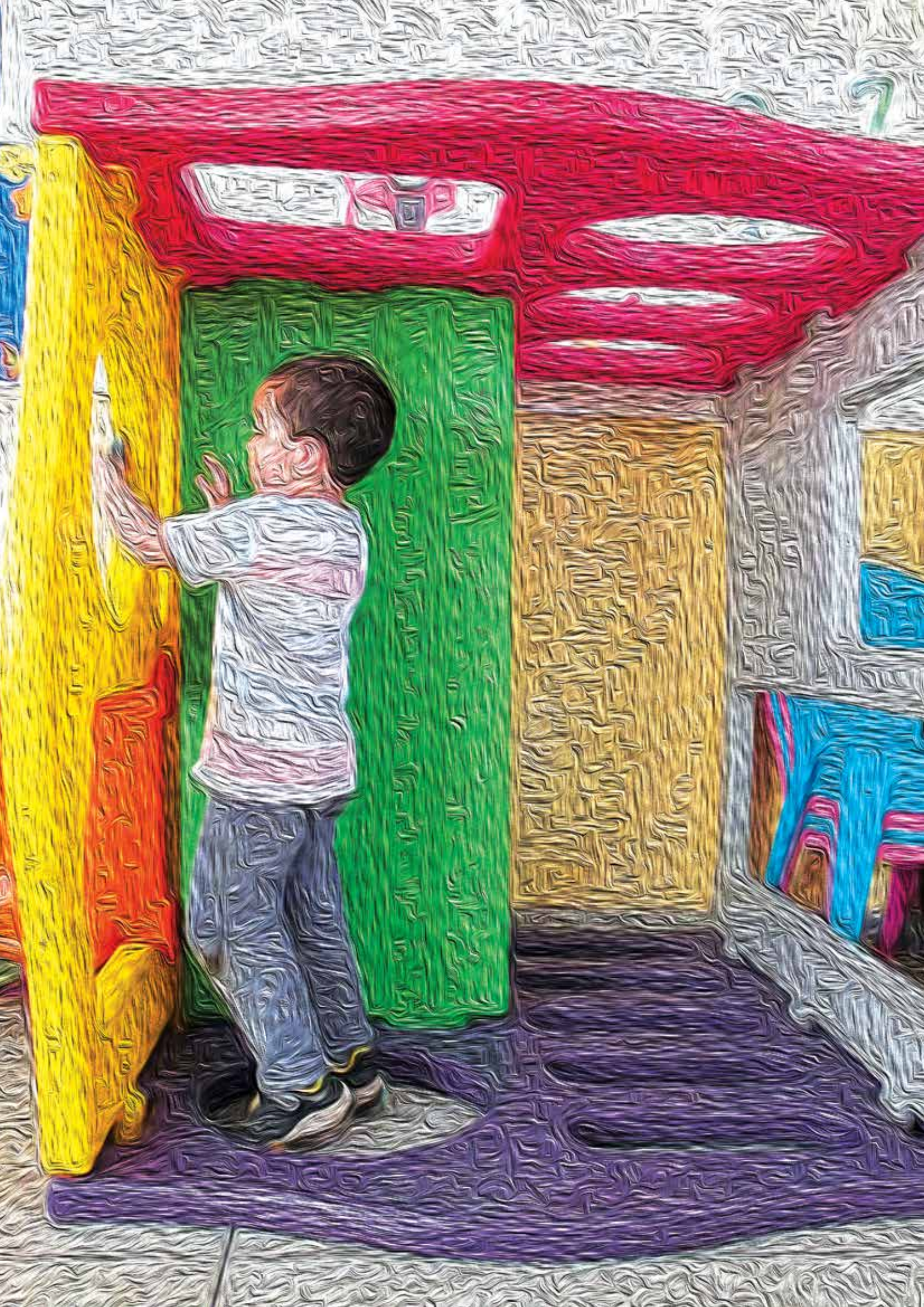
The quantitative data gathered in the ten municipalities was complemented by the following qualitative strategies:

- 54 in-depth interviews;
- 23 focus group sessions; and
- 56 participant observations/visits (schools, reference centres, etc.).

The complete set of data was systematised and analysed making it possible to build a broad scenario of the main progress achieved, as well as the challenges faced by the municipalities in providing education for students with disabilities, ASD, GDD, and high ability/giftedness in a perspective of universalizing inclusion.

In the chapters that follow the study presents a comparative analysis of the data obtained concerning the public-school networks in ten municipalities. It also composes a broad but detailed portrait of the implementation of special education policies in an inclusive education perspective in Brazil.

It will become apparent during the text that although the selected municipalities presented indicators that were outstanding in comparison with the national averages at the time of the secondary data gathering, nevertheless, the primary data gathering conducted in the field revealed a set of considerable challenges to address and several aspects that need improvement.



Institutional and Organizational Aspects of Inclusive Education in the Surveyed Municipalities

Within State-society relations, public policies represent the position of the State regarding issues considered as social problems, which are the object of interpretations in disputes and conflicts. The achievement of the objectives of a public policy usually occurs due to a cycle involving formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation activities.

In every local context, inclusive education policies, based on the existing legal reference framework and the historical condition of the education provision to persons with disabilities, ASD, GDD, as well as gifted/talented students, are put into effect by means of programmes and projects developed by the public schools and by continuous contextualisation and reframing processes accomplished by the schools.

Such policies express the good will of the administrative bodies in charge of public education to guide schooling practices, who identify a series of intentions and prospective actions. The policies are also associated to deliberated expectations for achieving goals and objectives through the allocation of financial, technical and human resources together with the definition of accountabilities.

Based on those definitions the policy implementation process involves political-institutional, organizational, administrative and information management issues; human resources, service provision logistics, regulatory aspects and other matters. This chapter provides information on how all these aspects were dealt with by the selected municipalities.

1.1 Organizational and Administrative Aspects

The field of inclusive education is delineated by the activities of a multiplicity of actors who generate a constellation of macro and micro-policies with a variety of purposes and underlying rationalities. In that context, the intervention strategies of the administrative bodies responsible for municipal public-school networks are necessarily indirect, mediated and complex. The possibilities for implementing and sustaining those strategies are related to articulations made among a variety of spheres – the Ministry of Education, the Departments of Education or administrative bodies specifically managing special/inclusive education policies and schools. Municipal Departments of Education, in turn, instead of merely 'receive and apply' policies formulated in higher spheres, they rebuild the policy proposals based on their tasks in the local sphere and the protagonist role of the school communities.

To interpret the institutional dynamics involved it is necessary to understand that the inclusion process not only depends on the validity of its principles, but also on its implementation process. The development of inclusive education involves different administrative levels and areas in which innumerable actors participate, all of whom elaborate their own interpretations of their pursued purposes and have certain available resources. Accordingly, the implementation field comprises an 'arena' at a crossroad of a range of factors closely related to policy, human rights, representations associated to education (in general) and to inclusive education, mechanisms that make the education provision feasible, as well as specific conditions of individual schools and their social contexts.

The data analysis of the ten participating municipalities revealed some outstanding organizational and administrative aspects of inclusive education: the great organizational diversity; the continuity of inclusive education administration independently of changes in municipal governments; the provision of inclusive education in various educational levels and modalities with special emphasis on primary and lower secondary education levels; the very intense relations between municipalities and the federal government regarding inclusive education, but, at the same time, how seldom municipal respondents mention the state government; the performance of the reference centres which endeavour to meet both education and health needs; and the expansion of municipal legislation, regulations and guidelines dedicated to inclusive education.

1.1.1 Special/Inclusive Education in the Structure of the Municipal Departments of Education

In almost all Departments of Education in the surveyed municipalities, inclusive education was led by a specific coordinating body, division or sector at the Department. The exception among them was the municipality of Betim, where the Rafael Veneroso Inclusive Education Reference and Support Centre (*Centro de Referência e Apoio à Educação Inclusiva Rafael Veneroso* – CRAEI-RV) is the service-providing unit that accumulates the functions as a reference centre and an administrative body for the inclusive education policy.

In some of the municipalities, the sector responsible for inclusive education seemed to be alone in its appropriation of any issue associated to the area, which meant that the theme was hardly cross-cutting to the other sectors. There were even some cases of a single administrator who 'personified' the area, thereby limiting the possibility of inclusive education to be under the responsibility of and managed by collective entities drawn from the different education levels and modalities (pre-school, primary education, lower secondary education and adult education), and limiting the circulation of knowledge and practices, as well as monitoring data and information concerning the educational developments of the students with disabilities, ASD and GDD, as well as gifted/talented students.

In contrast to that situation, however, various municipalities have made progress in ensuring that inclusive education is a more cross-cutting issue. In those cases, the study revealed that the heads of the Departments of Education had taken the lead as articulators and boosters of the co-responsibility among the different sectors in the Department regarding inclusive education. It was also possible to identify the efforts of inclusive education teams in monitoring the theme on the agendas of other sectors/divisions in the Department as part of their daily work routines.

Among the strategies identified are the participation of inclusive education teams in the work groups of other areas (for example, in curricula), their involvement in planning and administration processes of the whole Department, the systematisation and dissemination of results obtained in inclusive education in the other sectors/areas, etc. Those forms of organization identified within the Departments of Education inspire and guide the schools in the process of making inclusive education a cross-cutting theme permeating all phases, from planning to evaluation. At the same time, the schools begin to ask for an alignment of co-responsibility in managing inclusive education to the other sectors of the Department of Education.

1.1.2 Continuity of Inclusive Education Policies

Public policies, particularly educational policies, require a considerable time to become effective. Inclusive education policies are no different in that respect. In general terms they presuppose cultural changes, background experiences, course corrections, progressive introduction of schooling practices, review of roles and responsibilities, facing conflicts and confrontations.

Thus, the continuity of policies is a way to ensure they acquire strength and consistency to face and overcome resistances, consolidate cultural and structural issues, negotiate the meanings of the proposed changes and incorporated them into the practices of the public agents. One of the most notable features of the surveyed municipalities is the continuity of their inclusive education policies. Almost all of them (Maracanaú, Betim, Florianópolis, Florianópolis, Vitória, Rio Branco, Porangatu and Erechim) revealed continuity in their administration of inclusive education policies whether it was done by the Department of Education or by an area specifically responsible for the policy.

At the time of the survey, except for a two-year interval, the Secretary for Education in Maracanaú had been in charge of inclusive education policies for 21 years. In Florianópolis and Florianópolis those responsible for inclusive/special education had occupied their positions since 2001 and 2005 respectively. In Betim and Vitória, even with the alternation of different political parties in power, there had been no significant changes in the development of inclusive education since the 1990s. In Porangatu, the person responsible for inclusive education had held her post since 2002. In Rio Branco, in addition to the continuity in municipal administrations since 2005, there has been a strong collaboration regime with the State throughout the period.

1.1.3 Background of Education Provision to Students with Disabilities, ASD, GDD, as well as to Gifted/Talented Students

'Special education has traditionally been organized as a specialized educational service that replaces the regular education mode and is endowed with its own understandings, terminologies and modalities. It has led to the creation of specialized institutions, special schools and special classes. It is a form of organization based on a normality/abnormality concept that determines clinical-therapeutic forms of attention strongly rooted in psychometric testing and the diagnoses based on the tests define school practices for students with disabilities' (Brasil. MEC/SEESP, 2008c).

The philanthropic institutions that provide education services for persons with disabilities, ASD, GDD and high ability/giftedness adopt a medical-clinical approach in an assistance perspective. Well known examples of such institutions are the Parents and Friends of the Exceptional (*Associação de Pais e Amigos dos Excepcionais* – APAE), and the Assistance for Disabled Children Association (*Associação de Assistência à Criança Deficiente* – AACD). They and many others have played a highly important role in providing educational, clinical and social assistance services to such individuals, addressing a request that has largely been neglected by the public authorities.

More recently, however, especially after the 1970s, some public-school networks have begun to provide services to the target audience of special education by creating special schools and classes with small numbers of enrolled students belonging to that group. Furthermore, by means of formal agreements, they have often been able to count on complementary attention offered by private assistance organizations like the ones mentioned above. In many state and municipal public schools networks such service provision persists in the form of replacement experiences in a segregationist perspective whether the segregation is in terms of special classes or special schools, or even effectuated by institutions that have not incorporated the principles and practices of inclusive education. In other situations, the private institutions fulfil the role of providing the SEA, while the public schools networks agree to accommodate those students in regular classrooms along with all the other students.

The municipalities that were surveyed follow the general guidelines of both the *National Policy on Special Education in the Perspective of Inclusive Education* (Brasil. MEC/SEESP, 2008c) and the *Convention on Persons with Disabilities* (Brasil, 2009), which recommend that such students should be accommodated and attended to in regular schools and classrooms.

In various municipalities that were surveyed inclusive education had been organized even prior to the establishment of the main legal framework on the issue, the *National Policy on Special Education in the Perspective of Inclusive Education* (Brasil. MEC/SEESP, 2008c). Inclusive education had been achieved by them, either by means of federal programmes that already addressed the issue or by simply increasing the practice of enrolling students that comprised the target audience of special education policies in regular classes or by organising complementary services to reinforce inclusive education. Except from the municipality of Rio Branco, it should be noted that none of the municipalities reported the existence of any important partnership arrangements with state governments.

Some of the municipalities had no history of special schools or classes at all. The schooling of the students that were the target audience of special education was carried out in regular classrooms of regular schools even though the enrolment numbers were initially low (compared to the total number of school-aged individuals with disabilities, ASD, GDD and high ability/giftedness in the population), but there had been progressive increases in enrolment as time went by. In other municipalities, there was a transition from the special classes and schools to regular classes in inclusive schools during the years 2000. Again, in some cities education services were provided exclusively by philanthropic institutions entirely substituting the place of regular schools.

On analysing the set of experiences examined in this study it can be verified that since 2011 none of the surveyed public-school networks have any special classes or schools in their structures now and all students with disabilities ASD, GDD and the gifted/talented ones are enrolled in regular classes. Table 2 below presents the timeline of events in the context of the municipal inclusive education policies.

It must be underscored that the data referring to the enrolments of students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and gifted/talented ones in regular classes have been made available by the School Census carried out by MEC from 2002 on. Thus, they do not allow a historical analysis from earlier periods.

In that regard, it was found that some municipalities apparently had never had students with disabilities ASD, GDD or gifted/talented ones enrolled in special classes. However, it could be that those municipal government public-school networks never provided any form of education service at all to that public prior to the beginning of their enrolment in regular classes.

Table 2: Timeline of special/inclusive education events in the surveyed municipalities

Municipality	Timeline
Barreiras (State of Bahia)	<p>2002 – It had already enrolled students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and gifted/ talented ones in regular classes of the municipal public schools.</p> <p>2003 – It became a pole for the MEC programme called <i>Educação Inclusiva: Direito à Diversidade</i> (Inclusive Education: the right to diversity).</p> <p>2005 – The transition of students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and gifted/ talented learners from APAE to special classes in classrooms with multifunctional resources in the municipal public schools.</p> <p>2008 – It completed the transition of students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and gifted/ talented learners to regular school classes.</p>
Betim (State of Minas Gerais)	<p>2002 – It had already enrolled students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and gifted/ talented ones in regular classes belonging to the municipal public schools.</p> <p>2003 – It became a pole for the MEC programme <i>Educação Inclusiva: Direito à Diversidade</i>.</p> <p>2009 – The implantation of the first classrooms with multifunctional resources.</p>
Erechim (State of Rio Grande do Sul)	<p>2003 – The enrolment of students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and gifted/ talented learners in regular school classes.</p> <p>2008 – It began the gradual closure of special classes in primary and lower secondary education schools.</p> <p>2009 – It began the gradual closure of special classes in pre-school education schools.</p> <p>2011 – It completed transition of students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and gifted/ talented learners to regular school classes.</p>
Floriano (State of Piauí)	<p>2005 – It began enrolling students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and gifted/ talented students straight into regular classes of the municipal public schools.</p> <p>2005 – The implantation of the first resource room.</p> <p>2006 – It became a pole for the MEC programme Inclusive Education: the right to diversity <i>Educação Inclusiva: Direito à Diversidade</i>.</p>
Florianópolis (State of Santa Catarina)	<p>2002 – It already had enrolment of students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and gifted/ talented learners in regular school classes.</p> <p>2003 – It became a pole for the MEC programme <i>Educação Inclusiva: Direito à Diversidade</i>.</p> <p>2004 to 2005 – The transferring of students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and gifted/ talented learners from special classes in philanthropic institutions to inclusive classes in the municipal public schools.</p> <p>2005 – implantation of nine multifunctional rooms in the municipal public schools to provide services for the target audience of special education.</p>

Maracanaú (State of Ceará)	<p>2002 – It had already enrolled students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and gifted/talented learners in regular classes in the municipal public schools.</p> <p>2010 – closure of the Special Education Support and Development Centre (<i>Centro de Apoio e Desenvolvimento da Educação Especial</i>). With the closure of special classes, the Centre was transformed into the Integrated Health and Education Centre (<i>Centro Integrado de Educação e Saúde – CIES</i>) exclusively administered by the Department of Health.</p> <p>2010 – The inauguration of the first classroom with multifunctional resources.</p> <p>2011 – It completed the transition of students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and gifted/talented learners to regular classes.</p>
Oiapoque (State of Amapá)	<p>2003 – It became a pole for the MEC programme <i>Educação Inclusiva: Direito à Diversidade</i>.</p> <p>2004 – It began the enrolment of students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and gifted/talented ones in regular classes in the municipal public schools.</p> <p>2005 – The implantation of the first classroom with multifunctional resources.</p>
Porangatu (State of Goiás)	<p>2002 – It had already enrolled students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and gifted/talented learners in regular classes in the municipal public schools.</p> <p>2003 – It became a pole for the MEC programme <i>Educação Inclusiva: Direito à Diversidade</i>.</p> <p>2005 – The implantation of the first classroom with multifunctional resources.</p>
Rio Branco (State of Acre)	<p>2002 – It had already enrolled students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and gifted/talented ones in regular classes of the municipal public schools.</p> <p>2003 – It became a pole for the MEC programme <i>Educação Inclusiva: Direito à Diversidade</i>.</p> <p>2007 – It began the transition of students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and gifted/talented ones from special classes in the state public schools to regular classes in the municipal public schools.</p>
Vitória (State of Espírito Santo)	<p>2002 – It had already enrolled students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and gifted/talented ones in regular classes in the municipal public schools.</p> <p>2003 – It became a pole for the MEC programme <i>Educação Inclusiva: Direito à Diversidade</i>.</p> <p>2007 – The pedagogical laboratories model – precursor of the current SEA attended by students from various schools in shifts that did not coincide with their school attendance shifts – was replaced by the SEA administered in their regular school shift period together with the teachers of the regular classes.</p>

Source: *Pesquisa Boas Práticas em Educação Inclusiva: a experiência de municípios brasileiros na inclusão de alunos com deficiência, transtornos do espectro autista (TEA), transtorno global do desenvolvimento (TGD) e altas habilidades/superdotação* (Good Practices in Inclusive Education Research Survey: the experiences in municipal public schools network in including students with disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), General Development Disorder (GDD), as well as gifted/talented students)

1.1.4 Inclusive Education Provision in Different Educational Levels and Modalities

One of the positive results of inclusive education policies in Brazil is the expressive enrolment increase and the progress made in the schooling of students with disabilities, ASD and GDD, as well as gifted/talented students. An increasing proportion of them, including those with intellectual impairments, has gotten beyond the years of primary education and reached more advanced educational levels. For the municipal public schools, this new context brings with it the challenge of extending the principles and practices of inclusive education to all educational levels and modalities.

The municipalities that participated in the survey provide inclusive education at all educational levels and in all modalities under municipal responsibility⁵ albeit the enrolment figures for the pre-school and primary education years are higher than for other levels or modalities. These data are presented in the following tables.

1.1.5 Enrolments of Students with disabilities, ASD and GDD, as well as Gifted/Talented Learners by Educational Levels and Modalities in Comparison with Total Enrolments (2013)

Table 3: Enrolments of Students with Disabilities, ASD and GDD, as well as Gifted/Talented Learners in Pre-school Education and Primary Education

Municipality	PS*	PS – DIS		PE	PE – DIS	
Barreiras (Bahia)	2,868	15	0.52%	9,620	243	2.53%
Betim (Minas Gerais)	5,001	57	1.14%	21,847	541	2.48%
Erechim (Rio Grande doSul)	2,518	27	1.07%	1,982	119	6.00%
Floriano (Piauí)	1,132	8	0.71%	3,498	157	4.49%
Florianópolis (Santa Catarina)	11,293	156	1.38%	8,542	174	2.04%
Maracanaú (Ceará)	5,258	38	0.72%	14,537	484	3.33%
Oiapoque (Amapá)	929	4	0.43%	1,727	60	3.47%
Porangatu (Goias)	879	13	1.48%	2,318	153	6.60%
Rio Branco (Acre)	11,107	121	1.09%	9,543	292	3.06%
Vitória (Espírito Santo)	17,975	151	0.84%	15,068	355	2.36%

(*) PS – Pre-School Education; PE – Primary Education; DIS – Students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and gifted/talented ones.
Source: 2013 School Census (Brasil. INEP, 2014).

Table 4: Enrolments of Students with Disabilities, ASD and GDD, as well as Gifted/Talented Learners in Lower Secondary Education and Adult Education

Municipality	LS*	LS – DIS		AE	AE – DIS	
Barreiras (Bahia)	6,834	81	1.19%	1,538	40	2.60%
Betim (Minas Gerais)	19,360	326	1.68%	3,453	47	1.36%
Erechim (Rio Grande doSul)	1,293	52	4.02%	299	28	9.36%
Floriano (Piauí)	2,137	40	1.87%	935	31	3.32%
Florianópolis (Santa Catarina)	6,878	140	2.04%	1,217	19	1.56%
Maracanaú (Ceará)	14,745	234	1.59%	5,604	129	2.30%
Oiapoque (Amapá)	144	0	0.00%	173	6	3.47%
Porangatu (Goias)	1,088	43	3.95%	303	6	1.98%
Rio Branco (Acre)	249	9	3.61%	796	28	3.52%
Vitória (Espírito Santo)	12,828	585	4.56%	3,197	90	2.82%

(*) LS – Lower Secondary Education; AE – Adult Education; DIS – Students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and gifted/talented ones.
Source: 2013 School Census (Brasil. INEP, 2014).

⁵ According to the provisions of the National Education Bases and Guidelines Act (*Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional – LDB*), municipalities are responsible for providing day care centres and pre-school education and share responsibility with the states on the provision of primary and lower secondary education. Some of the municipalities participating in this study took on exclusive responsibility for lower secondary education in addition to pre-school and primary education provision, without involving state governments. Others did not provide secondary education. In every case, the municipal education networks are obliged to provide all the educational levels they offer in their adult education programmes (Brasil, 1996).

The figures shown in Tables 3 and 4 together with those obtained by the research survey reveal important aspects to be underscored:

- Among all the educational levels and modalities, the highest numbers of enrolments have always been in the primary education years because up until recently they were the years that correspond to compulsory education. That same situation is repeated in the case of students with disabilities, ASD and GDD, as well as gifted/talented students.
- In all the surveyed municipalities, the percentage of enrolments of students that are the target audience of special education in pre-school education is significantly lower. That calls for greater mobilisation and organization of the public-school networks to ensure such children to have access to that educational level.
- All the surveyed municipalities offer the Adult Education (AE) modality to students that are the target-public of special education. The enrolment percentages are at an intermediate level between those verified for primary education and those verified for lower secondary education. The provision of SEA corresponding to the years of lower secondary education is scarce. That constitutes an important challenge for the municipal public-school networks. At the same time, research fieldwork showed that many of the students in that category were coming from special schools and classes in which there had never been any opportunity to have access to higher educational levels.
- Furthermore, SEA or similar preceded proposals were originally offered at the of primary education level. For this reason, it took more time for schools to assimilate it and incorporate it to their teaching routines and practices.
- In most of the municipalities, the structuring of SEA was found to have coincided with the increase in the enrolments of students with deficiencies, ASD and GDD and gifted/talented ones in the primary education years. It contributed to consolidating a culture of attending regular classes and receiving SEA attention in the alternative school shift period and that was true, not only for the students with or without disabilities, but also for their parents and the school staff.
- Even though the numbers of students that are the target audience for special education are increasing in the different school years and levels because of the progressive consolidation of inclusive education policies. Nevertheless, the enrolment number in primary education is far higher than in lower secondary education. That has led public-school networks to set priority on providing suitable structures and services in those early educational levels first.
- In the primary education years there is usually only one teacher per class who is responsible for the class during an entire school shift. In that case, in addition to having more intense contact with students individually and getting to know them very well, the teacher is also able to collaborate more intensively with the SEA teacher. Even though, normally the SEA service is provided in the period of the alternative shift to the one the regular class is held in.
- In lower secondary educational level, the students have different teachers for each study discipline so a given teacher spends far less time with the students. That makes it more difficult to offer more personalized attention to students and for the teachers to articulate with the SEA teachers.
- It must be borne in mind that the entry or transferring to regular classes is recent for the special education students, which is one explanation for the small number of enrolments in lower secondary education. Thus, it is essential to continue to monitor the educational indicators of such students, as well as to continue to offer them the necessary conditions so that they can eventually have access to the more advanced educational levels.

1.1.6 Relations between the Municipal Public Schools Networks and the Ministry of Education (MEC)

MEC has been the main protagonist in engendering inclusive education policies; it has various programmes and projects dedicated to making it operational. Municipalities strongly adhere to them. Among the outstanding projects and programmes are:

- *Double Enrolment in FUNDEB*⁶ for students attending SEA: to distribute FUNDEB funds, a double enrolment is allowed for students in regular classes of the public education system who are also benefited by special education services. The double enrolment means that the student is registered in both regular education and in SEA. The increase in enrolment figures brings in complementary financial support from FUNDEB.
- *Multifunctional Classroom Resources*: this programme provides an array of IT equipment, furniture, teaching materials and accessibility devices for public schools offering regular education to enable them to organize the space for special education service provision.
- *Accessible School Programme* (Programa Escola Acessível – PEA): financial resources are made available for the work of architectural adaptation and installations – ramps, toilets, access ways, handrails, visual, tactile and auditory signs, as well as for acquiring wheelchairs, technological assistance devices, drinking fountains and appropriately accessible furniture.
- *Accessible School Transport*: the programme seeks to make means of school transport available to municipalities thereby contributing to enhance the access and attendance of students with disabilities.
- *Accessible Books*: the programme is designed to ensure that students with visual impairments are enrolled in regular schools that offer primary and secondary education are provided with basic books in formats that are accessible to them. They are acquired under the aegis of the National School Books Programme (*Programa Nacional Livro Didático* – PNLD) and the National School Library Programme (*Programa Nacional Biblioteca da Escola* – PNBE);
- *Continuing Professional Development for Special Education Teachers*: offered by the Open University (*Universidade Aberta do Brasil* – UAB) and the National Network for the Qualification of Education Professionals (*Rede Nacional de Formação de Profissionais da Educação* – RENAFOR). They seek to provide support for the ongoing qualification of SEA teachers enabling them to work in both multifunctional classrooms and ordinary classrooms in regular education;
- *Inclusive Education: The Right to Diversity Programme*: the *Educação Inclusiva: Direito à Diversidade* programme involves actions aimed at qualifying administrators and educators in principles and practices related to inclusive education.
- *National Programme for Certification of Proficiency in the Use and Teaching of LIBRAS Programme*: the *Programa Nacional para a Certificação de Proficiência no Uso e Ensino da Língua Brasileira de Sinais* (PROLIBRAS) programme provides national examinations to certify proficiency in the use, teaching, translation and interpretation of LIBRAS (the Brazilian sign language system).

Other federal government initiatives have contributed to expanding the educational inclusion of children and young people with disabilities. An example is the Continuous Social Assistance Benefits Programme (*Programa*

⁶ FUNDEB (*Fundo de Manutenção e Desenvolvimento da Educação Básica e de Valorização dos Profissionais da Educação*) is a special accounting fund for states (there are 27 funds for each state and the Federal District), originating almost completely from taxes and fund transfers related to education collected in states, municipalities and the Federal District. Besides these funds, FUNDEB is comprised by a parcel of the federal funds to complement a predefined total national amount for each state unit whenever the value per student does not reach the lowest amount necessary to finance their basic education. Regardless of origin, the entire fund generated is redistributed for exclusive application in Basic Education.

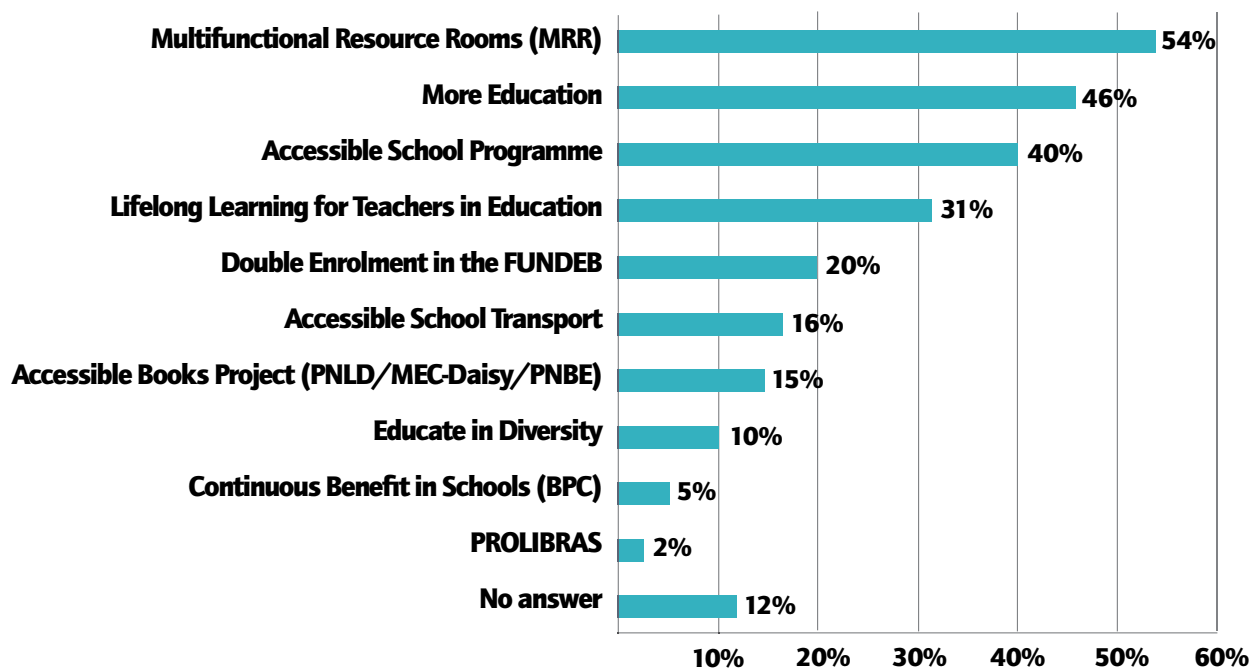
Benefício de Prestação Continuada de Assistência Social –BPC) applied to schools. This inter-ministerial action began in 2007. Today, it is part of the National Plan for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (*Plano Nacional dos Direitos das Pessoas com Deficiência*) also known as *Viver Sem Limite* (Living Without Limits). The BPC in schools is aimed at monitoring and fostering access to, and permanence in school of persons in the ages between 0 and 18 with disabilities from low income families.

The municipal public-school networks embraced by the research survey indicated the importance of the federal government as the main driver of inclusive education policies and underscored the following aspects:

- The regulatory role performed by the National Policy on Special Education in the Perspective of Inclusive Education, which has led to the establishment of a series of laws, decrees and technical opinions and notes all of which have served as references for elaborating municipal policies.
- The input of federal financing by means of the above-mentioned programmes.
- The strong boost given to SEA structuring by financing MRRs and the reference framework for SEA implementation. Chapter 4 will show in greater detail how central SEA is to consolidate inclusive education policies in the municipalities.
- The contribution of federal programmes to the constant professional development of educators by offering UAB courses especially those targeting SEA, and those offered by the *Educação Inclusiva: Direito à Diversidade* programme, run by the SECADI/MEC. In fact, eight out of the ten municipalities surveyed are poles for that programme, and the other two (Erechim and Maracanaú) are within its scope.

To find out more about how those programmes are present in the schools, a specific question was included in the questionnaire administered to school principals. The results are displayed in Chart 2 below.

Chart 2: Federal Government Programmes of which your school, staff and/or students are beneficiaries



NB: the total displayed in the chart does not necessarily correspond to the number of respondents.

Source: Questionnaires administered to school principals, 2015.

These data effectively ratify the importance of the programmes, their propagation until reaching the schools, the strong adherence achieved and their strong presence in the municipalities.

1.1.7 Regulation, guidelines and standardization

It was found that the public-school networks are undergoing a process of increasing regulation of the educational attention being offered to students with disabilities, ASD and GDD, as well as to gifted/talented ones. In addition to the fact that many of them already have implemented and up-to-date municipal education plans contemplating inclusive education aspects, several of them have formulated Multifunctional Resource Room (MRR) policies inspired by the principles of the *National Policy on Special Education in an Inclusive Education Perspective*. Operational guidelines for service provision were identified – usually segmented according to the types of disability, but a notable absence of the gifted/talented-students' category – as well as form templates, service provision flows, registration cards and other instruments used to guide the data gathering process and the monitoring of service provision.

It is quite usual for such local cases to be inspired by national reference documents issued by the federal government (the Ministry of Education and its autarchies, such as the Anísio Texeiro National Institute for Educational Studies and Research (*Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira* – INEP) and the National Education Council (CNE). They often adapt these instruments to local contexts and incorporate them in local instruments that have been previously used in national standards.

Constructing a Reference Framework for the Municipal Public Schools Network in Vitória

The local government bodies responsible for managing the inclusive education policy in Vitória (State of Espírito Santo) have sought to construct and disseminate references and instruments for actions throughout their Municipal Public Schools Network regarding the provision of education services to students with disabilities, ASD and GDD, as well as to gifted/talented ones.

In addition to a *Municipal Policy of Special Education in the Perspective of Inclusive Education* – elaborated in alignment with the general guidelines of the national policy –, the municipality also has detailed documents of underlying concepts, references and strategies regarding educational service provision to students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and high ability/giftedness, bilingual education, organization of MRR and others. The contents of those documents are the object of systematic professional development actions headed by the Special Education Capacity Building and Accompaniment Coordinating Body (*Coordenação de Formação e Acompanhamento da Educação Especial* – CFAEE), the body responsible for administering the local inclusive education policy.

'Those reference frameworks have been of fundamental importance for aligning concepts and expectations regarding the performance of municipal schools in this area of education.'

That statement was underscored by the Municipal Secretary for Education, who stated that:

'Even though we are aware that it is not enough just to get it all on paper, nevertheless, the definition of reference frameworks and guidelines indicate the path to be taken, the guiding principles and the expectations of the Municipal Department of Education (SEME).'

1.2 Information Management

Managing the implementation of inclusive education policies involves structuring the processes for gathering, organising, systematising and disseminating information on enrolments and attendance of students, learning and educational results, as well as those concerning service provision, organizational flows and others. Managing is one

of the fields to strengthen or to weaken the relations between central administrative bodies and individual schools. It is a field to create conditions to ensure the effective use of public resources or to miss the opportunity to do so. It is either a field to structure relations to ensure collaboration and improvement of actions or merely to control measures.

The municipalities investigated by this study face considerable information management challenges in the context of inclusive education. In most of them, there were no systematic documental registrations of attendance control, of the activities carried out or of the learning achievements of students with disabilities, ASD and GDD, as well as gifted/talented ones. Florianópolis, Betim and Vitória were in better situations in this aspect. They have built more consistent and effective information management systems, making it possible to conduct a more consistent monitoring of the education provision to students that are the target audience of special education. They have structured data and information related not only to access to the public-school network, but also the permanence of students in education and the educational results they achieve. That, in turn, generates conditions for constantly improving the service provision.

Another issue associated to information management that the survey revealed concerns the special education data that the municipal authorities are supposed to send to the federal government to make diagnoses and formulate and implement policies. The information flows among schools, Departments of Education and MEC administrative bodies (such as INEP, the National Education Development Fund, Departments, Programme Coordinations and so on) face obvious difficulties for articulating and understanding the flows themselves, as well as for setting roles and responsibilities. These difficulties undermine resource management and adequate allocation in addition to generating inconsistencies in monitoring and assessing policy impacts and results.

Monitoring Access, Permanence, and Learning of Students with Disabilities, ASD and GDD, as well as Gifted/Talented Ones in Betim and Vitória

The bodies responsible for inclusive education policies in the municipalities of Betim and Vitória showed that they took the creation and maintenance of structured data, information and records concerning students who are the target audience of inclusive education very seriously.

The structuring in question involves data delineating of students' profiles, doctors' statements, student attendance and activities undertaken under the aegis of SEA, in addition to information on students' access to other services, learning in regular classrooms, etc. It was clear that those municipalities were making a special effort to involve, not only the teams and personnel in the administrative units responsible for education policies at the Department of Education, but also the staff in schools, in gathering, systematizing and analysing such information and data.

Both municipalities have implanted IT systems in their public-school networks that create conditions for permanent access to information to support supervision, monitoring and evaluation activities.

1.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation activities are the means of investigating and accompanying the implementation of a policy, a programme or a project with a view to verifying the fulfilment or achievement of the established objectives and to eventually decide on making corrections. Building monitoring and evaluation strategies envisages the identification of expected results, the elaboration of indicators, the development of data and information gathering tools and mechanisms, and foresees the participation of stakeholders in the results of

the process. Data analysis obtained generates institutional learning and elements that can serve as reference to constantly improve the actions.

In most cases, monitoring inclusive education in the surveyed municipalities was undertaken in a relatively unstructured manner. Few mechanisms, processes or tools have been specifically elaborated for that purpose. The data gathered revealed a strong centralization of monitoring activities in the special/inclusive education coordinating bodies. It generally took the form of periodic meetings and visits during which they passed on the needs considered important for the schools and other sectors of the Departments of Education.

It was also found that there is little awareness of the data and information made available by the various spheres associated to MEC to reinforce the inclusive education policy or hardly any use of them for elaborating action plans, defining priorities, conducting inter-sector articulation, guiding pedagogical management in the schools or for other similar purposes. In other words, all the investment made in producing and distributing data and information is under-exploited by the Departments of Education and the schools.

Erechim: Ombudsman and Organizational Ambience Research

The municipality of Erechim monitors and evaluates its educational inclusion policy by means of external and internal mechanisms installed in the Department of Education and in other administrative bodies of the local government authority. Internal evaluation is conducted by the Human Resources Division, which is responsible for the Internal Control Division for all contracts, bidding processes, works, school meals, transport, the *One Computer per Student* project and everything else involving the Department of Education. The Office of the Ombudsman and the *Pesquisa Clima* survey (see details below) maintain close communication with the Internal Control Division of the Municipal Department of Education and, according to the nature of the identifying need they can guide its activities.

The Municipal Office of the Ombudsman is one of the external mechanisms. Its aim is to contribute to improving the quality of public services provided by the municipal government. According to the Municipal Secretary for Education,



'The Office of the Ombudsman is one of the tools that help to improve the work of the Department of Education and guide its performance.'

The Office of the Ombudsman keeps open a channel for dialogue with the school communities and the school administrations and in that way, it can evaluate the service provision. It also issues reports containing complaints, requests, suggestions, and registrations of cases that have been solved or that are still pending.

Another external instrument is the *Pesquisa Clima* (Ambience Survey) conducted by the Personnel Management Sector of the municipal government. It is a survey of the organizational ambience whereby the municipal government Departments make a self-assessment report. It takes into account aspects such as remuneration, relations in the work environment, motivation, among others. In 2013, the Department of Education scored 8 in its self-assessment.

1.4 Infrastructure and Accessibility

According to the terms of Decree No. 5,296/2004, which regulates Acts No. 10,048/2000 and 10,098/2000, accessibility concerns the conditions 'for the safe use, with total autonomy or with assistance, of the urban spaces, furnishings, equipment and buildings, and the transport services and communication and information devices, systems and means, by persons with disabilities or reduced mobility' (Brasil, 2004). The same Decree also offers a definition of barriers, namely: 'any hindrance or obstacle that limits or impedes access, freedom of movement, and circulation in safety or the possibility of persons to communicate or have access to information' (Brasil, 2004).

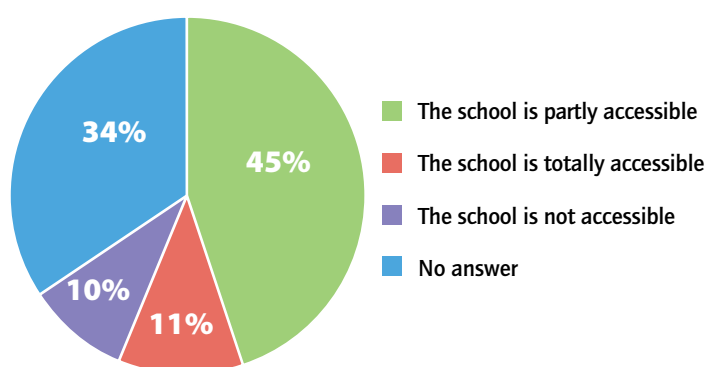
Among the municipalities embraced by the study, the perception on the importance of architectural accessibility in the reduction of barriers to access to and participation in school life of students with disabilities, ASD and GDD, as well as gifted/talented students is very well diffused. Even though, it is an issue that has not been entirely solved, especially in older schools of the public-school networks.

It was also found that there was strong adherence to the MEC PEA Programme. All the municipalities surveyed had requested participation and had schools included in this programme. However, only 39% of the principals who responded to the questionnaire during the fieldwork stage of the survey stated that their school was benefitted by this Programme. It must be pointed out that the PEA is one of the actions under the aegis of the Programme *Dinheiro Direto na Escola* (Money Straight to the School) and it does not contemplate all schools. Instead, it prioritizes schools with the highest numbers of enrolments of students with deficiencies, ASD and GDD, as well as gifted/talented ones and those schools contemplated with MRRs.

During the fieldwork, it was found that there had been important progress in the aspect of architectural adaptations because new schools are being built in alignment with basic accessibility standards and a considerable number of other schools have made small adaptations, especially using the PEA financial resources. The big challenge has been to refurbish the existing schools and broaden the scope of the accessibility items.

In the questionnaires filled out by school principals, teachers working in regular classrooms and SEA teachers, almost half the respondents (45%) considered their schools to be partially accessible in architectural terms, while 11% believed their schools are not entirely accessible. On the other hand, 10% considered that their schools were not accessible at all. However, about 1/3 of respondents did not answer the question regarding that aspect and that could indicate their lack of knowledge regarding the issue.

Chart 3: How would you evaluate the architectural accessibility of your school?



Responses	Participants
The school is partly accessible	898
The school is totally accessible	215
The school is not accessible	192
No answer	687
Overall total	1,992

Source: Research Survey Questionnaire administered to teachers in regular classrooms, principals and SEA teachers, 2015.

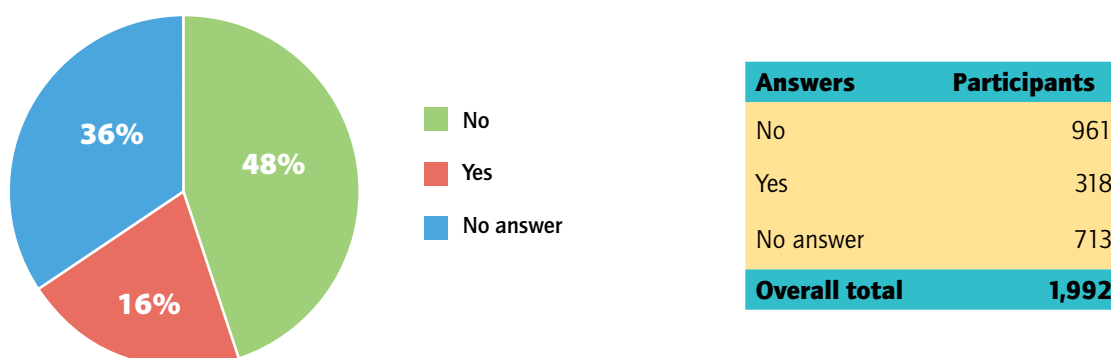
Maracanaú: accessibility-financing alternatives

In Maracanaú there has been an effective policy for financing accessibility since 2010 instituted by Municipal Act No. 1,539/2010, which authorizes the transfer of financial resources to school boards every half-year 'to promote accessibility in their institutions'. It is called the School Autonomy: Accessibility Programme (*Programa de Autonomia Escolar: Acessibilidade – PAE Acessibilidade*). All the school administrators interviewed and listened to have mentioned this Programme and considered it an advancement.

Very few of the other accessibility-related aspects like furnishings, ICT installation, signing, illumination, areas for socialising, etc. were present in the schools or mentioned by the actors that were interviewed.

Many respondents to the questionnaires administered to principals, teachers in regular classrooms and SEA teachers declared that they did not consider their schools to have an inclusive and accessible environment whereas only 10% declared that their schools were not accessible in architectural terms (Chart 4). 48% stated that their school was not an accessible environment after they had been stimulated to evaluate other aspects like furnishings and communication, as can be seen in Chart 4.

Chart 4: Do you consider that your school has an accessible environment (are there tactile floors, signs or placards in Braille and with large letters, signs or placards in LIBRAS, luminous signs, accessible furnishings and others)?



Source: Research Survey Questionnaire administered to teachers in regular classrooms, principals and SEA teachers, 2015.

Apart from architectural accessibility, it is clear that there is still a long way to go in incorporating the different dimensions of the concept of accessibility to the daily routine of public schools. They are fundamental conditions for ensuring equal opportunities, participation and autonomy of the students with disabilities, ASD and GDD, as well as the gifted/talented ones.

1.5 Inter-sector Articulation

Historically, the education provision in Brazil has been noted for a certain degree of isolation and self-sufficiency compared to other public services; remnants of a vision of the school as a quasi-total institution. In the case of education provision for students that are the target audience of special education, the scenario is even more critical. However, as the old model is gradually abandoned and a field of differentiation of educational actions compared to other public services is built, especially those in the fields of health and social assistance, the public schools endeavour to comprehend the complementariness that exists among services and the need for greater inter-sector articulation.

In the municipalities of this study, however, inter-sector articulation involving inclusive education and other public services still timidly occurs. There is very little articulation. Whenever it occurs, it usually relates to the health area. In some cases, there is articulation in the sense of an active search to identify children of school age with disabilities, ASD, GDD, and high ability/giftedness who are not in school.

The survey also identified articulations with the Municipal Departments responsible for the BPC in Schools modality within the BPC Programme (generally, they are Departments of Social Assistance or Departments of Citizenship). The Programme staff informs the schools the necessary number of the enrolments to be reserved for students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and high ability/giftedness. In some municipalities, the community health agents working for the Family Health Programme also notify the cases of children who are part of that target group that are not enrolled in schools.

It is important to highlight that inclusive education is strengthened when it builds bridges to other services. In addition to the more obvious complementariness with the areas of health and social assistance, this articulated action must extend to other sectors of public policy such as transport, labour, sports and leisure. An effort should be made to identify and generate synergies, stimulate the dissemination of inclusion principles, and effectuate integral human rights for all.

Betim: Sport and Inclusive Education

Betim Municipal Department of Education has a partnership agreement with the Department of Sports in the form of a project called Adapted Physical Activity (*Atividade Física Adaptada - AFA*), part of the Programme Long Live Sport (*Viva o Esporte*). The project has been in existence for 30 years and its activities are held in the Municipal Garden and the Municipal Sports Gymnasium with the participation of 150 to 200 people with ages ranging from 4 to 81. Most of them have intellectual or multiple disabilities, but there are some with low visual ability or blind and others with ASD and/or GDD. Participation is organized by age groups.

The project works with three modalities of activity: athletics, hydro-gymnastics and indoor football (*futsal*). There are other psychomotor development activities involving general and fine motor coordination, equilibrium, force, agility, etc. Training takes place every day not only for those involved in competitive athletics (intending to participate in professional competitions), but also those practicing participatory athletics. There are also two groups, mostly made up of persons with intellectual disabilities, with whom the work focuses on developing Psychomotricity and initiation in the other modalities, as well as a group that practices hydro-gymnastics adapted for adults with physical disabilities.

Children and young people with disabilities, ASD, GDD, and high ability/giftedness students come to the project of their own volition or on the indication of the APAE and the Inclusive Education Support and Reference Centre, which is the coordinating body for the inclusive education policy in the municipality. The project also enjoys the collaboration of the Psychological and Social Support Centre: Alcohol and Drugs (*Centro de Apoio Psicossocial: Álcool e Drogas - CAPS-AD*), the Mental Health Reference Centre (*Centro de Referência em Saúde Mental - CERSAM*) and the Mental Health Reference Centre for Infants (*Centro de Referência em Saúde Mental Infantil - CERSAMI*). In these latter cases, the activities are usually undertaken in groups monitored by professional staff of the respective services.

The cooperation among the various Municipal Departments usually takes the form of loaning permanent staff of the Department of Education, because the Department of Sports does

not have any permanent staff; all the professionals are on temporary contracts or have been nominated to their posts. The project team is made up of four teachers, two psychologists, two social assistants one guide for the blind and four trainees. The team holds weekly three-hour meetings to discuss the cases, methodologies and the whole project. AFA is the only project within the *Viva o Esporte* Programme that holds weekly meetings. The mothers of the children and young people that participate in the project, who usually wait for them while they are engaged in the activities, compliment the initiative and highlight the enormous benefits the project has made to their children.

1.6 Raising Awareness and Sensitivity

Implementing inclusive education policies involves important cultural changes. Accepting naturally the educational exclusion of students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and high ability/giftedness and the persistence of the presuppositions and practices of special education, which stigmatise, discriminate and segregate those students make it essential the mobilization of efforts aimed at promoting a culture of inclusion in a human rights perspective.

In the municipalities investigated, where inclusive education policy implementation is at a more advanced stage, the opinions of most of the persons interviewed show that inclusion is indeed a value shared by the school communities. That was apparent in people's attitudes and favourable disposition towards it. Despite the awareness that there is still much to be done to ensure the effective inclusion of students with disabilities, ASD, GDD, as well as gifted/talented students, the discourse of inclusion seems to have become firmly rooted.

In the light of that situation, many of the people interviewed declared that there was less need now for mobilisation and awareness arousing activities to create a propitious atmosphere for the implantation of inclusive education policies. Even so, the municipalities of Floriano, Erechim and Maracanaú continue to regularly unfold awareness-raising activities and stand out from the others in that aspect.

Case

Activities to Raise Awareness and Sensitivity Regarding Inclusive Education in Maracanaú, Erechim and Floriano

In Maracanaú the participation of students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and high ability/giftedness and their families in events, councils, and meetings has been an important instrument in raising awareness on inclusive education, as the declarations below clearly illustrate:

'We took the opportunity of inviting a mother to open one of the meetings. She has three children with autism and it was highly instructive for the teachers that were present.'
(School principal)

'There was the participation of one of our students who wrote a book. She has hearing and visual disabilities and people communicate with her through touching. She opened the meeting by communicating what the school has meant to her. We use the participation of people like her to open our meetings to make people more sensitive to the importance of inclusion.'
(Coordinator of the Inclusive Education area)

The municipality at large also underwent a process of raising awareness and sensitivity associated to the change from special education service provision to inclusive classes. According to all the statements collected, the Department of Education formed teams of educators and therapists, who conducted the debate concerning the closure of the specialized education centres with the parents of all enrolled students and indicated the enrolment of the students in the schools nearest their homes, guaranteeing school transport for those who lived farther away. The statement of one of the SEA teachers gives a clever idea of how the community was involved:



'All the families took part, students, staff, therapists, health professionals; all of them took part in the debate. In the beginning the parents were against the change; they were afraid of their children to leave the centre of their attention to be launched to the world.' (SEA teacher)

The inclusive education coordinator for the municipality highlighted the raising and sensitivity awareness process enhancement that took place in the city:



'[The process] was highly controversial, very polemical; there was lots of discussion and it went on for a long time, about two years before we finally arrived at a consensus. Lots of dialogue, conversation, explanations. At the meetings, which were held by segments, there was always someone present who could describe and explain how it was going to be. The teachers and principals mediated the dialogues. Formerly there was a lot of resistance but today it has diminished considerably [...] it is the fear of something new'. (Inclusive education coordinator)

Again, according to the states of the interviewees, the great protagonists of the process were the Department of Education staff and some teachers. In one of the focus group sessions, coordinators of other areas in the Department explained the following:



'The technical staff that headed the discussions related to inclusion were very well qualified. If they had not been well-qualified, they would never have succeeded as they did. It really was a great struggle. And it is a cultural change, a new form of acceptance. It is a significant evolution in a very short space of time. We recognize the merits to the people in the team.' (Coordinator of the Department of Education).

Many families denounced the process to the Office of the Public Prosecutor. There were several public hearings at which the Head of the Department of Education was repudiated. There were several disputes between the Municipal Council of Persons with Disabilities and the Department of Education. The coordinator for inclusive education and the head of the Department of Education suggested that many of the parents were complacent with the situation of the special services centre. According to the coordinator:



'The centre offered both health and education [services]. For this reason, many students were dependent on that space alone; they had no other activities. They would not participate in any event nor they would go to any other places; only when the race for people with disabilities took place. There were excursions, but they were for people with disabilities only.'

Erechim – participation of the families

In Erechim the schools organise meetings at which all the parents meet and share their observations and experiences. During the data gathering process, it could be observed that

the meetings are considered to be excellent occasions for enhancing sensitivity and sharing experiences. The statement of one mother of a disabled child illustrates that generalised approval of such meetings:

'The school where my child goes to invited me to share my experience as a mother with the parents of students with no disabilities. I believe that it was very useful. I could notice that even those parents of children without disabilities had difficulties with the education of their children. Imagine how it is for the parents of children with disabilities!' (Mother of a child with cerebral palsy in the second year of primary education)

Another account given by a supportive teacher illustrates the awareness and sensitivity raising strategies that the municipality implemented:

'Today, the parents of my son's classmates, call me up to ask me how was the surgery of my son. Their support has been a blessing. I feel less alone.' (Mother of a child with Down Syndrome)

One mother told how she could now count on the support of the other parents because of the work of implementing and disseminating a culture of inclusion in the schools:

'When a student with disabilities arrives in a classroom, I organise reading sessions of stories designed to enhance the sensitivity of the classmates to diversity themes and value differences as a welcome celebration. Inclusion is something we need to teach.'

Floriano: collaboration and initiatives

The municipality of Floriano has carried out awareness and sensitivity raising activities with the support of or in partnership with the Office of the Public Prosecutor, as the Coordinator for Inclusive Education reports:

'Seminars, workshops and events were held in partnership with the Office of the Public Prosecutor, which provided guidance on the laws and conducted a study that suggested a public hearing to verify the costs spent over the last ten years. The Office of the Public Prosecutor asked us to organise an event for raising awareness and sensitivity in private schools because many of them do not include students with disabilities. They refuse to receive them and do not even open the door to say why they are not prepared to receive them!'

Another activity aimed at raising sensitivity implemented by the municipality, but this time in collaboration with the Federal University of Piauí, was the 1st Forum on the Struggle for Inclusive Education (*I Fórum de Luta pela Educação Inclusiva*), an allusion to the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. University professors supported the event by giving lectures that led to discussions of the theme in a human rights perspective.

During the opening ceremony, the mayor of Floriano, the Secretary of Education and one of the prosecutors from the Office of the Public Prosecutor lectured to the teachers in the audience defending the strengthening and validation of public policies on inclusion in municipalities. The lecture was accompanied by artistic presentations made by students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and high ability/giftedness from the municipal network of public schools.

All those experiences show that even in municipalities where the discourse of inclusion has been incorporated partly or entirely to the educational practices, mobilisation and awareness raising activities are still of fundamental importance to ensure the diffusion and sharing of concepts, practices, values and significations related to inclusive education among the larger set of education professionals in public schools, and among the families and communities. Such initiatives have made a considerable contribution to reducing resistance and building a feasible horizon for equalising opportunities, valuing human diversity and guaranteeing rights.

1.7 Participation and Social Control

In a democratic regime, public policies are not actions that involve the State alone. They must involve building social legitimacy and support. It is essential that they incorporate knowledge and experiences that are external to the State structures. With this background, participation is considered a component with strong potential for qualifying policy elaboration, implementation and social control processes.

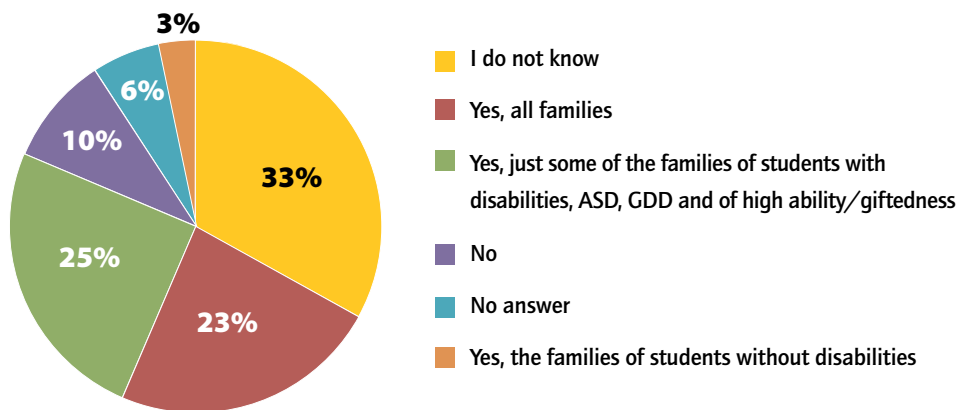
Taking that into consideration, this study sought to investigate various aspects, alternatives and strategies of participation and social control that involve the school community and inclusive education policies. It was identified actions that encouraged families to participate in the school activities, the relations between the public schools and the councils for the defence of human rights, as well as advocacy actions of legal system professionals in the implementation of inclusive education policies.

1.7.1 Participation of the Families

In several municipalities embraced by the study the coordinators of sectors responsible for inclusive education policies stated that the families of students with disabilities, ASD, GDD, and of gifted/talented students have become more participative. One of the reasons identified for that in various municipalities was greater knowledge of the rights of persons with disabilities, especially in inclusive education. Furthermore, the families have been mobilised by the public schools around certain concrete issues, such as the right to SEA, information exchanges on students (other forms of clinical attention being received, personal characteristics, discussion of strategies for attention in school, etc.). They have also become involved in participatory spaces (such as councils) in the elaboration of the school Pedagogical Policy Plan, in evaluations and so on

Nevertheless, as a result of the questionnaires were administered to school principals, SEA teachers and ordinary classroom teachers, the responses to the question about the participation of the families of students with and without disabilities, ASD, GDD and of high ability/giftedness in inclusive/special education in their municipality, 33% of the respondents stated that they did not know about them, 10% considered that there was no participation, and another 6% failed to answer to the question. In other words, almost half of the respondents either knew nothing about the issue or believed that there is no such involvement of the families, as shown by Chart 5.

Chart 5: Do families of students with and without disabilities, ASD, GDD, and gifted/talented students participate in any way in the actions of inclusive/special education in the municipality?



Source: Research Survey Questionnaire administered to teachers in regular classrooms, school principals and SEA teachers, 2015.

Even though that participation is not readily perceived by the greater part of the school community, in the qualitative research, there are many statements that identify the intense participation of a restricted group of families of students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and high ability/giftedness who are more interested in taking an active part in the school attendance of their children, in discussing the development and learning achievements of those students, and who find a space within the school where there is attention given, receptivity and the possibility of exchanges with other families and education professionals. The extracts from statements below will give a better idea of that perspective:

'When I received the diagnosis that my son was autistic, the doctor told me that my personal life would be over. In his school, I found a lot of support and people interested in helping my son and myself. I began to attend all meetings and that has been highly important to me.' (Mother of a student)

'My other son is enrolled in a private school. When my daughter with intellectual deficiency was born, her diagnosis was not clear. I wanted to enrol her in the same school as my son, but they would not accept her. I sought out other private schools, but they always came up with some excuse. Until one day, someone suggested that I should try a municipal public school. I resisted somewhat, because I was quite prejudiced against public schools. Eventually, I took my daughter there for lack of any other option. The principal welcomed me warmly and called in her SEA teacher, who simply took my daughter up on her lap and said, "come with me, I am going to show you your school". I decided right there to enrol her and I think it was the best choice I could have made!' (Mother of a student)

'There are people who say, "disabled children come to school to socialise". We, mothers, must fight against that idea, because it is not true! They come here to learn! However, disabled she may be, she can always learn something. So, she comes here to learn!' (Mother of a student)

'We, parents, know our children alright, but we do not know the theory, the studies. The teachers do. So, we need to take our mundane knowledge of the daily routine and join it to the experience of the teachers. Thus, we can assist our children better.' (Father of a student)

1.7.2 Relations between Public Schools and Human Rights Councils

In various municipalities, it was possible to identify articulations of the Departments of Education with Councils and other policy control bodies. The aspect of inclusive education seems to be more commonly present in the councils for the defence of the rights of disabled persons sometimes cross-cutting the theme of accessibility. In some of the municipalities the Department of Education is formally represented on such councils. In the case of the councils for education however, according to some of the interviewees, the inclusive education agenda only appears very timidly or superficially.

That participation allows greater presence of the inclusive education agenda in such councils. It fosters a qualifying educational action regarding inclusive education principles and the associated legal reference framework. It also allows the pursuit of inter-sector articulations and a more systematic monitoring of the public policies on inclusive education.

The participation of communities in decision-making processes regarding inclusive education is fostered through the school councils, parents' associations and other supporting networks.


1.7.3 The Role of the Office of the Public Prosecutor

Putting into effect the legal framework associated to the right to education for all in Brazil has had the important participation of the legal system professionals and entities, especially the Office of the Public Prosecutor. In its role of monitoring compliance with the law, the Office has frequently been called in and has positioned itself in favour of the needs associated to inclusive education, especially in cases of omission of government agencies or entities regarding guaranteeing the right to the access and permanence in regular public schools and classrooms to students with disabilities, ASD, GDD, as well as gifted/talented ones. Relations have not always been friendly or conflict-free, but they are the sign of a ripening process of the institutions that comprise the Democratic State of Law in Brazil.

Among the municipalities studied, there was a notable performance of the Office of the Public Prosecutor in guaranteeing the right to inclusive education in Florianópolis, Rio Branco, Oiapoque, Barreiras, Florianópolis, Maracanaú, Erechim and Betim. To varying extents, its actions are present in the form of pressuring for the provision of schools for students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and high ability/giftedness or in actions more specifically dedicated to inclusive education. They have transformed that body into an important stakeholder in effectuating the respective public policy.


The role of the Office of the Public Prosecutor in strengthening inclusive education policies in Rio Branco and Florianópolis

In Rio Branco, the Office of the Public Prosecutor has taken strong action in defence of the rights of persons with disabilities, particularly regarding compliance with the legislation on the right to inclusive education. In 2013, the Municipal Department of Education signed a Term of Conduct Adjustment drawn up by the Office of the Public Prosecutor with a view to implementing bilingual (LIBRAS/Portuguese) education for all students in all municipal public schools by 2021. That led to the development of the *Escola Acessível: Caminho para o Bilinguismo* project (Accessible School: the way to bilingualism). The project began in schools that had enrolled students that were deaf or had hearing impairments, and it was soon adhered to by all the other schools. In 2014, the project had reached 14 schools, six more than had originally been planned. According to one prosecutor who was interviewed:




'If everyone learned LIBRAS, that would be a way to enable deaf people to live better in society, making it easier for them to socialise and communicate with those with hearing. Otherwise, deaf people are condemned to living in ghettos. It was in that light that I began to work alongside the Department of Education in the sense of universalizing the teaching of LIBRAS, whether there are deaf children in the school or not. Our dream is that in 20 or 30 years from now a deaf person can move around in the city of Rio Branco without having to drag along an interpreter of LIBRAS.'

In Florianópolis, according to the special education manager, the closer relations with the Office of the Public Prosecutor began in a crisis context. There was an impasse surrounding the issue on the need for an auxiliary teacher in certain classrooms:



'During the process, some families appealed to the Office of the Public Prosecutor. That led to the involvement of the Judiciary. Nowadays, many judges understand much more about inclusive education policy to the point where they take part in seminars and they call on us to offer courses for prosecutors, judges, and their staff.'

The Secretary of Education also identifies a partnership with the Office of the Public Prosecutor as being 'very important piece of recent progress'.



'It is not always what the families desire that is what is best for the child or young person with a disability [...]. The parents resisted inclusion. They went to the Office of the Public Prosecutor with a medical opinion in hand. Doctors, on the other hand, much they may know about the syndrome or disability, do not know what is best for the child regarding educational aspects. When the Office of the Public Prosecutor started to listen to the educational management, the question began to evolve. They held seminars and meetings with a much broader vision of the needs of those children.'



Inclusive Education Professionals

Inclusive education policies introduce new issues for the public schools to address human resource management. Education provision for students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and high ability/giftedness administered in a perspective of inclusion involves new responsibilities and new mechanisms of coordination, articulation and cooperation among professional personnel.

In the context of inclusive education policy implementation, the public schools seek solutions to overcome the former models framed in clinical perspectives, and to develop proposals guided by the principles of inclusive education whereby a pedagogical perspective should be subjacent to all the activities unfolded. That process involves re-considering certain roles (especially the role of the teacher in regular classrooms), the creation of new posts and functions (carers, trainees, LIBRAS interpreters and LIBRAS instructors, etc.), the extinction or reconfiguration of certain posts (especially those undertaken by special education teachers and health professionals, such as speech and hearing therapists, psychologists, etc.), and the involvement of all staff that are part of the public-school networks.

Setting up new human resource structures in the Departments of Education and in schools breaks with a former logic that segregated the group of special education staff and held it exclusively accountable for the management and operationalization of service provision to students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and high ability/giftedness. In the process, it is also necessary to address the feeling of insecurity that overtakes professionals faced with new responsibilities, as well as their frustration with their loss of power. The functional roles in the service provision flows also need to be reviewed. They also need to be resistant to the changes being implemented.

Having faced such problems for much longer than most Brazilian municipalities those studied municipalities have already partially overcome some of the problems and dilemmas associated to human resource management in the process of implementing their inclusive education policies and they have developed strategies and created structures for providing services dedicated to facing considerable challenges that will be presented here later.

In regard to human resource management, the most recurrent and important aspects that emerged from the data analysis were: the large number of posts and functions, many of them with similar responsibilities and incumbencies, but given different titles by the municipalities; the clearly apparent 'feeling of security' and perception of improvement that followed the integration of the 'new' professionals in the inclusive school; the persistent lack of definition of the role of the carers; the regular entry route, through competitive civil service entry exams, by which the great majority of the professionals working with inclusive education had obtained their positions; and the fact that most of such professional personnel worked in the schools and centres of their own municipalities. Those aspects will be addressed in detail in the following section.

2.1 Composing the Work Team

With the implementation of inclusive education in public-school networks, new work posts and functions are created to meet the specific needs brought about by the paradigm shift (from excluding special education to inclusive education). In the studied municipalities, similar work posts were detected, but with different nomenclatures, according to the municipality:

- Pedagogical support agent (*agente de apoio pedagógico*);
- Pedagogical support attendant (*atendente de apoio pedagógico*);
- Educational carer (*cuidador educacional*);
- Care taker (*cuidador*);
- Trainee (*estagiário*);
- Guide-interpreter (*guia-intérprete*);
- LIBRAS teacher/instructor/auxilliary teacher (*professor/instrutor/professor auxiliar de LIBRAS*);
- LIBRAS interpreter/educational interpreter (*intérprete de LIBRAS/intérprete educacional*);
- Auxiliary teacher (*professor auxiliar*);
- Support teacher (*professor de apoio*);
- Specialized educational attention teacher (SEA) (*professor do atendimento educacional especializado*); and
- Bi-functional teacher (*professor bidocente*).

The following table explains the roles and functions of these professionals.

Table 5: Description of posts and functions of inclusive education professionals

Job titles	Functions/roles
Pedagogical support agent; Pedagogical support attendant; Educational carer; auxiliary teacher; supporting teacher ⁷	<p><i>Betim</i>: The pedagogical support attendants stay in the classroom and collaborate with the teacher. Their focus is on students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and high ability/giftedness, but if necessary they can perform other tasks like changing diapers or feeding;</p> <p><i>Florianópolis</i>: educational carers look after students with mobility impairments, students in wheelchairs, children with autism and those with intellectual disabilities that cannot perform their tasks on their own. Such students are directly monitored pre-school through to primary and lower secondary education.</p> <p><i>Maracanaú</i>: the function of the carers is to assist in in terms of hygiene, locomotion and feeding.</p> <p><i>Florianópolis</i>: they help in hygiene, feeding, locomotion and organising the space.</p>
Trainee	<p><i>Erechim</i>: trainees coming from the physiotherapy, psychology, pedagogy and design courses at the Regional Integrated University (<i>Universidade Regional Integrada – URI</i>) mainly work in the child care centre.</p> <p><i>Vitória</i>: these are students from the pedagogy undergraduate course. They take on teaching duties and help in terms of feeding, locomotion and hygiene.</p>
LIBRAS teacher/instructor	Most of the municipalities can count on a professional responsible for teaching Libras as a first language to deaf students, and as a second language to students that can hear. A minority of these professionals are deaf themselves.
LIBRAS interpreter/educational interpreter	Most of the municipalities can count on professionals to work with interpreting from LIBRAS>Portuguese and Portuguese>LIBRAS. In some cases, the interpreters act as LIBRAS instructors.
Support teacher	<i>Porangatu</i> : career teachers formerly teaching in classrooms who have recently been re-allocated to their new function. According to the coordinators, some of them had been occupying administrative posts in the Department of Education where they had been 'put aside' and merely carried out bureaucratic tasks.
Support teacher for teaching/learning process (Erechim)	This teacher assists teachers and students in the teaching/learning processes.
Bifunctional teacher (Erechim)	This is a regular teacher who works alongside a main classroom teacher in an inclusive class, alternating attention given to students with and without disabilities. The two teachers have the same qualifications
specialized educational attention (SEA) teacher/multiple resource classroom	All the municipalities encompassed by the survey had such professionals at their disposal. Their responsibilities and functions are defined in a harmony with the MEC reference framework.

Source: *Pesquisa Boas Práticas em Educação Inclusiva: a experiência de municípios brasileiros na inclusão de alunos com deficiência, transtornos do espectro autista (TEA), transtorno global do desenvolvimento (TGD) e altas habilidades/superdotação* (Good Practices in Inclusive Education Research Survey: the experiences in municipal public schools in including students with disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), General Development Disorder (GDD), as well as gifted/talented students).

⁷ Despite the diversity of titles it was found that the performance of all these professionals are very similar among the municipalities surveyed

The New Inclusive Education Professionals and their Impact

In most of the municipalities investigated by the study, professionals working in inclusive education have been considered as strong allies in the implementation of the respective policy. That vision, in turn, has an impact on students with disabilities in the schools and it has also led to greater acceptance and tranquillity on the school staff and the families of such students. The excerpts below have been taken from the statements of family members and team members of various municipalities regarding the importance of such professional staff.

'At first we were afraid that he (a student with disabilities) would not be able to make it. We did not believe that he could. We resisted while you persisted. Thanks to you we have learned that what is most important is not his limitations, but his potential, which can increase if he is treated with dedication, attention, care, etc. The fruits we see today are the result of your work, of your not giving up on him. You have the gift of being a teacher.' (Note written by the mother of a child with disabilities addressing a SEA teacher)

'I was afraid that my daughter would be treated badly; that the teacher would not look after her properly, would not take her to the toilet or take her to brush her teeth. I spent three years accompanying my girl in school (in the corridor, not the classroom). The teachers told me I did not need to worry... What made me stop worrying was the performance of the SEA teacher in the pole-school explaining how important all this could be for her development.' (Remarks of the mother of a student with disabilities)

'One mother told me that she spent three months in the school until a care taker was designated for her daughter (who cannot walk). She was also afraid that her daughter would be treated badly; that her classmates would not want to play with her. However, she finally realised that the prejudice was hers alone because nobody in the school looked at her daughter in a discriminating way, everyone played with her, the teacher put her in the queue with the others and the ladies serving the children's meals also treated her entirely without prejudice.' (Remarks of an education professional concerning the mother of a child with disabilities in his school).

'One important advancement was the creation of the post of pedagogical support attendant to replace the "trainees". In most cases that change meant hiring more mature and experienced professionals. It also meant the fact of their having a formal labour contract guaranteed greater commitment to the work.' (School principal)

'The Accessible in LIBRAS School project is already making a difference. The deaf child is no longer isolated; he or she is indeed included. It is no longer just a group of deaf students that speak LIBRAS; the other students and the teachers have already picked up some basic knowledge and so the deaf ones are not isolated. In the regular school, the deaf students have the class teacher, the interpreter, the deaf instructor and the managers. They all have different ways of approaching the same student, unlike the special school where none of that existed.' (SEA teacher).

2.1.1 The Role of the Support Staff

According to the Technical Note No. 19/2010 of the Ministry of Education in Brazil, which discourses on support professionals for students with disabilities and GDD enrolled in regular schools, the function of these professionals is to support 'locomotion, hygiene and feeding activities providing individualised assistance to students who cannot carry them out independently. That support must consider the specificities of students associated to their condition of functionality rather than their condition of disability' (Brasil. MEC/SEESP, 2010a).

In the municipalities of this study it was found that there were support professionals and care takers in activity and with similar functions to those specified in the technical note, but with job titles different from the nomenclature it used, and sometimes carrying out additional functions not foreseen in it. In that regard, the said document clearly states that 'it is not one of functions of the support professionals is to carry out any differentiated educational activities with students that are the target audience of special education or to take responsibility for teaching such students. The support professional should act in a manner that is coordinated with the actions of the regular classroom teachers, those of the multiple resource classrooms and other professional staff in the school context' (Brasil MEC/SEESP, 2010a).

The importance of such professionals is readily acknowledged, but what often happens is that they end up being made entirely responsible for providing integral care and attention to disabled students. That way, it merely reinforces an educational model that is segregating and therapeutic while at the same time removing responsibility from the other staff, especially the teachers in the regular classes and classrooms. That, in turn, has a strong negative influence on the relations of disabled students with their other classmates and on their development and learning processes, as well as on their autonomy and participation in the daily routine of the school.

Another aspect that emerged was that some municipalities imagine that each individual student with disabilities, ASD, GDD or high ability/giftedness requires an individual support professional. That view is often shared by the families, administrators and other actors involved, such as legal system professionals. The support personnel should not be considered as the personal accompaniment of a student, but instead as a collaborator with a group of students and only when needed in the circumstances and activities indicated above. Furthermore, it may happen that students do not need support for all the activities where it was expected they would. Every effort must be made towards making that a transitory situation aimed at constructing greater autonomy of the student.

The 'one on one' attitude weakens some of the key concepts of the inclusive education policy. It also weakens the possibility of bringing about the changes in the representation of the person with disabilities that the policy aims to achieve. Apart from that, the one on one demand would generate large additional expenditures that could very well be better directed to satisfy other structural and pedagogical needs of education policies.

The statement cited below shows the concern of an inclusive education administrator regarding the possible transfer of responsibility for students with disabilities, ASD, GDD, as well as for gifted/talented students to the support personnel:



'Many students needed a person to help them with changing, eating, locomotion and organising the space; things like that. We could only hire people linked to education. That is why they are called auxiliary "teachers". But it is not a question of double qualification or double function. They are not expected to interfere in teaching aspects. It is "not expected" that they do, but in practice that is not what happens in many schools. Some of them end up becoming responsible for the schooling of those students. Some teachers shrug off their responsibilities once such a staff member appears in their classes. We are in the middle of a qualification process designed to make it clear what their real function is. We visit the schools one by one, to identify whether there is a real need for such a professional.'

It was also found that in some contexts, the duties of the support persons were shifted to the trainees not as a means of qualifying the latter, but just to replace the support professionals in their roles.

2.1.2 Specialized Educational Attention (SEA) Teachers

Among the new kinds of professionals incorporated to regular public schools during the progress of inclusive education policies are the SEA teachers, considered to be central figures in implementing the policies in all the municipalities researched in this study. Their function is well defined and well-structured, with clearly stated regulations that have been implemented for some time now. Administrators, regular class teachers and families recognise these professionals as being the main mobilisers and disseminators of the inclusive concepts and practices.

Specialized educational attention strategies preceded the *National Policy for Special Education in the Perspective of Inclusive Education*. They were the inspiration for the current model of SEA. In many municipalities, that service has been structured since before the elaboration of the national policy and that has contributed to reinforcing the establishment of the general conceptual and operational guidelines associated to this kind of service provision and covering the professionals that work with it. All the municipalities in this research work follow the operational guidelines issued by MEC as their main reference and that includes the duties of the teachers.

However, despite all the progress identified it was found that some of the public-school networks still had teachers working in a way that was segmented according to the type of disability. In some situations, it could be seen that all the responsibility and the decision making regarding development processes of the students with disabilities was placed exclusively on those SEA professionals with very little participation on the part of other actors in the school community or the in the families of the students. It must be underscored that the situation is sometimes reinforced both by the SEA teachers and by the rest of the school community, corroborating the concept that only a specialist can work with a disabled person.

According to Article 13 of Resolution No. 4/2009, the duties of the SEA teacher are as follows:

- identify, elaborate, produce and organise, services, teaching resources, accessibility and strategies to meet the specific needs of students that are the target audience of special education;
- elaborate and execute the SEA plan and evaluate the functionality and applicability of the teaching and accessibility resources;
- organise the moments of service provision to students in the MRR by type and by numbers;
- accompany the functionality and applicability of teaching and accessibility resources in the regular classrooms and classes as well as in other school environments;
- establish inter-sector partnership arrangements with other areas for the elaboration of strategies and for making accessibility resources available;
- offer guidance to teachers and families regarding the teaching and accessibility resources used by the student;
- teach students how to use the assistance technology in a way that will expand their functional skills and foster their autonomy and participation; and
- ensure articulation with teachers in regular classrooms with a view to making services and teaching and accessibility resources available, as well as strategies that promote the participation of students in school activities.

Those references are usually followed in the municipalities researched with some adaptations and detailing of pedagogical aspects, regarding the teaching of codes and languages, and the kinds of articulations that are needed to ensure implementation of the SEA service, etc.

2.1.3 LIBRAS Instructors and Interpreters

The *National Policy on Special Education in the Perspective of Inclusive Education* is the guideline for public-school networks in the aspect of guaranteeing enrolment in regular schools to students with deafness or auditory deficiency through the provision of bilingual education, the presence of LIBRAS/Portuguese translators/interpreters and the teaching of LIBRAS in the schools.

Article 22, Sub-headings I and II of Article 22 of Decree No. 5626/2005 indicates the way bilingual education should be organized:

I – Bilingual education schools and classes open to both deaf and hearing students, with bilingual teachers in pre-school and primary education;

II – Bilingual or regular schools offering standard education open to deaf and hearing students in lower secondary and higher secondary education or technical/professional education with teachers of the respective study areas fully aware of the linguistic singularity of deaf students and with the presence of a translator/interpreter of the LIBRAS and Portuguese languages' (Brasil, 2005).

Similarly, to ensure the effective inclusion of deaf students and students with auditory disabilities, full access to school study subject contents, communication and information must be provided in compliance with the terms of Article 15 of the Decree:

'To complement the common national curricular base, teaching of LIBRAS and of written Portuguese as a second language for deaf students must be performed in a dialogical, functional and instrumental perspective, in the form of:

I – specific activities or complementary curricular study subjects in pre-school and primary education; and

II – study areas in the form of curricular study subjects in lower and higher secondary education and in higher education' (Brasil, 2005).

In other words, to ensure that there is equality of educational opportunity and effective inclusion of deaf students and students with hearing disabilities in regular classrooms, either the teachers must be bilingual or there must be interpreters of LIBRAS present in the regular classrooms where there are groups of such students. Furthermore, the teaching of LIBRAS should be extended to all students and members of the school community to make communication among them viable. In the same direction, teaching systems must incorporate LIBRAS instructors, preferably those who are deaf themselves. Several of the municipalities in this research had held public service entrance exams for professionals to occupy posts in that category and had also regulated the activity with specific municipal legislation. In the city of Rio Branco, for example, Municipal Act No. 1,954/2012 was regulated by Municipal Decree No. 890/2014, which recognises the Brazilian Sign Language (LIBRAS) as the means of communication and expression of deaf persons in the municipality. The same decree defines 'the necessary conditions for the diffusion and use of LIBRAS in public and private services in areas such as health, transport, culture, social assistance, education, etc. In the case of education, it determines that "public" and private basic education institutions must include LIBRAS teachers/instructors and educational interpreters on their staff to ensure that deaf students have access to communication, information and education' (RIO BRANCO, 2014).

In some municipalities included in the study there was a notable absence of such professionals in flagrant non-compliance with the legislation. That fact jeopardised the learning opportunities of deaf students and students with hearing disabilities. This aspect will be analysed in depth in the chapter on inclusive teaching practices.

In one municipality, the place of such professionals was occupied by teachers with some knowledge of LIBRAS, but without fluency in the language. In another, classes of deaf students only were formed, taught by teachers who were fluent in LIBRAS, but, again, that corresponded to the former segregating model with special classes. The teaching of LIBRAS to the school community to foster inclusion of deaf students and those with hearing disabilities was only registered as a regular practice in some municipalities.

Furthermore, it is quite common for these professionals to be included in school teams, but with very precarious non-regularised employment contracts and without any clear definition of their functions and responsibilities.

Several statements mentioned how the municipal public-school networks had found it difficult to recruit qualified professionals in the field of bilingual inclusive education. That reveals the poor offer of qualifying courses in that field. Inclusive bilingual education becomes stronger when it can count on teams that include hearing translators/interpreters, deaf instructors and teachers with knowledge of LIBRAS and teaching practices specifically directed at deaf students and those with hearing disabilities.

2.1.4 Hiring Professionals and Occupying Vacant Posts

As inclusive education policies become increasingly consolidated in the municipalities, professionals who were originally hired on a provisional basis become permanently incorporated to the teams. It is interesting to note the institutionalisation process the public schools have undergone and are undergoing. Temporary contracts and external partnership arrangements and reallocation of staff to fill the posts have gradually diminished and given way to public admission exams as part of human resource management for the area of inclusive education.

Access to most of the posts related to inclusive education takes place through the mediation of civil service entrance exams except in the case of some of the jobs like 'care takers' or equivalent and trainees (which are temporary and not subject to entrance exams). The professionals are hired according to the need, which is defined by the number of students with disabilities ASD, GDD or gifted/talented students enrolled, and who effectively require that kind of support – and in the case of the LIBRAS interpreters and instructors, the presence of deaf students or students with hearing disabilities enrolled in regular schools and in SEA.

2.2 Continuing Professional Development and Initial Teacher Education

Teaching practice in inclusive education involves a set of concepts associated to qualification needs and the nature of knowledge such teachers need. In the transition from the special education models – where the emphasis was on specialisation in the deficiency, that is, in a clinical perspective which took precedence over the pedagogical aspect – to inclusive education where importance is placed on all students sharing the same space and the same school curricula – the qualification of the educators takes on a new dimension. In this latter perspective priority is set on strengthening the skills of educators in performing in situations marked by diversity and the singularities of individuals; individuals whose disabilities are just one of their human characteristics. The homogenizing intent, which is at the base of the model for special schools, is replaced, in the inclusive schools, by a valuing of heterogeneity and of socialising among all the individual subjects

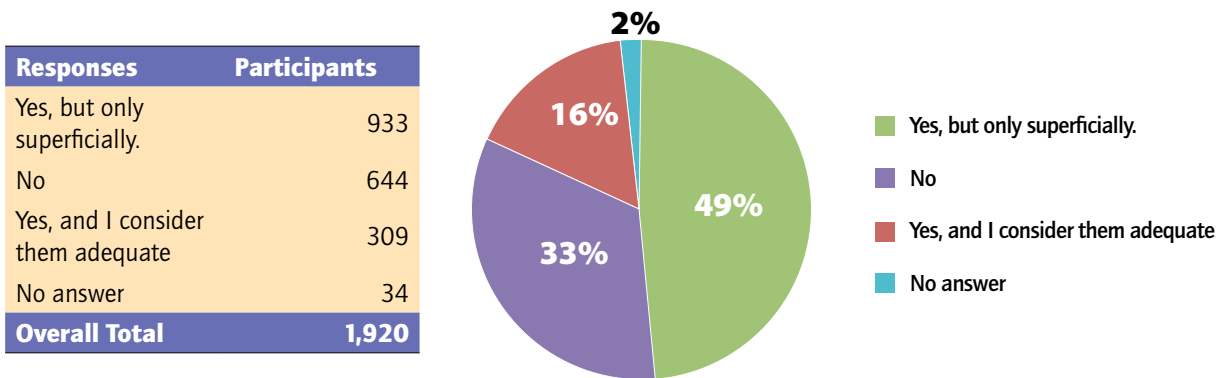
That new approach has had a strong impact on the inclusive teaching practices and accordingly the initial and continuing professional development of teachers is tensioned by new needs. That is why the present

research sought to investigate the perceptions of municipal education actors on the needs in the initial and continuous education introduced by the theoretical reference framework and the teaching practices that are at the base of the inclusive education proposals.

2.2.1 Gaps in Teacher Education

In the questionnaires administered to teachers working in regular classrooms, pedagogical coordinators and school principals, almost half the respondents (49%) reported that they had studied contents associated to inclusive education during their initial period of teacher education, but only in a superficial way. It is worth stressing that around 1/3 (33%) reported not having had any contact at all and only 16% considered that they had received adequate education regarding inclusive education during the initial period of their qualification course as shown by Chart 6.

Chart 6: In your initial teacher education course did you study contents associated to inclusive education/special education?



Source: Research survey questionnaire administered to teachers working in regular classrooms, pedagogical coordinators and school principals, 2015

That deficient initial education of teachers has various effects on the implementation of inclusive education policies. It is at the root of the feeling of insecurity that educators experience when faced with the needs associated to education provided in an inclusive perspective. At the same time, it is used as an argument by schools and families of the students who resist the latter proposal alleging that 'the teachers are not properly qualified for it'. It must be pointed out that the limitations in early teacher education are not restricted to the specific contents and practices of inclusive education, but include other knowledge and capabilities that are highly important for the work of a teacher. While criticism of the performance of the teacher educating institutions accumulate, the models of basic education in the pedagogy and teaching degree courses of the public schools find themselves in a complicated situation. According to one Secretary of Education who was interviewed:



'The administrative bodies of education systems committed to offering high quality education have no alternative but to invest in continuing professional development and join the struggle to enhance the value placed on professional educators.'

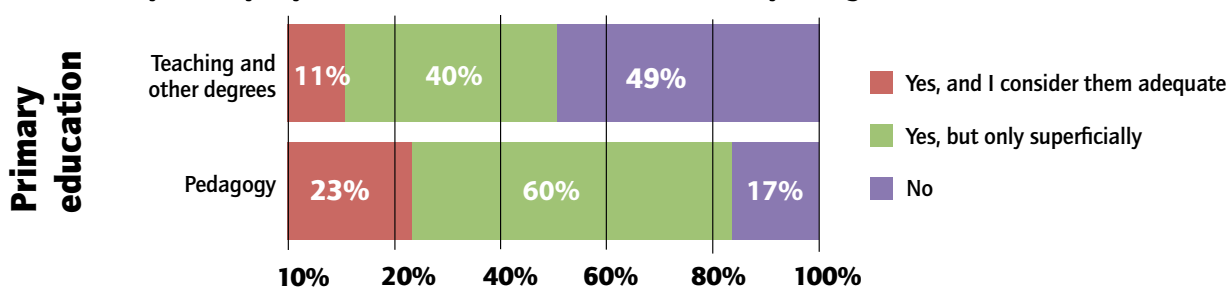
Outstanding universities in the inclusive education qualification offer

In the municipal public schools of Florianópolis and Vitória, the public universities were identified as actors that play a key role in the basic qualification of educators in inclusive education. In various statements made by professional staff of the municipal public schools of Florianópolis it was clear how the interviewees acknowledged the high quality of the pedagogy degree course offered by both Federal University and the State University of Santa Catarina in the knowledge related to inclusive education. In Vitória, several professionals from the municipal public schools emphasised the fact that the Federal University of Espírito Santo constituted an important nucleus in the field of inclusive education and that graduates of its courses have a consistent qualification in that area. One principal of a child care centre attributed the 'success' of the inclusive education policy to the undergraduate and continuing professional education the staff of public schools had received.

'We have good universities in which people have already adopted an inclusive education perspective by the time they graduate.'

An analysis of the degree courses based on the questionnaires that were answered by professional staff showed that those with a degree in Pedagogy were the ones that declared they had been exposed to inclusive education content, albeit in a superficial manner. The analysis of the responses on that topic given by the staff that held a teaching diploma or other degrees⁸ showed that much greater percentage of them had never been exposed to inclusive education contents at all in their course.

Chart 7: Did you study any content related to Inclusive Education in your higher education studies?



Source: Research survey questionnaire administered to teachers working in regular classrooms, pedagogical coordinators and school principals, 2015

Considering that most teachers working in higher secondary education have teaching degrees and that there is a trend for enrolments of students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and high ability/giftedness in that schooling level to increase, then it can be considered that it is the schooling level for which municipal networks will have the highest need for appropriate university and lifelong learning qualification.

2.2.2 The Continuing Professional Development Offer to Educators

In view of the gaps and deficiencies identified in the school and university qualifications of educators, lifelong education and continuing professional development come to the fore as important alternatives for strengthening inclusive education policies. In that regard, municipalities have structured various education strategies in both live presence and distance learning modalities such as: partnership arrangements with universities; involving the teams in the Departments of Education, teaching coordinators and SEA teachers in the qualification of other professionals; organising study groups and collaborations with other Departments, and other activities.

⁸ Primary school teacher education course (senior secondary level +) or degree course

Analysis of the questionnaires administered to teachers in regular classes, school principals and pedagogical coordinators showed that most of the respondents had participated in some form of specific qualification in inclusive education mainly in the form of attending lectures and participating in seminars, congresses and videoconferences.

However, in the discourse of non-teaching staff, teachers in regular classrooms, pedagogical coordinators and principals mention was recurrent among those groups of the paucity and low frequency of the offer of qualification regarding the theme of inclusive education. In both the questionnaires and the research carried out *in loco* the actors involved indicated that such qualification opportunities were largely directed at the SEA professionals.

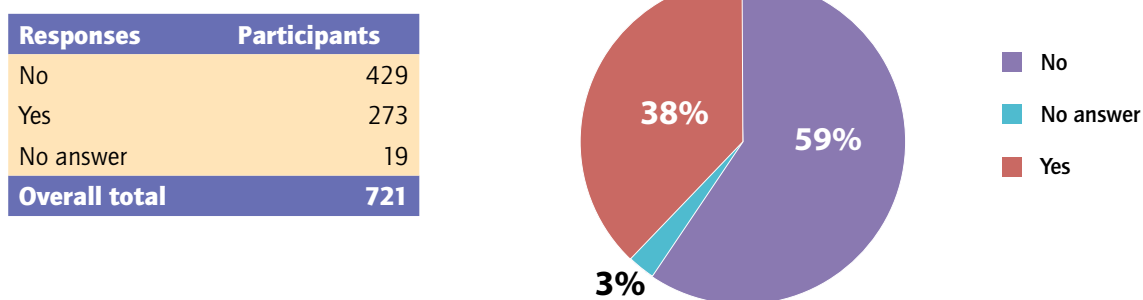
Table 6: Qualification in special/inclusive education offer of the municipal network

Does the Municipal Department of Education offer qualification in inclusive education/special education to education professionals?	Yes	No	Not known	No answer
SEA teachers	84%	6%	2%	8%
Teachers in regular classrooms	60%	20%	15%	5%

Source: Research survey questionnaire administered to teachers working in regular classrooms and SEA teachers, 2015

Among the staff working in schools, the non-teaching staff are the ones most neglected by the lifelong learning and continuing professional development initiatives directed at qualifying them to work with students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and high ability/giftedness. When asked whether they received any kind of capacity building or instruction for that kind of work most of them said no.

Chart 8: Have you received any kind of capacity building or instruction to enable you to work with students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and high ability/giftedness in school?



Source: Research survey questionnaire administered to non-teaching school staff, 2015

The data collected reveals the enormous challenge that has still to be faced to ensure that there are qualified staff members in all the different posts. Inclusive education is the responsibility of every member of the school staff and not just of the SEA teachers or the regular classroom teachers. Accordingly, the administrators of inclusive education policies in the federal, state and municipal spheres must find alternative ways of remedying the deficiencies in the qualifications of such employees.

2.2.3 The Role of the Universities in Lifelong Learning Provision

In the municipalities investigated by this research there were various statements collected that corroborated an assessment that the universities have been taking on an increasingly key role as partners in the endeavour

to provide lifelong learning opportunities for professionals working in inclusive education despite the criticism that exists of the fragility of the graduate courses they offer and the omission of inclusive education-related contents in them. To a greater or lesser extent, according to the characteristics of the respective municipalities, there are partnerships between Departments of Education and universities in various directions: development of and collaboration in continuing professional development opportunities for the further qualification of professionals; the presence of undergraduate trainees from the universities in the schools; course conclusion papers and research projects targeting the network; SEA teachers who are tutors at the Open University of Brazil (*Universidade Aberta do Brasil* – UAB/MEC) and advisory assistance of university professors in the construction of the policies and regulatory norms of the municipal education networks.

2.2.4 The Inclusive Education: Right to Diversity Programme

The Ministry of Education in Brazil furnishes important support for inclusive education all over the country through the mechanism of the lifelong education programme called *Inclusive Education: Right to Diversity*. Created in 2003, it seeks to contribute to the construction and strengthening of inclusive education systems by continually updating the qualification of administrative staff and educators. It is unfolded in all the Brazilian states and the Federal District and its implementation is usually achieved through a municipality selected to be a pole for its region. Such poles act as multipliers, enabling the programme to engage other municipalities in the outreach areas of the poles.

Most of the surveyed municipalities were poles for the programme. The only exceptions were Erechim, which participates in the programme via the pole municipality of Passo Fundo; and Maracanaú, for which the pole municipality is Fortaleza. That situation contributes to keeping the lifelong learning qualification objective well up on the agendas of the municipalities, as well as promoting contacts among reference personnel in this field of knowledge and expertise, thereby strengthening their performance in inclusive education.

2.2.5 SEA Teachers as Inclusive Education Capacity Builders and Multipliers

According to several statements collected in the municipalities, the daily social and working coexistence of SEA teachers and regular classroom teachers represents an important space for qualification. The joint discussion of teaching and learning strategies for the students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and high ability/giftedness and the joint construction of a plan for educational service provision to those students offers an opportunity for reflection on teaching practices and to search for alternatives, all of which contributes to building the capacity of the teachers.

In that context, the knowledge and experience accumulated by the SEA teachers during their professional trajectories constitute a point of support for the teachers in regular classrooms. According to the principal of one school, the challenge is:



'To certify that the SEA teacher does not become the only one responsible for the learning of students in special education, but rather that he or she should serve as a reference and a stimulus for the other teachers from regular classrooms, helping everyone to commit themselves to the learning of the students with disabilities.'


In Vitória, the SEA teachers are active in all shifts and take on a key role of support and reference for the other teachers of the regular classrooms and for the administrators and non-teaching staff of the schools. In Maracanaú, Floriano and Florianópolis, men and women SEA teachers are also involved in qualifying the regular classroom teachers and other staff.

2.2.6 The Experience in School as an Educational Case

As stated before, the references and principles of inclusive education mobilise a reflection on what is needed to qualify and prepare people for the inclusive practices. However important and fundamental a good school and university qualification and good formal lifelong learning activities may be, educators in inclusive education acquire their qualification during their professional careers, just the way people do in other professional fields. In that educational process one of the most crucial factors is the experience acquired together with the students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and high ability/giftedness.

In other words, courses, seminars and other actions designed to enhance qualification are not the only spaces for qualifying the professional staff of inclusive schools. During the field work of this study, when visiting the schools, there were constant declarations about how much was learned in the daily contact with the students and in the efforts to find solutions for teaching and learning problems. Other remarks that were very common concerned how necessary it was to innovate and to learn to be able to address the characteristics of a given student, and how the experience of working together with students that are the target audience of special education transforms the educators and makes them better, more capable professionals well prepared for the task of teaching the complete set of students together; those with deficiencies and those without.

That experience in the daily life of the school, together with the educational processes of school and university education comprise the basis for ensuring that professional staff are well prepared for the work in inclusive schools. The co-existence, exchanges, challenges and anxieties generated contribute to making those professionals believe in themselves and in the broader possibilities for the students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and high ability/giftedness to learn, develop and have their rights and achievements duly recognised. A statement taken from a regular classroom teacher sums up the process very well:

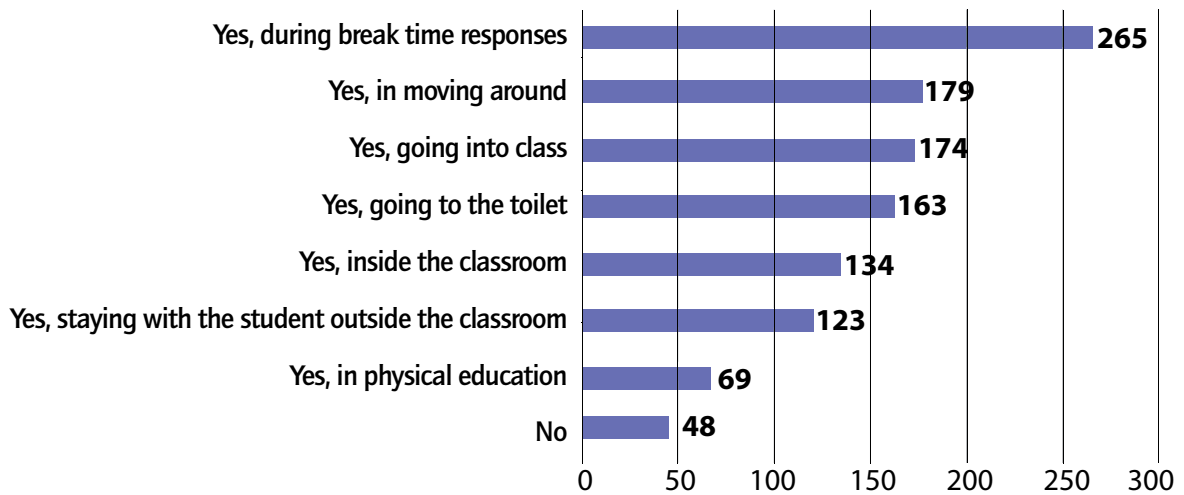


'I had already been working as a teacher for many years and I was quite sure that I was a good teacher until the moment when I received my first student with intellectual deficiency. That situation strongly affected my conviction that I was "a good teacher", "well prepared" and "experienced". I argued with the principal that I was not in any condition for that and she said "what do you mean? You are one of the best teachers we have in our school." Well, that student cost me many nights of sleep and made me question my practices, find out more, seek for courses and more information and qualification... Little by little I could see that he was learning, he was becoming motivated and getting better... So now I have no doubt that today I am a much better teacher and I mainly owe that to the fact that I have students with disabilities in my class.'

The arrival of students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and high ability/giftedness in regular schools also favours articulation and collaboration among the different professional and the co-responsibility of the school community in the process of including such students. That new configuration provides opportunities for learning and the daily qualification of staff regarding the respect for the diversity of all and the singularity of each one.

In the responses to the questionnaire administered to more than 700 non-teaching school employees there were frequent mentions of helping students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and high ability/giftedness both inside and outside of the classroom as Chart 9 below shows.

Chart 9: Have you ever helped or do you help students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and high ability/giftedness in school?

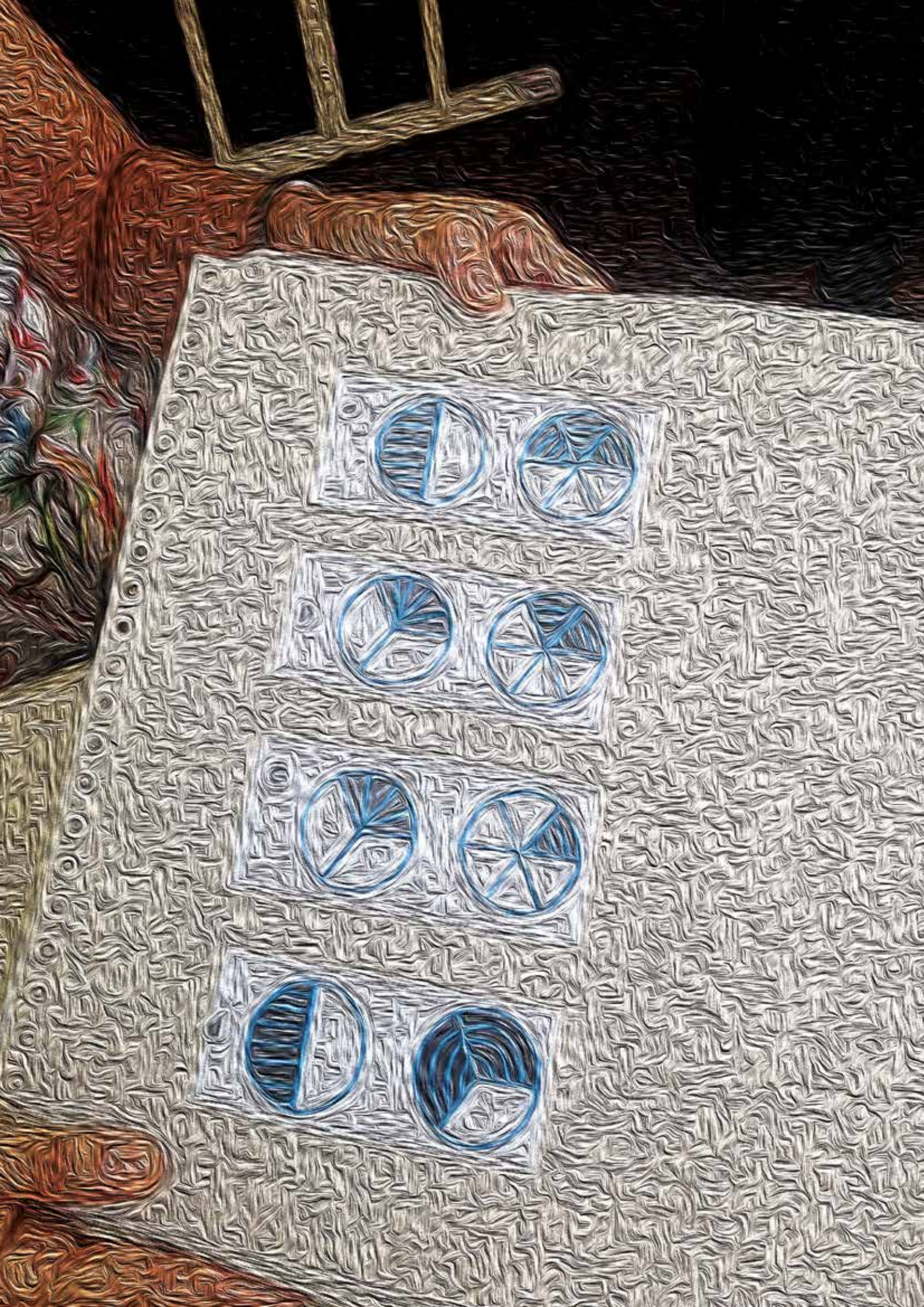


Note: the total registered in the chart does not necessarily correspond to the number of respondents
Source: research survey questionnaire administered to non-teaching school staff, 2015.

The chart shows how important it is for the school community to get involved and share the responsibility for those students. Various declarations indicate that many of the non-teaching staff do not just collaborate in accommodating these students, but regularly assume functions that extrapolate their normal roles and responsibilities. According to one school kitchen employee:



'Because the teachers are often absent or moved to other schools, we (the kitchen staff) end up becoming a reference for them not only for their studies but in other aspects of their lives as well.'



Implementing Specialized Educational Attention (SEA)

One of the main advances achieved by inclusive education policies in Brazil has been the structuring of SEA in regular schools. It is one of the main pillars of national public policies that seek alignment with the international reference frameworks in the field of human rights. The disputes and debates in the lead up to the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (United Nations, 2006; Brasil, 2009) led to the construction of a broad consensus around the principle of non-segregated service provision for students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and high ability/giftedness. One of the fundamental steps in that direction was the organization of specialized attention inside regular schools designed to complement, not replace, regular schooling and with an educational emphasis that would make it possible for students that are the target audience for special education to attend regular classrooms together with all the other students.

As a result of the trajectory of SEA implementation and the structuring role it plays in the inclusive education policy, this kind of service provision can now count on greater regulation, specific financing (via double enrolment in FUNDEB) and more clearly defined operational guidelines regarding other aspects of policies in that field. Article 2 of Decree No. 7,611/2011 explains that 'special education should guarantee the provision of specialized support designed to eliminate obstacles that could impede the schooling process of students with disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, general development disorders and high ability/giftedness' (Brasil, 2011). The first paragraph of the article defines which services come under the heading specialized educational attention, specifying a set of activities as well as accessibility and educational resources, to be continuously and institutionally organized and provided in the following ways:

- complement the education of students with deficiencies, ASD or GDD with permanent support restricted to the time and the frequency of attendance of the students in MRRs; or
- supplement the education of gifted/talented students (Brasil, 2011).

The decree further stipulates that SEA must be integrated to the pedagogical proposal in the school, involve the family of students and meet the specific needs of who are the target audience of special education. In addition, the service must be provided at all educational levels and stages and in all modalities. In article 3 it specifies the objectives of the service:

- provide access, participation and learning conditions in regular education and guarantee specialized support services provision according to the individual needs of the students;
- guarantee the cross-cutting nature of the special education actions in the regular education environment;
- foster the development of teaching and pedagogical resources that eliminate barriers from the teaching and learning process; and
- ensure that conditions exist for the continuity of studies in the successive education levels, stages and modalities (Brazil, 2011).

In Article 5, National Education Council Resolution No. 4/2009 determines that SEA should 'preferably be administered in a multiple-resource room in the school itself or in another regular education school that has one and in the school shift, alternate to that of the regular classes of students. It must not replace regular classes. It can also be administered in Specialized Educational Attention Centres in the public-school network or in non-profit community, philanthropic or religious institutions with formal agreements with the Departments of Education or its equivalent in the State, Federal District or Municipal governments' (Brasil. CNE, 2009).

Article 7 makes provisions concerning gifted and talented students who are 'to have their curricular enrichment activities carried out in the regular public school with an interface with the nucleuses for activities for gifted and talented students, and with higher education institutions and institutions dedicated to promoting research, the arts and sports' (Brasil. CNE, 2009).

Article 9 of the Decree deals with the elaboration and execution of the SEA Plan, 'which is the responsibility of the teachers working in the multifunctional facilities or SEA centres in articulation with all the other regular education teachers, with the participation of the families of the students and an interface with other services of the health and social assistance sectors and of any others that may prove to be necessary' (Brasil. CNE, 2009).

All those operational guidelines and norms seek to guide the system regarding the characteristics of this kind of service provision, and clarify the roles and responsibilities and the resources to be mobilised. That regulatory effort has been of fundamental importance for elaborating more general principles and concepts, building basic standards of service provision, combating the resistance of education systems to inclusive education, qualifying educators and constructing a culture of inclusion in regular schools as we will see below.

3.1 The structure of SEA services

Implementing SEA in schools calls for systematic work directed at administrative reorganization and ensuring that it is cross-cutting in the PPP and the action plans, reviewing the processes of student registration and accompaniment, and ensuring the effective collaboration among schools in cases where there is no SEA in the school a student is enrolled in. It also requires implementing work flows, defining criteria for selecting students

that are the target audience for SEA, constructing plans for providing services in the SEA classroom, organizing the work to be undertaken with the families of the students and other aspects.

Now that it is obligatory to implement SEA as a service offer complementary or supplementary to regular education it is of fundamental importance to structure the service in close articulation/negotiation with the activities carried out in the regular classrooms and with other complementary activities that the school undertakes – extra-curricular projects, activities carried out in the alternative shift hours and so on. SEA cannot be a replacement for regular schooling and its activities must not limit or impede the participation of students with disabilities, ASD, GDD or talented/gifted students in the regular classrooms.

3.1.1 SEA features, specificities and functioning

In the municipalities covered by the research the structures for SEA are in alignment with national references and guidelines, albeit with some variations. There now follows a description of the key features and specificities of this service in the respective public-school networks.

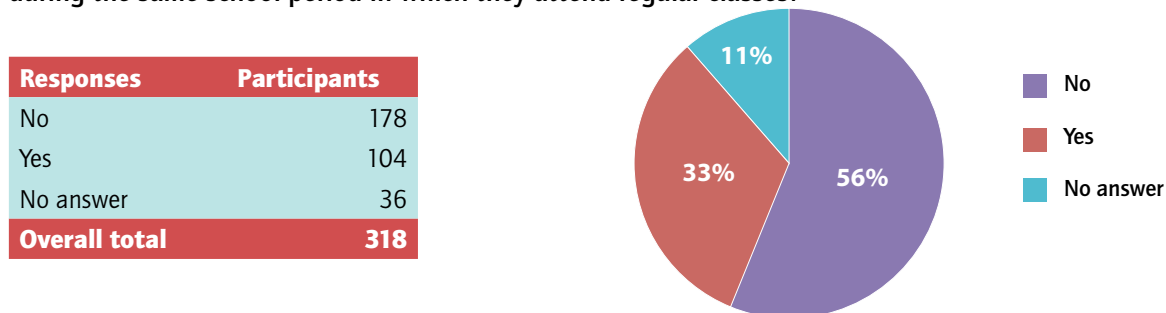
■ In the networks of Florianópolis and Barreiras, the SEA is organized based on pole schools, which serve as reference units and offer SEA to their own students and to students in the surrounding areas. In Maracanaú, Floriano, Betim, Porangatu and Erechim, although no schools have been officially designated as poles, nevertheless, students from schools that do not have SEA attend the nearest school that does provide that resource. In Betim and Porangatu, students from schools that do not have SEA respectively attend specialized centres (CRAEI) and the municipal APAE. Almost all the schools in Vitória offer SEA except for three, which were schools occupying temporary installations. In Oiapoque, the schools in the urban zone that have students that are eligible for SEA do offer the service while such students enrolled in the rural zone attend the urban schools nearest to their own for SEA services. In Rio Branco, most schools offer SEA; some have SEA teachers and MRRs and others only have SEA teachers.

■ Although the public schools investigated by this research have established the rule that SEA should be provided in the alternative school shift period to that in which the student attends regular classes, as stipulated in the federal legislation, the research revealed that most of the municipalities provide it during the same shift period as the regular classes for students as well. It was alleged that the offer during the normal class shift was to address exceptional situations that included the situation of students and the difficulty for their family to organize attendance in two periods, as well as transport insufficiencies. Both qualitative and quantitative data suggest that the provision of the service during the regular class period is quite frequent. The following statement shows some aspects of the situation:

'The service is provided in the alternate shift and most of the students receive attention in a 50-minute session. However, there are certain specificities; students in wheelchairs who are not able to attend morning and afternoon classes; the family says that it cannot manage to bring them twice a day; another has cerebral palsy with very delicate health and so we make an exception in those cases to provide the service in the same period as regular classes. Then, most of the adult education students receive SEA attention during the same period of their studies, that is, at night when it is the fathers who bring their child....' (Mother of a student)

The Specialized Educational Attention teachers that responded to the questionnaires of the study reinforce this perception, as shown in Chart 10.

Chart 10: Are there any cases where the SEA service is provided for students during the same school period in which they attend regular classes?



Source: Research survey questionnaire administered to SEA teachers, 2015.

■ The service offer was greater in the primary education schooling years, better structured, with greater outreach, and with good SEA practices. It is the schooling level for which the service was offered at the very beginning and the level with the highest numbers of students enrolled that are eligible for special education, and the one with the majority of MRRs.

■ The SEA offer for lower secondary school years is far smaller and less structured and the biggest challenge is to articulate SEA with the teachers of the many different study disciplines and to overcome their resistance to developing inclusive education practices. As one SEA teacher reported:



'Because classes are given by study area, the challenge is to achieve joint planning because each one has a different day allocated for planning.'

■ In Adult Education, the SEA offer is extremely limited and it is the education modality that presents the greatest challenges to the structuring of SEA. That is largely due to the peripheral status afforded to this mode of education in the public-school network structures, to the very small numbers of students targeted by special education enrolled in it (albeit, in some school networks there are signs that these numbers are increasing), and because it is an education modality that is largely offered at night only making it difficult to alternate the SEA attention to the other day shift periods; and there are other factors involved. According to one principal of a school that does offer adult education:



'We have tried various models for SEA provision in Adult Education in our public schools. Currently we have organized it to begin at 6 pm before the regular AE classes, which begin at 7 pm. It was the best we could do, because practically none of the students were able to attend in the alternative shift periods. However, we are aware that many of such students cannot make it by 6 pm either and so they end up losing the SEA service.' (School principal)

■ In many municipalities, the SEA teachers have a 40-hour working week. According to various statements that were taken, it creates more suitable conditions for them to act as a negotiator with the other teachers working in the regular classes, as well as time to accompany the students and their families and the qualification processes engaging other professionals in their schools.

■ Another phenomenon detected was that of itinerant SEA teachers, who went from school to school to provide educational attention to students with disabilities, ASD and GDD, and to gifted/talented

students. That practice was present in most of the municipalities and it plays a variety of functional roles in providing services in rural settings, in pre-school education and in reference centres.

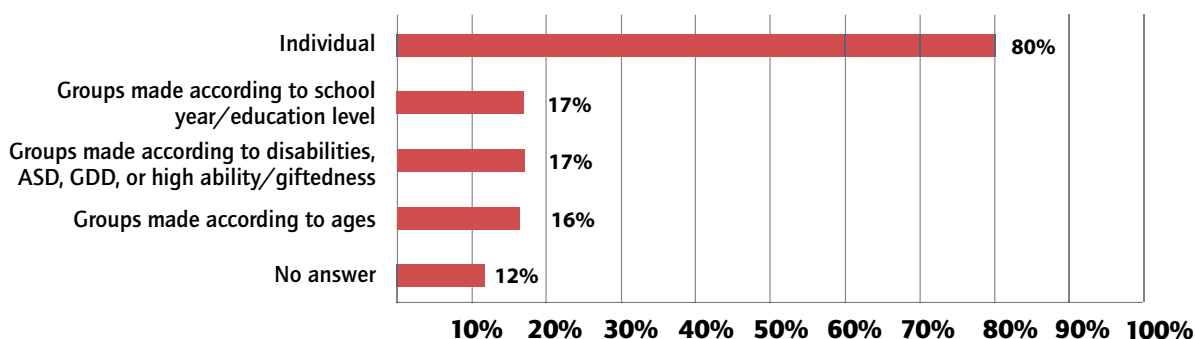
■ Some of the municipalities in the scope of this study have special education students enrolled in rural areas. In those cases, the SEA services should address the difficulties that are normally associated to rural schools – modest or precarious infrastructure, limited availability of transport, long distances and difficult access, classes with mixtures of schooling years, small number of teachers and students, and others. In that context, many of the public schools have not yet managed to guarantee adequate service provision to all the students who should be benefitted by SEA.

■ Even though the national guidelines, regulations and principles of inclusive education recommend that SEA teachers should work with all the students that are eligible for special education services, and that the students should be organized according to age groups and schooling years and levels, but not according to their deficiencies, many public schools have proved themselves to be flexible in their interpretation of that requirement. It is very common for the SEA to be organized according to the type of deficiency and various administrators justified that situation saying that there were still former posts in existence occupied by teachers that were specifically qualified in a certain deficiency, and due to the presence of teachers stemming from degree and specialisation courses that had been organized on that basis. There are still other administrators who firmly believe that grouping by deficiencies is the best model. It can be seen, therefore, that there is a need for a transition period and experimentation to move forward, in the sense of constituting an offer that is not segmented according to deficiencies and in which the teachers will be able to provide attention to all their students.

■ The service offers segmented according to types of deficiency and administered by specialized teachers has led to the majority to choose for individualized educational attention for their students. During the visits to schools and reference centres, it was verified that such forms of service offer are often very similar to the practices of the special schools, where the emphasis was on individualized, clinical attention.

■ Individualized attention is preponderant in the public-school networks covered by the study as Chart 11 demonstrates. The chart sets out the responses of SEA teachers to the question regarding the form of organization of the service provision to their students.

Chart 11: How do you organize the way you offer SEA to your students?



NB: The total displayed in the chart may not necessarily correspond to the number of respondents.

Source: Research survey questionnaire administered to SEA teachers, 2015.

■ A few cases of service provision in the homes of students or in hospitals were registered in the networks covered by the survey. One case registered in the qualitative research involved an SEA teacher, who attended a student with low immunity and who could not attend the school too frequently on orders made by their doctor:



'I plan the class that I will give and I go to his home twice a week; an hour each time. But he also goes to school to participate in the SEA class activities and the regular classes. He cannot do any of the tasks that require a physical effort. He attends any kind of school event, but only if it is in an open environment.'

■ In the municipalities covered by the study, the SEA offers structured as a supplementary contribution for gifted/talented students is practically non-existent. The only municipality that has such service properly structured is Vitória.

■ Most of the municipalities targeted by the research not only have SEA in their own school networks, but they draw up agreements with other organizations for its provision, especially APAE. Some of the professionals that were interviewed stated that the relation with such entities is one of collaboration and partnership, but certain difficulties and tensions were also referred to especially regarding the perceptions of those entities regarding inclusive education, to supervision and monitoring of the SEA provision in the institutions by staff of the Departments of Education and its poor level of integration with regular schooling.

Reference Centres

In six of the municipalities involved in this study (Betim, Erechim, Florianópolis, Maracanaú, Porangatu, and Rio Branco) there are reference centres maintained by the Municipal Departments of Education, which are engaged in providing services to students with disabilities, ASD, GDD, as well as to gifted/talented students. They play a significant role in organising special/inclusive education, in SEA provision, in the production of accessible resources, in the qualification of professional education personnel, etc. Often those centres take on responsibilities and perform roles that go beyond the sphere of providing educational attention to the students and enter in the realm of administering the inclusive education policy, notably the case in Betim.

The reference centres offer services in the areas of health and social assistance to the students and their families. They can count on a multidisciplinary team with professionals from the areas of psychology, speech and hearing therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, social services and so on.

Nobody can deny the importance of those services; nevertheless, many of them still have strong traces of the former special education model, based on medical-clinical approaches in an assistance perspective. Furthermore, their existence corroborates the non-existence of health and social assistance services specifically dedicated to persons with disabilities.


Case

The Educational Attention Provision to Gifted/Talented Students in Vitória

According to the CFSEA coordinator of Vitória Municipal Department of Education has made every effort to work more systematically with specialized educational attention to gifted/talented students at least since the beginning of the years 2000, when the Creativity Development Programme was created with the intention of contributing to the development of the potential of such students in their public-school network.

That programme was followed by the Talent Centre (*Centro de Talentos* – CT) and by partnership arrangements established with universities and other institutions. In that same

period, there was an effort made to organise the service provision by creating projects. Around 2011, according to the CFAEE coordinator there was a reflection on the need to provide that service inside the schools; it was the school that indicated the student who was then directed to the project, but from then on, the school was no longer involved in the process as witnessed by the following statement:



'We began to think about what could be done in the schools, in the regular classrooms the students came from, so that we could boost the possibilities of their remaining in those schools.'

A Working Group was made in which some of the members considered that the current model was adequate and should continue, whereas the group belonging to the Department of Education considered that it would be better if the action arose from the school and negotiated its conditions with the curriculum and the activities of the school. From then on, new guidelines were constructed for providing services to gifted/talented students. They were implemented in 2014.

That service was organized in the following way: six reference schools were distributed around the administrative regions of the city, and each with a multiple-resource classroom to meet the needs of gifted/talented student. It was decided not to use the MRRs and, instead, to organise a specific form of service provision for the group in question in view of its singular characteristics. Each school would receive municipal financing that would enable it to equip itself with the aim of achieving an enrichment of the curriculum rather than the development of specific gifts and talents such as physics, music and so on. That resource room would also meet the needs of schools in the surrounding areas.

Each classroom receives, on average, students from ten schools coming from both primary and lower secondary education schooling years and they can count on the presence of one teacher in the morning shift and another in the afternoon one. The students attend whichever session is alternate to the shift of their regular classes. The school is required to fill out and send in a specific form to the Municipal Department of Education reporting and justifying the request and explaining the reasons why the request is being made and outlining the schooling record of the student, any curricular issues involved, the field of interest of the student, his or her needs and difficulties, interactions in school and so on.

Based on that information, the Department gets in touch with the reference school for gifted/talented students. The specialized teacher from that school will then interview the family of the student. Following that, the work with the student begins. The service does not restrict its focus to the special talent of the student, but also considers the other talents that need to be developed and other curricular issues and difficulties. However, the reference schools for gifted/talented students are not always to meet all the needs of such students. In that case, the municipal network can count on projects that the student can be referred to: there are partnership arrangements in the field of music, some actions undertaken by the Municipal Department of Sports and projects run by the Department of Education in collaboration with the planetarium, the Science, Biology and History School and other supplementary actions. Every three months the projects and the resource rooms elaborate reports with information on the attendance of the students and on how they are progressing in their activities. Based on those

reports the Department of Education organises regional meetings with the pedagogical staff of the schools to socialize the information as to how each student is progressing. The reports and the results of the meetings are then sent to the schools for an assessment of ways in which the curriculum could be boosted and to further qualify the service provision to such students.

The CFAEE coordinator acknowledges that the programme has only recently been implemented. It encountered resistance at first, but it has increasingly been recognised by the school network. Regarding the challenges it faces and the points that need to be improved, she stated the following:

'I think we need to improve the actions in the school and I think more about the aspect of what benefit the regular schools gain from the experiences taking place in the reference school and in the resource classrooms. We need to see whether the regular school is appropriating the results of those experiences. Our focus is on boosting the learning achievement of students in the regular school and seeing that the school is enriched by the experience.'

She also acknowledges that:

'It is important to be very clear about who this student that needs to be sent for specialized attention really is. We need to build indicators and refine our strategies to ensure adequate identification of those students.'

3.2 Access, Permanence and Learning Process of Students with Disabilities, ASD, GDD and High Ability/Giftedness in the SEA

As mentioned previously, the SEA is duly structured in all the municipalities that were investigated. This research sought to analyse the strategies developed to ensure access, permanence and learning for the students that are the beneficiaries of the SEA service.

3.2.1 Access

According to the administrative staff members who were interviewed, access to SEA has been practically universalized and institutionalized in the urban zone, but there are still great obstacles to be overcome for the rural areas.

Raising awareness of the families is an important aspect and it has contributed to achieving the present situation.

The federal laws and regulations give clear indications as to who the target beneficiaries of this kind of attention provision are. The public schools in this research adopt all those principles, but even so one of the great difficulties the interviewees identified was the construction of eligibility parameters that are not restricted to a clinical perspective, but consider pedagogical ones as well.

To guarantee the access of students to SEA it is important to construct organizational flows of services provision that begin with the characterization of the student made by the teacher of the regular class he or she attends. That should be done together with the respective pedagogical supervisor (coordinator) and the SEA teacher, because not all students with disabilities actually need SEA.

At that stage, it is also important to involve the families to provide more information on their child's development record, state whether there has been a formal diagnosis, whether he or she has received or is receiving medical care and other facts. Based on that information the decision can be made as to whether the child should be forwarded for SEA if the family agrees. Once eligibility has been confirmed, a detailed plan is prepared specifying the conditions necessary for the student to remain in school, the logistics for service provision, organization of transport, meals, frequency of attention, whether it will be individual or in group, the type of support needed, whether special assistance technology is involved, and the most urgent steps to take to overcome immediate barriers such as access difficulties, etc. It is essential undertake this work in collaboration and negotiation with the regular class teacher.

There were three differences observed among the surveyed municipalities in their structuring and organization of the SEA process. In some there are formal guidance documents, protocols and forms for enrolling and accompanying the students and those are all incorporated to the routines of the various administrative spheres concerned. In others, although general reference guidance does exist, the process is much more informal and varies from one school to another. There were also municipalities that are only just beginning the discussion of SEA organization and structuring. In those cases, the eligibility of students for SEA is largely based on their medical diagnoses and the diagnosis proffered by the SEA teacher.

The excerpts from statements that follow below describe some of the processes that were observed in the municipalities:

'There are no guidelines or documents to determine the flow of students sent for SEA. The identification of the need for it begins in the school when the case gives rise to doubts. When a regular teacher perceives that one of the students may need SEA, the parents are called in and told that their child should undergo a medical assessment. Parallel to that, the student is sent to SEA and the SEA teacher runs some tests with him.' (Special education coordinator)

'The SEA teachers use direct observation, interviews and records to study the cases of students with disabilities enrolled in their school with a view to identify any needs and determine what the frequency and duration of the service provision should be. They then elaborate a plan of educational attention provision, which is subject to constant review.' (Special education coordinator)

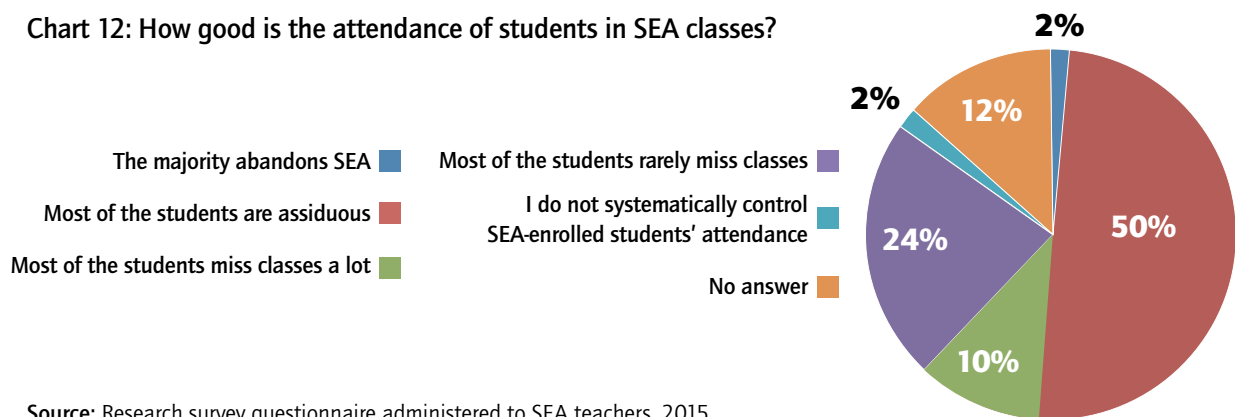
'The student arrives in school in January. February is devoted to the process of getting to know his or her difficulties. When March comes around the teacher refers the student to the SEA.'

Taking a student out of SEA is something that most of the municipalities hardly discuss at all. Once students start receiving SEA, they only stop if they drop out of the school or at the formal request of the family. In the latter case, the family is called on to sign a term of commitment. Quite often, even after the student has left the school, the continuation of SEA is negotiated especially between schools belonging to the same public-school network. The municipalities of Erechim, Florianópolis and Vitória were the ones that showed most concern for the question of establishing criteria for the disconnection or continuity of SEA service provision to students based on the principle of the transitory nature of SEA and the need for constant and processual reassessments that analyse the progress, acquirement of autonomy and other elements of the students that denote whether or not the attention provision should continue.

3.2.2 Permanence

74% of the SEA teachers who responded to the questionnaires declared that most of the students enrolled in SEA are assiduous (50%) or rarely miss classes (24%).

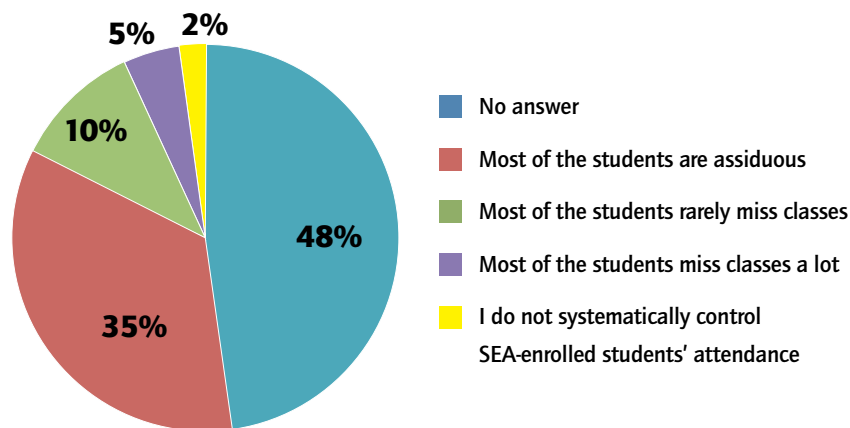
Chart 12: How good is the attendance of students in SEA classes?



Source: Research survey questionnaire administered to SEA teachers, 2015.

Regarding the attendance in regular classes, the teachers concerned said it was lower. Their responses showed that 35% of the students are assiduous and 10% are rarely absent. One remarkable figure was the number of teachers who failed to answer the question (48%), which either indicates their lack of knowledge or their failure to accompany such students' class attendance or, even worse: that the attendance of such students in regular classes is far lower than the rates obtained from the responses would indicate.


Chart 13: How good is the attendance of students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and gifted/talented students in the regular classroom?



Source: Research survey questionnaire administered to teachers in regular classrooms, 2015.


3.2.3 Learning

During the field visits many statements were collected that pointed to the importance of SEA as a strategy for reducing the barriers to schooling and inclusion that these students encounter in the regular schools. They are reports of the daily achievements of those students, the planned progress and unexpected learning. They refer to the surprise of the parents at potentialities revealed in their children that they had never suspected they existed; reports of fear and joy and the lessons learned by the regular teachers themselves from their socialisation with students with disabilities, ASD and GDD, as well as talented/gifted students. The mother of one such student gave a statement that is very illustrative of that context:




'In school, my son does the same things as the others, within his possibilities. The other children with no disabilities help him, but without doing things for him and that was something the teacher taught them. It would be all too easy for them to do my son's tasks themselves, but that is not what happens and I have been able to observe that directly.' (Mother of a student with a disability)

Those practices help in the quest for a new understanding regarding the nature of the learning that is generated by the school experience in all its aspects and in the light of its complexity.




'I have a student with intellectual insufficiency who has shown great progress in terms of socialisation and writing skills ever since she started to receive SEA. I never imagined she would learn to write so fast.' (Regular class teacher)

Mediating the learning process for students that are the target audience of special education in the same way as is done for all the other students requires continuous efforts, constancy and investment. Those students often stimulate the exploration and experiments of different teaching practices, languages and resources which, if they are well negotiated with the regular class activities, can expand resources and learning possibilities of the full set of students.




'We received a student in our schools who was an incentive for us to work in an articulated manner. She has visual deficiency and is losing her sight. The SEA teacher began tactile stimulus work with her and started to teach her Braille. Work was also undertaken with her family to raise their awareness regarding the importance of Braille, because they were unable to face the fact that she was going blind and they did not want her to learn Braille. The student's case has been accompanied by the reference centre ever since she first came to the school.' (Pedagogical coordinator)

The regular class teacher complemented that statement:



'When she came to our school she was already literate. She quickly learned and today she uses it very skilfully. The arrival of this student made me decide to take a course to learn Braille.' (Regular class teacher)

There are also frequent accounts of the difficulties SEA teachers must find ways to relate to these students, understand their needs and define strategies for their development. Some statements made it very clear that the work is still focussed on relations of socialisation and adapting to the rules and norms that govern living together in school spaces.




'I specialized in intellectual deficiency, but I had to quickly become more versatile and learn to handle students with different disabilities. At first, I worried most about behaviour and socialising; it was a great challenge, finding a way to incorporate strategies that would facilitate those students' learning. I had some opportunities to further qualify myself and I got to know Vygotsky's theory about mediating development and learning processes. It helped me a great deal.' (SEA teacher)

During the visits, it was plain to see that one of the great challenges in accompanying the SEA students' gains and learning is the fragile or weakly structured process for registering and systematising the learning, and that goes as much for SEA teachers as for those in regular classrooms.

Florianópolis – SEA teachers in pairs


One of the notable features of the structure of service provision to students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and to gifted/talented students was the presence of SEA teachers working in pairs full-time in the schools. Based on the statements of administrators and the regular classroom and SEA teachers it is possible to identify how those pairs of professionals perform fundamental roles in the processes that involve students with disabilities, ASD and GDD, as well as gifted/talented students not only in SEA classrooms, but also in the regular classroom.

In addition to the work carried out in the multifunctional rooms as they are called in that municipality the pairs are directly responsible for the special educational attention plan and for other activities, as the municipal secretary of education emphasized:




'We have two teachers in each multifunctional room because, in addition to the need for specific capacity building those teachers need time in which to investigate resources and activities that help the students in the inclusion process.'

The manager for special education points out some other important aspects of that initiative:



'Working in pairs favours exchanges, different ways of looking at things and that contributes to the case studies. The teacher is not kept in isolation.'

One SEA teacher agreed:



'Instead of confronting our ideas and initiatives we try to unite them to achieve good work. The viewpoint of the other person enriches the work. It is a relationship that gets built up; an exercise of working pairs. We add to one another. We get to grips with the work.'



Inclusive Education in the School Routine

'By recognising that the difficulties faced by the education systems are evidence of the need to confront discriminatory practices and create alternatives to overcome them, inclusive education moves to the centre of the debate on contemporary society and the role of the school in overcoming the logic of exclusion' (Brasil. MEC/SEESP, 2008c).

Education policies attain materiality by means of the pedagogical practices carried out in the schools. The school as an institution gives them form through management strategies, the organization of activities, division of labour and the development and implementation of pedagogical practices. By articulating those various dimensions, backed by a 'school culture', established but in constant transformation, schooling practices are tensioned by the trajectories and world visions of their actors in a dialogue with much broader educational perspectives, but always with a reasonable margin of autonomy.

In that context, inclusive education policies need to be articulated with the school practices and the school actors on pain of becoming ineffective. Whereas the design of inclusive education policies expresses an action programme in which visions of the role of the State in guaranteeing educational rights gain form and content, the ultimate intention of any educational policy is to transform the normative models into functioning modes incorporated to daily life. Therein lies a need to construct strategies which, while considering the relative autonomy of schools, also keeping up the dialogue with them, can influence their practices and ensuring the existence of the conditions for the said action programme to be put into effect.

In addition to the processes that design inclusive education policies and the management practices of the central bodies of the education networks, this research set out to investigate the way in which school practices incorporate and give meaning to inclusive principles and reference frameworks as defined in the design of the policies themselves. To that end, information was gathered about school management processes, the construction of the PPPs, curricular aspects and questions about pedagogical practices designed to ensure the learning and participation of all students but taking their singularities into account.

4.1 School Administration/Pedagogical Coordination and Inclusive Education

Inclusive education requires a series of changes inside the schools involving school management and the review of organizational and pedagogical practices, in addition to involving: architectural/spatial, curricular, PPP and human resources aspects, qualification, relations with the families, articulation and negotiations among schools and other agencies of the public domain and the public services and, therefore, it requires the commitment of all stakeholders.

Thus, it is fundamentally important that the school administration, which is the responsibility of the principals, deputy principals (in some networks) and pedagogical coordinators, should take on and develop their work with the knowledge that they can count on the participation of the entire school community and they must constantly be on the lookout for any practices or modes of functioning that hinder the construction of an inclusive school. Furthermore, the administration should encourage all concerned to create alternative designs and compositions to ensure the construction of a school *by all* that is truly *for all*. It is a complex challenge that requires time and a lot of investment. It has an impact on structural, organizational, financial, political, philosophical, pedagogical and instructional aspects as well as on registration, accompaniment and systematisation and others. The process normally generates conflicts, tensions, uncertainties, fear and boycotts that need to be logically analysed and overcome.

As mentioned earlier, among the municipalities investigated there were great differences in the administration of the Departments and that was naturally reflected in the schools of their networks. The qualitative research showed that in schools where the school administrations take on the role of negotiating and articulating inclusive education and operational responsibility for it together with the other actors concerned, considerable progress is achieved in the structural, organizational and pedagogical aspects. In some schools, there is visible alignment of the discourse on the inclusive education principles and practices that extends beyond the three main administrators to the entire school staff.

In schools where the work is more consolidated, the significant role of the SEA teachers is undeniable. They act in close coordination with the administrative team of the school and are often included on that team for any issues involving inclusive education and that constitutes an expansion and intensification of coordination. That recurrent arrangement is associated to strategies and forms of organization that set high value on the work of those professionals and strengthen the process of integrating the teams. However, the work calls for intensive efforts on the part of Municipal Department administrators in defining the roles of team members in school management to ensure that all the responsibility for managing inclusive education in the schools is not attributed to the SEA teachers alone.

At the same time, it is easy to see that in many schools it is the school administrators that have been the great obstacle to inclusion. According to one member of the Department staff responsible for pre-school and primary education:



'Our society is viewed as if it were entirely uniform. It is the standard pattern that prevails. So, the moment an administrator starts to adopt inclusion there is a long process involved until the time that all the barriers can be overcome. Well, those administrators that are more open to inclusion manage to take the step, but those who have not yet understood it put up resistance and make demands such as insisting that parents of students with more serious disabilities must remain in the school with them... It is always much easier for us to run the school when the principal attributes to the importance of inclusion.'

A few examples will serve to illustrate the resistance of school administrators to inclusive education and the consequences of their stances for the school routine. In some of the schools that were visited, positions were identified frontally opposed to the SEA guidelines and to any operationalisation or integration of such services for students with disabilities, ASD, GDD or gifted/talented students in the regular classes and classrooms. In one school with various enrolled students that are usually contemplated by special education, the principal and the pedagogical coordinator were resistant and on some points openly against some of the inclusive education policy principles. They argue, for example, that the school hours of some such students should be reduced for an indefinite period:



'It is as if you are requiring more of him than he is capable of.'

They also argue that SEA should be administered in the same shift as the regular classes of the students.



'I don't think it should be so rigid as the [federal] government defines it in the law.'

As a counterpoint to that position, the SEA teacher is equally intractable regarding those aspects and so there are tensions and negative consequences for the implementation of inclusive education and the parents of students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and of gifted/talented students can see that.

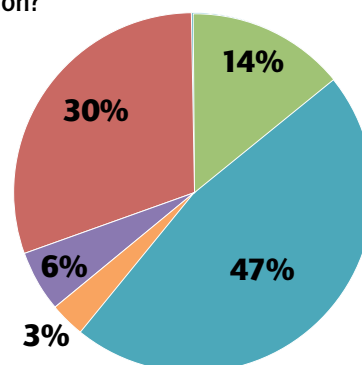
The quantitative data gathered from ordinary teachers and SEA teachers corroborate the perceptions gleaned by the qualitative research regarding the need for greater involvement and participation of the administrative personnel in leading all the processes that stem from the implementation of inclusive education in the schools.

Again, the quantitative data show that 30% of the regular class teachers declared that they receive follow-up of the school administration regarding their inclusive teaching practices. Another notable fact that appeared was that 47% of teachers in ordinary classes failed to answer that question, which means they do not acknowledge the existence of any follow-up performed by the administrative team regarding the daily round of inclusion of students with disabilities, ASD, GDD or gifted/talented students in the regular classes.

Chart 14: Does the school administration (principal, deputy principal and/or teaching coordinator) monitor your pedagogical practices regarding inclusive education/special education?

Responses	Participants
Always	429
Sometimes	197
Seldom	78
Never	39
No answer	664
Overall total	1,407

- Always ■
- Sometimes ■
- Seldom ■
- Never ■
- No answer ■

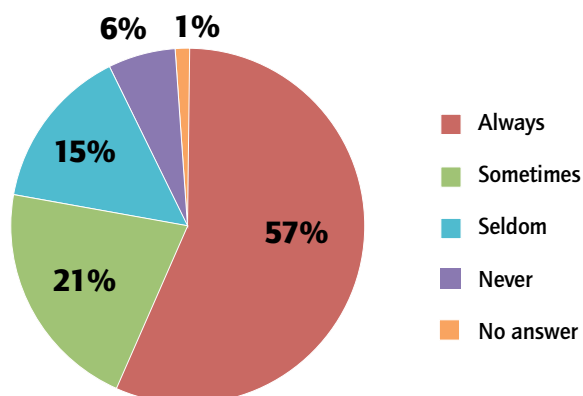


Source: Research survey questionnaire administered to teachers of ordinary classes, 2015.

That negative perception of the performances of administrative teams related to monitoring pedagogical practices is less prevalent among the SEA teachers as Chart 15 shows.

Chart 15: Does the school administration (principal, deputy principal and/or teaching coordinator) monitor your pedagogical practices?

Responses	Participants
Always	180
Sometimes	68
Seldom	20
Never	3
No answer	47
Overall total	318



Source: Research survey questionnaire administered to SEA teachers, 2015.

The qualitative research revealed how, in a considerable number of schools, the SEA teacher is the major catalyser and main person responsible for inclusive education issues and that situation is often monitored by a distancing of the administrative team from inclusive education or for their shouldering very little responsibility for managing it. That is probably why, in the quantitative research, a higher percentage of SEA teachers declare that they are monitored by the administrators or the school regarding inclusive education practices. In general, the administrative team achieved that monitoring through its contact with the SEA teacher.

Another aspect underscoring that analysis concerns the direct relations of SEA teachers with those responsible for education, including those in government Departments of Education. Often the school administration teams are not the mediators of those relations thereby confirming the distancing of the administrative teams from monitoring inclusive education in their schools.

4.2 Curriculum

'Defining the target audience should be contextualised and not limited to the mere categorisation and specification associated to a reference framework of disabilities, disorders and special abilities. It must be borne in mind that people continuously modify themselves and transform the contexts in which they find themselves. That dynamism requires a pedagogical performance directed at altering the situation of exclusion and at emphasising the importance of heterogeneous environments that foster the learning of all students' (Brasil. MEC/SEESP, 2008c).

The curriculum expresses and aligns the educational aspect of the schooling experience in the framework of a working project elaborated by the public-school networks and by the schools in alignment with the federal state and municipal curricular reference frameworks.

In that regard, the curricula in the municipal public-school networks highlight a given concept related to the schooling experiences, which it is believed every student should have based on the principle that society considers them to be fundamental for the development of students. In terms of educational policy, the curriculum can be understood to be an expression of the commitment of the State to society and to the school system. In terms of public education policy, the State must create the necessary conditions to materialise the educational

experiences. It must be added that the curriculum itself is a process of permanent construction, tension and analysis, subject to change and restructuring in the light of the expectations and needs that society generates at each historical moment.

That means a curriculum cannot be a mere collection of pre-established study subjects and contents to be set before the students. Instead, it should be a composite of directions, intentions, strategies, means and actions interlaced by political, philosophical, pedagogical and educational principles that contribute to building a fair and equal society. In that sense, the school and the teacher have a central role to play in the process of organising school times and spaces that produce meaningful, collaborative work practices and realities. Teaching all the students presupposes that the teachers have a solid repertory of themes to be addressed, a clear planning of the strategies and mediations to be used, a sharp, observant eye sensitive to the learning processes of all the students, also that there are diversified resources in different formats and with guaranteed accessibility available.


Thus, equal opportunity, which is at the base of the inclusive education proposals, means ensuring that all the children and young people with disabilities, ASD, GDD and gifted/talented students have the chance to access the practices and the contents foreseen in the planning undertaken by each school and its staff. It means that equal opportunity must be extended to include learning opportunities. In the case of those students, it is important to verify the manner of their access to the school curriculum.

This study observed different ways of working with the curriculum in an inclusive perspective in the selected municipalities. It is widely acknowledged that the curriculum is one of the crucial knots for guaranteeing equality of learning opportunities. Various aspects of inclusive education have achieved considerable progress; nevertheless, the prospect of a curriculum for all is still a challenge facing the municipal public-school networks. In many cases the challenge is built in an equivalent way to the challenge regarding the perceived learning possibilities and impossibilities of students with disabilities, ASD and GDD, as well as of gifted/talented students, based on mistaken perceptions stemming from medical-clinical, psychological, psychometric and rehabilitation approaches.

The curricular approaches identified in the networks researched by this study and their ramification in terms of the content to be taught or the strategies and activities proposed for the students that are contemplated by special education can be grouped into four main blocks for analysis purposes:


- **Common content for all with diversification of activities:** this perspective is in alignment with the principles of education for all. It ensures the same curriculum provision to everybody and activities are designed in a way that contemplate diversity among students learning modes.
- **Common content for all with adapted activities:** the content worked on tries to be the same, but the proposed activities underestimate the learning possibilities of students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and the gifted/talented ones.
- **Adapted content and adapted activities;** the perspective of equality is weakened not only in the content planning process, but also in the proposed activities and that makes interaction and learning processes more difficult among the students.
- **Exclusive content and activities:** in this case students contemplated by special education receive individualised, segregated educational attention, which transforms the school experience into just one more experience of discrimination. The possibility of learning *with* and *in* diversity is not considered.

Those practices that work with content that is common to all students, but with diversification of the activities are still the least frequently found. Some school networks have identified achieving that point as being the great challenge facing the consolidation of their inclusive education policy. That is underscored by this excerpt from a statement made by one of the special education coordinators that were interviewed:




'I think we are making progress with the entry of other elements, other languages. Theatre, painting... I believe that is an advance towards a more open curriculum. There are incentives for schools that undertake projects of that kind and need [financial] resources. Those projects challenge the conservative type of school organization. The need to change the concept of what constitutes teaching, what constitutes learning; that is a challenge. Depending on that concept, we either recognise or do not recognise the universal capacity of all children; that which they are capable of learning. A conservative concept holds that some learn and others do not. Changing the concept is the great challenge.'

According to the accounts we obtained in the visits to the municipalities most of the schools in their networks are still at the stage of developing adapted content and activities in which equal opportunity to access the curriculum is very limited:



'We need to rethink the curriculum structure. It is still very much organized based on little boxes. How a person with disabilities can be included has yet to be idealised. Let us take the example of intellectual deficiency and autism where there is difficulty with reading and writing; the curriculum must be re-thought. For the teachers, our advice is to carry out different activities. Not that they should be dis-contextualised, but they must be activities thought up for them. However, we still need to make progress on this; not everyone follows our guidance.' (Special Education Coordinator)

The development of exclusive content and activities for students with disabilities, and gifted/talented ones was also detected in the school networks. The most recurrent reason given for that situation lies on in the student and in the 'more severe' type of disability. They presumed the impossibility of the student to access the regular curriculum.



'Especially in the more severe cases, the more serious disabilities, it is just an illusion to think that the student will always be able to follow the activities designed for all students. I think such a student really does need more specialized, more individualised attention and with content that he can manage to follow.' (Regular classroom teacher)

The different points of view revealed by the qualitative research are also apparent in the quantitative data. In the questionnaires administered to SEA teachers, regular classroom teachers and pedagogical coordinators, the participants were asked whether the school should teach the same content to students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and to gifted/talented ones. Table 7 synthesizes their perceptions. They adjusted their answers according to the various kinds of disability.

Table 7: Common curriculum provision to students with disabilities

Should the same curriculum content be taught to students with disabilities?		Yes	No	It depends	No answer
Blindness	Pedagogical coordinators	66%	4%	15%	15%
	Regular classroom teachers	61%	8%	19%	12%
	SEA teachers	71%	2%	21%	6%
	Average	63%	6%	19%	11%
Poor sight/visual disability	Pedagogical coordinators	71%	2%	13%	14%
	Regular classroom teachers	69%	5%	16%	10%
	SEA teachers	77%	1%	16%	6%
	Average	70%	4%	15%	11%
Deafness	Pedagogical coordinators	66%	5%	13%	16%
	Regular classroom teachers	64%	7%	17%	12%
	SEA teachers	75%	3%	13%	9%
	Average	66%	6%	16%	12%
Auditory disability	Pedagogical coordinators	70%	2%	13%	15%
	Regular classroom teachers	65%	6%	17%	12%
	SEA teachers	74%	1%	19%	6%
	Average	67%	5%	17%	12%
Multiple disabilities	Pedagogical coordinators	35%	9%	41%	15%
	Regular classroom teachers	42%	14%	31%	13%
	SEA teachers	49%	5%	36%	10%
	Average	42%	12%	33%	13%
Deaf and blind	Pedagogical coordinators	43%	4%	27%	26%
	Regular classroom teachers	46%	13%	27%	14%
	SEA teachers	54%	5%	29%	12%
	Average	47%	11%	27%	15%
Mental/intellectual disability	Pedagogical coordinators	36%	4%	37%	23%
	Regular classroom teachers	40%	17%	32%	11%
	SEA teachers	57%	8%	34%	1%
	Average	42%	15%	33%	11%
ASD/GDD	Pedagogical coordinators	40%	4%	36%	20%
	Regular classroom teachers	41%	13%	32%	14%
	SEA teachers	53%	7%	31%	9%
	Average	43%	12%	33%	12%
Gifted/talented	Pedagogical coordinators	50%	7%	28%	15%
	Regular classroom teachers	55%	10%	21%	14%
	SEA teachers	66%	4%	19%	11%
	Average	56%	9%	22%	13%
Overall average		55%	9%	24%	12%

NB: the sum of the percentage may not be exactly 100% because the figures were rounded off to the nearest whole number.

Source: Research survey questionnaire administered to regular classroom teachers, SEA teachers and pedagogical coordinators, 2015.

Table 7 can be analysed in several ways. Various hypotheses can be formulated regarding the perceptions of the curriculum in inclusive education and the ways it is understood.

■ In the overall average of the totals it can be noticed that most of the professionals (55%) have already incorporated the possibility that all the students can learn the same content to their discourse. However, there was an expressive percentage of respondents (24%) that chose the less absolute option 'it depends'. When the figures are broken down according to types of disabilities, the doubts of the respondents regarding the possibilities of different students learning the same content becomes more explicit.

■ In general, it is the group of SEA teachers that most believes in the possibility of teaching the same content to all the students. Their perception is probably due to the greater investment made in their professional qualification and their reference role in the direct and intense work they undertake with students with disabilities, ASD, GDD, and with gifted/talented students.

■ Unlike the SEA teachers, the pedagogical coordinators are those that least believe in the possibility of teaching the same curricular content to students with multiple disabilities, deafness and blindness, intellectual deficiency, ASD, GDD, and gifted/talented students. Given the importance of their role in the pedagogical affairs of the schools, their formative role and their responsibility in the process of implementing curriculum proposals their disbelief regarding the learning possibilities of students that are addressed by special education is evidence of great lack of knowledge and information and is a serious barrier to building inclusive schools for all.

■ The data indicate that the greatest difficulty the staff have in acknowledging the possibility of teaching the same content as other students is for the students with intellectual disability, ASD and GDD. That attitude was also reflected in the qualitative research and was associated to a social representation that relates those groups to limitations and inability.

Thus, overall, the data set points to the question of curriculum as one of the main challenges confronting inclusive education policies. There is still a lot of ignorance, prejudice and unconcern and there is a notably low level of investment of the networks and their professionals in that theme as far as the teaching-learning processes of students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and gifted/talented students are concerned.

4.3 Inclusive Education and the Pedagogical Policy Project (PPP)

Article 12 of the Brazilian National Education Law setting out education guidelines and principles (*Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional – LDB*) (Brasil, 1996) establishes that schools must elaborate their annual pedagogical plans and do so in a participatory manner. The document, which sets out the goals and objectives, the strategies and activities to achieve them and the resources to be used, is called the Pedagogical Policy Project (*Projeto Político-Pedagógico*).

The document, which is often elaborated in a bureaucratic and non-participatory manner, expresses the background, the profile and the identity of each school, its needs, the nature of the public it serves and its vision of the best way to guarantee the educational rights of all its students. Given the public nature of municipal education networks and their schools, it is obviously highly important that the PPPs of the schools should clearly define how they will fulfil their responsibility to constitute a space that is democratic, plural and for all.

One of the indicators of the progress achieved by inclusive education policies is the incorporation of inclusive principles and practices in the PPP at all schooling levels and in a cross-cutting manner. In that incorporation, inclusive education is taken as a premise not only from the institutional point of view, but also regarding the ways of fashioning and organising the education provision to all students.

This study set out to investigate the way in which schools address or specify inclusive education issues. One fundamental point that was underscored in several municipalities concerns the planning done by the Municipal Departments of Education and how it materialises in the schools. The PPP is supposed to express principles that are common to the entire network and their formulation occurs in the central entities of the Municipal Departments of Education which, in turn, dialogue with the national guidelines.

Maracanaú Municipal Department of Education has an institutional inclusive education project within the PPPs elaborated by the schools. The example below was taken from the project of one of the schools for the period 2013-2014:

'In the perspective of inclusion and accordance with the National Policy of Special Education in the Perspective of Inclusion, with Decree No. 6,571/2008, the school also offers Specialized Educational Attention in the three school shift periods in the Multifunctional Resource Room with the function of complementing and/or supplementing the education of students with disabilities or, GDD and gifted/talented students' (Secretaria Municipal de Maracanaú).

In the PPP in question, the inclusive perspective is present throughout the document which mentions types of disability of students enrolled at the school, the structure of the multifunctional resource room and the roles of SEA teachers and regular classroom teachers.

In the municipality of Erechim it was found that inclusive education appears in the guidelines formulated by the Municipal Department of Education for the elaboration of the PPP document and in the schools PPPs in accordance with the recommendations set out in Technical Note No. 11/2010 (Brasil. MEC/SEESP, 2010b).

In the municipal network of Porangatu, according to the person responsible for inclusive education, the inclusive perspective is cross-cutting in the Department of Education and that is reflected in the school PPPs.



'There is no question of inclusion being separated, it is cross-cutting to all the issues, in the Department of Education, too. So much so that we do not talk about a section (of inclusion); we are part of the pedagogical section. Inclusive education is in the Pedagogical Policy Plan of the school and in the statutes and regulations of the Department of Education.'


It must be stressed that the public-school networks that were investigated adopt different planning models and processes not only in the Departments of Education, but also in the schools. There were municipal education plans, Departmental plurennial plans, annual plans, action plans, monitoring plans, institutional projects, etc. The PPPs coexist with those education management processes sometimes in complementary, coordinated, articulated manner and sometimes in a contradictory way, disorganized or hardly aligned with the guiding principles of the more general planning documents.

That profusion of planning processes does not necessarily accompany the operational time frames of the inclusive education policies. Various statements indicated that the process is not always a linear one. In other words, just because the central planning has established rules and recommendations does not mean that the schools will necessarily incorporate inclusive education and implement it. It is also quite common for schools to organize strategies and implement practices of their own that can later be incorporated to the documents and regulations. Furthermore, during the period of this study, in various networks the PPP was still in the elaboration or validation processes, which made it difficult to assess the presence and scope of inclusive education in those documents.

Another important point concerns the ways in which the various schools incorporate the different aspects of inclusive education into their PPPs. The analysis of the quantitative data gathered in the fieldwork indicates that quite often inclusive education is only addressed in the PPPs in general terms that have more to do with its concepts and principles than with any strategies for putting it into effect. Frequently the detailed description of pedagogical practices and the implementation of inclusive education provision is entirely restricted to the SEA for which procedures, responsibilities, operational mechanisms and implementation strategies are described in general terms only and according to the rules and guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education.


Betim Municipal Department of Education formulates a guidance document for the schools with details of how to incorporate the SEA in the construction of their PPPs.

Professional in various different posts of the Florianópolis public schools network state that the PPPs of the schools not only incorporate the general principles of inclusive education, but also set out the details of the operational and pedagogical aspects of SEA, of the regular classrooms and of other school spaces. One school principal, referring to how inclusive education is incorporated in the PPPs considered that:



'Today, everyone involved has internalized the idea and the practice of inclusive education; all members of school staff including the non-teaching staff. It is set out in the PPP!'

Complementing that statement, the inclusive education coordinator for the municipal public schools network says:




'Formerly it was just an appendix, but as a result of all the work that has been done, inclusive education now appears in the PPP.'

PPP elaboration and inclusive education in Vitória


Vitória Municipal Department of Education elaborated a draft version of the PPP of each school, which was assessed by the CFAEE team at the Department of Education to verify: how the plans incorporate the inclusion of students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and gifted/talented students; whether they are in alignment with reference framework on inclusive education of the municipality; what they contain regarding inclusive pedagogical practices, and other aspects.

According to the CFAEE coordinator:



'We believe it is of fundamental importance to accompany and advise the schools in the elaboration of their PPPs. Our team reads all the draft documents from the point of view of inclusive education and identifies weak spots; points that need to be further elaborated, as well as positive aspects that can be incorporated to the plans.'

The principal of one school in the network underscored the value of that initiative in these words:



'The CFAEE support is fundamental to ensure that we are always aware of the issue; to ensure that we do not leave any possible aspect of inclusion out. Their feedback helps us to improve the plan which is shared by the entire school.'

In the questionnaires that were administered to education professionals in Vitória, most of the regular classroom teachers and the SEA teachers confirmed that inclusive education is addressed by the PPP of their schools, as can be seen in Table 8.

Table 8: Is inclusive education addressed in your school's Pedagogical Policy Plan?

Target audience	Yes	No	Do not know	No answer
Regular classroom teachers	78%	4%	14%	4%
SEA teachers	79%	5%	8%	8%

Source: Research survey questionnaire administered to regular classroom teachers and SEA teachers, 2015.

The data clearly show that in the municipalities investigated, inclusive education is present in the planning documents of the Department of Education and the schools, as well as in the discourse of the professional educators in the schools. The stances of different actors regarding the PPPs and the analysis of some of the plans show that the implementation of inclusive education policies and the process of making them transversal are at different stages across the network. That suggests that the discussion of inclusive education has largely gone beyond the aspect of its legitimacy and that efforts are now concentrated on overcoming difficulties in its implementation.

4.4 Inclusive Pedagogical Practices

While the curriculum and the PPP express the main lines of action for the schools, albeit often in an abstract manner, it is the pedagogical practices that effectively materialise their meanings and their social functions. They are devices that interweave, mix and become confused with one another in the respective discourse and the actions themselves.

In pedagogical practices, the knowledge humanity has built during its history is shared, recreated and invented for new generations. The classroom, in turn, is the nucleus in which the professional educators carry out their daily tasks, organizing the school time and spaces in their aspect of being public dimensions. Pedagogical practices are usually how the curriculum and the plans and programmes stop being mere intentions and come into real effect.

Pedagogical practices are also imbued with the authority, mark, visions of the world, knowledge and experience of the teachers and students, cut across by the conceptions, concepts and prejudices of their actors. Inclusive pedagogical practices demand the confrontation of historical, conservative practices of discrimination, exclusion, competition, homogenisation, regulation and classification that are still widely present in various social spheres, including the school.

Pedagogical practices are by far the best indicator for observing whether inclusive education is being put into effect. If the analysis is based on the point of view of just one teacher or other school actor, then the inclusive experience could be just an isolated or individual fact, but when it embraces an entire education network the focus is on the collective action, on the efforts of the administrators to disseminate references and create

suitable conditions for pedagogical practices to effectively occur and also on efforts of the teachers, as well as their commitment and creativity to ensure that learning is extended to all, with no discrimination whatsoever.

The present research sought to map extensive and intensive indicators, as well as quantitative and qualitative ones to identify tendencies in inclusive education implementation in the networks while at the same time, taking a close look at practices. Thus, the study could observe trends in the ways of operationalising and in problem solving. Thus, finding alternatives, gaps and challenges became apparent in the pedagogical practices. Close attention to the intrinsic relations between micro and macro aspects brings the great questions and dilemmas of the education for all policies to light.

For better understanding on how the public schools have endeavoured to develop, implement and disseminate inclusive pedagogical practices, it is essential to understand how they have accepted national as guiding principles and how they and their schools organize themselves in such a way as to guarantee that their pedagogical practices are truly and effectively inclusive. Given that context in which efforts are made to provide general guidance, infrastructure, human resources and teaching resources, to what extent do all those efforts and all that investment materialise in the form of high quality inclusion for the students in all the education levels and modalities?

It cannot be denied that the municipalities targeted by the research have various positive indicators regarding access, infrastructure, the professional qualification offer, articulation strategies and the sharing of inclusive values and principles. All the national effort, however, the efforts of the public-school networks, can only fully come to fruition in the daily round of the classroom. It is the pedagogical practices that are the ultimate representation of the guarantee of the right to education.

In the surveyed municipalities, it was possible to verify different degrees of incorporation of the inclusive education policy in the pedagogical practices. The following practices were among those identified in the regular classrooms:

- Different, complementary, coordinated activities were carried out on a common theme.
- Students that were contemplated by special education carried out the same activities, according to their capabilities, as all the other students.
- Students that were contemplated by special education remained in the classroom, but without any activity that might make a significant contribution to curricular learning.
- Students that were contemplated by special education carried out adapted activities related to the theme being addressed by the group.
- Students that were contemplated by special education carried out adapted activities unrelated to the theme being addressed by the whole class.
- Students that were contemplated by special education carried out activities proposed by the care taker, by the support professional, by the trainee or by the SEA teacher.
- Students that were contemplated by special education carried out activities proposed by the SEA teacher.
- Students that were contemplated by special education left the classroom to attend the SEA.
- During regular class time, students that were contemplated by special education were in other school spaces, alone, or accompanied.
- All students in the classroom carried out activities proposed by two teachers in the double teacher modality of teaching.
- Interpreters translated the class into LIBRAS.
- Although there were deaf students in the class, there were no interpreters.

- A deaf instructor was in charge of all the students in the LIBRAS class.
- Students that were contemplated by special education carried out the same activities as the others with the help of accessible teaching materials and technological assistance resources.
- Students that were contemplated by special education carried out the same activities as the others, but without the help of accessible teaching materials or technological assistance resources.
- Students that were contemplated by special education did not carry out any activity at all.
- Students that were contemplated by special education interacted with the other students.
- Students that were contemplated by special education did not interact with the other students.
- Students that were contemplated by special education interacted with the other students in homogeneous groups.
- Students that were contemplated by special education interacted with the other students in heterogeneous groups.

Despite being contrary to inclusive education principles, some of those practices were observed *in loco* in some schools that were visited. It was found that they occurred in those public schools, where there were notable weaknesses in the aspects of inclusive education policies that directly influence pedagogical practices such as:

- restricted and intermittent offer of continuous qualification to different professionals, but especially to pedagogical coordinators and teachers in regular classrooms;
- little accountability of the pedagogical coordinator regarding curriculum, planning, monitoring and evaluation of inclusive pedagogical practices;
- administrative team with little knowledge or involvement regarding inclusive education pedagogical proposals;
- students attending SEA in the same shift as the regular class, which makes the SEA a replacement service and not a complementary one;
- Departments of Education, school administrators and regular classroom teachers and families of students' attribute responsibility for the management and implementation of inclusive education in the school almost exclusively to the SEA teacher;
- sectors of the Department of Education responsible for inclusive education policies with low levels of articulation with the sectors responsible for the different education levels and modalities and non-transversal performance contrary to the recommendations of the *National Policy on Special Education in the perspective of Inclusive Education* (Brasil. MEC/SEESP, 2008c);
- insufficient systematic, longitudinal monitoring of inclusive pedagogical practices in the schools and of the learning achievements of students that are contemplated by special education:
 - processes for the registration, systematisation and dissemination of inclusive pedagogical practices are insufficient, lack clearly defined guidelines for the whole public-school network and are conducted in an informal manner;
 - little provision of inclusive teaching material in accessible formats or of technological assistance;
 - multidisciplinary teams are more concerned with clinical and rehabilitation aspects;
 - resistance on the part of regular classroom teachers;
 - insufficient actions directed at raising awareness and sensitivity as part of the effort to construct a culture of inclusion in the schools; and
 - low prestige attributed to area of special education in the structure of the Departments of Education.

It must be stressed that many of the municipalities have already totally or partially overcome the obstacles pointed to above regarding inclusive pedagogical practices. Indeed, many inspiring examples and situations were identified with good inclusive pedagogical practices in operation. Some of them are listed below:

'One example is of an autistic student who is completing higher secondary education. We worked intensely with him alongside the support team about five years ago. It was a great challenge because we had to work with the family and we joined together in creating strategies to communicate with the student; the teachers were orientated as to how they should deal with a student with autism, improving the student's practice.' (Person responsible for inclusive education in the municipality)

'My son is in the second year and he has a severe motor disability, He studied the pre-school year in a private school and then he was enrolled in this school. He has been very welcome in this public school. His development over the last two years has been great. He is learning everything. To carry out his activities, here and at home, he uses the notebook available in the special resources room. Before the class, all his activities are prepared in digital versions by his SEA teacher, and afterwards they are printed out and registered in a notebook just like the other students of his class' (Mother of a student)

'In one class where there is a blind student, all the students have learned Braille and they even use books in Braille and ordinary books for their reading activities. In another class, the use of magnifying devices to make reading easier for students with poor sight has also turned out to be useful for students with writing problems such as changing the places of letters in words.' (Pedagogical coordinator)

'My daughter studies in an inclusive class and she has made friends with a classmate who has cerebral palsy. Once she was given the task of writing a report on a classmate. She interviewed her friend and described her in the report. I was greatly impressed by the care and affection with which she wrote about her. She simply described her friend; the disability took second place.' (Father of a student with no disabilities who studies in an inclusive classroom)

'We have worked with inclusion in the adult education class. The deaf students have an interpreter and the blind students are accompanied. In other words, the same care is taken with the students in the night classes as with those in the day classes. There were some students finishing their lower secondary education in the "Projovem" classes as well. And the students with disabilities take part in all the activities. Just recently there was a poetry recital for example.' (School principal)

'Working Groups (WG) have been organized in the network made up of representatives of different schools, functions and education levels. They meet to study and discuss common doubts and needs detected in the public-school network. One of the fruits of the WG has been the Department of Education document that re-dimensioned the auxiliary teacher policy.' (Coordinator of special education)

'Here we plan the work beforehand and together. For example, let's say in the case of a blind student the teacher is going to teach concepts related to fractions. She requests material in Braille and materials to help elaborate the concepts associated to fractions. We acquire the material and we (of the SEA) make sure that the student can work with the same things as the other students in the classroom and at the same time... I have a commitment to the family and to the teacher. I have to help the teacher with resources.' (SEA teacher)

Inclusive bilingual education in Rio Branco

In Rio Branco the project *Projeto Escola Acessível: Caminho para o Bilinguismo* (Accessible school: the way to bilingualism) aims at achieving wider communication among deaf students, students with hearing deficiency and hearing students and to create conditions so that everyone – students, teachers, administrative staff and other school staff – can all communicate by means of LIBRAS. The project was influenced by the Office of the Public Prosecutor. The Department of Education signed a Term of Conduct Adjustment with that body whereby it committed itself to implement bilingual education in all the schools in the municipality by the year 2021. By the end of 2014 there were 14 schools involved in the project, six more than originally planned. Nine of the fourteen schools have deaf students.

According to the statements of the Special Education Teachers Group of the Department of Education, the project has been a highly positive experience in including deaf students. One of the teachers from the group put it this way:

'The project is already making a difference; the deaf child is no longer isolated and is truly being included. It is no longer just a group of deaf students that speak LIBRAS; the other students and the teachers have acquired a basic knowledge of it and that means the deaf are no longer isolated. In the regular school, the deaf students have the regular class teacher, the interpreter, the deaf LIBRAS instructor, the administrative staff; a series of different approaches for the same student. Not like the special school. None of this existed there. We are on the right track. Today, our struggle is to achieve the inclusive bilingual school and that is an idea that I share.'

The Inclusive education coordinator in Rio Branco explained that SEA provision in the alternative shift to the student's study period occurs more frequently for the deaf students than other students with disabilities – five times a week in fact – because they consider that those students require more time to learn the languages. The SEA teaches written Portuguese and the students learn LIBRAS as a first language with deaf instructors. They also study the curricular subjects in LIBRAS, complementing what is being done in the regular classroom.

In the regular classroom, the teacher has the presence of an interpreter who is also qualified in pedagogy and he or she does the interpreting and helps to mediate the pedagogical situations. Those two teachers plan the classes and develop the teaching and learning materials. According to the Inclusive Education coordinator:

"Learning is not an easy task for deaf students so we need to provide extra attention and support for the SEA teacher and the regular classroom teacher."

4.5 Inclusive, Accessible Teaching Materials

Including students with disabilities, ASD, GDD, as well as gifted/talented ones in the regular school means that accessibility strategies and accessible resources must be defined to enable their learning to take place.

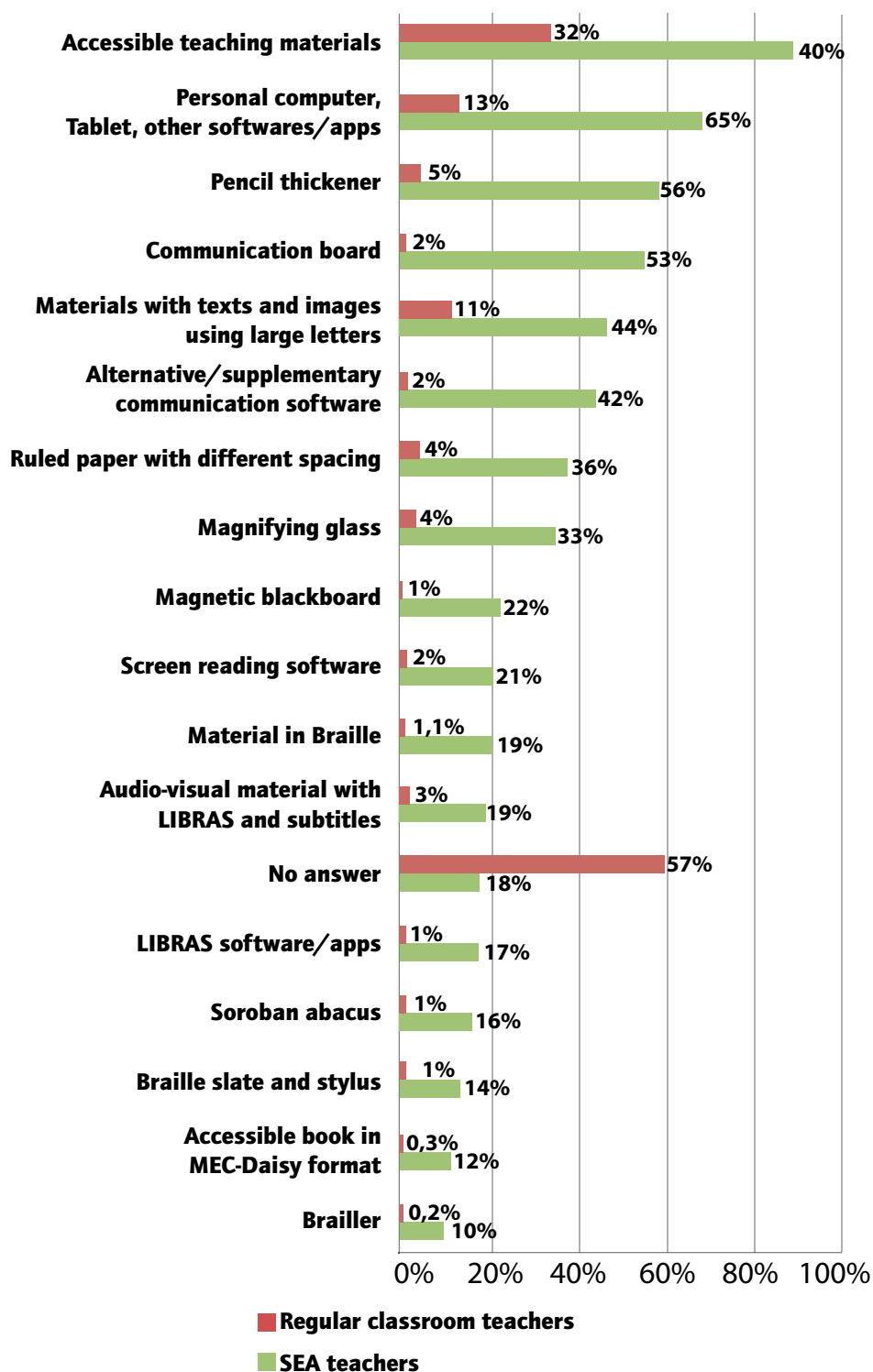
There are various statements registering the offer of opportunities for capacity building in accessible materials production and the use of assistance technology. In addition, it was possible to observe *in loco* many accessible materials produced by the SEA teachers and the regular classroom teachers as well.

Another fact observed was that the municipal school networks received inclusive, accessible teaching materials for their multiple-resource rooms by means of a specific Ministry of Education programme. Few municipalities made mention

of adhering to any other federal programmes that supply materials in accessible formats, usually only for persons with vision impairment, such as the National Accessible School Book Programme (*Programa Nacional do Livro Didático Acessível*). The PDDE programme (Direct Transfer of Funds to Schools Programme), for example, would make it possible for schools to acquire accessible materials according to the specific needs identified in each establishment.

When SEA teachers and regular classroom teachers were questioned about the use of accessible resources, their answers were very diverse as Chart 16 clearly illustrates.

Chart 16: Which of the resources listed below are used in your pedagogical practices?



Source: Research survey questionnaire administered to SEA teachers and regular classroom teachers, 2015.

Chart 16 reveals the glaring deficiency of various forms of accessible teaching materials in different formats in all the municipalities embraced by the research, especially in the regular classrooms. Comparing that to the (non-accessible) teaching resources available to the other students in the networks then we have a situation of explicit discrimination and that jeopardises the learning processes of the students contemplated by special education and hinders the performance of inclusive pedagogical practices and the equalisation of opportunities that the different Brazilian legal reference frameworks foresee.

Florianópolis – producing accessible teaching materials

The Support Centre for Persons with Visual Disabilities (*Centro de Apoio para Atendimento às Pessoas com Deficiência Visual – CAP*) is a decentralised Ministry of Education initiative producing accessible resources for blind students and those with impaired vision in the Florianópolis municipal public-school network. It supplies the materials on request from the Multifunctional Rooms (*Salas Multimeios*) as the Multiple Function Resource Rooms are called in that municipality. In the field research, a person responsible for coordinating it described the work carried out by the Centre:

'This is a centre for producing textbooks not just for Florianópolis, but also for another 13 municipalities in the state of Santa Catarina. We produce books in Braille or in audio versions and some other materials according to the needs of the blind students. In our region, there are 14 such students altogether. We also produce material with extra-large print for students with vision impairment whenever we get a request from a school. Our work is coordinated with the work in the schools and our direct contact is with the multifunctional rooms.'

In addition, the Centre promotes capacity-building activities for the teachers to enable them to work in Braille with their students. According to a representative of the coordinating body:

'Whenever necessary we provide capacity building to enable all the teachers who have blind students to make use of Braille. They learn how to use Braille Fácil (Easy Braille). We foresee for next year the need to work more closely with such teachers. Whenever a teacher feels it is necessary, he or she comes here. We carry out this work together.'

One of the obstacles encountered is that the request for material is often untimely and there is not enough time for the student to receive and accompany the content together with the rest of the class:

'Our difficulty is that we ask the teachers to plan beforehand so that the student can have the material in hand at the same time as all the others. Next year we will be holding meetings in the schools with all members of the school teams so that we can explain to them why we ask them to do that planning. It is not for us to inspect or evaluate. The student has a right to the same material as everyone else; pre-school literature for example. If we want the student to be able to draw, create, develop his sense of touch, his imagination, so that he can design, create his representations....'

4.6 Student Learning Assessment

In the municipalities covered by the research, information was gathered regarding the evaluation strategies used to evaluate the learning of students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and gifted/talented students.


This is a central issue for understanding the inclusive pedagogical practices in operation. It was found that the production of reports, dossiers and daily registrations of those students' learning is actually a fairly widespread practice among the surveyed networks. Such strategies reveal the existence of a tendency to value processual accompaniment and that makes it possible to monitor learning progress, adapt the pedagogical planning and perceive any eventual need for redirecting methodologies or practices or any other aspect.

During the analysis of those registrations and materials there were some showing that the evaluation had been made in common with all students, others were in the form of reports and portfolios registering the student's experience in the regular classroom and in the SEA classes together with SEA service plans and specific information regarding disabilities. This kind of assessment usually involves staff with different professional qualifications that work with the students in question.

Other municipalities structured specific instruments for the evaluation of students contemplated by special education usually based on vaguely remembered facts and with an emphasis on clinical, psychological and behavioural aspects, but with few or no pedagogical indicators cited. This latter perspective is loaded with traces of the special school model focussed on the disability, incapacity and the socialisation of those students.


In many instances, the formal evaluations made by the education networks and the schools, which ought to be instruments applicable to all the students enrolled, exclude the students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and high ability/giftedness from the evaluation processes.

There were also other versions of that situation observed in which students contemplated by special education take part in the formal evaluations, but the results are not registered in the students' report cards or their schooling records.



'My son is already literate, he is intelligent, he goes to school, does all his tasks, takes the tests gets a grade, but he receives a report that is entirely empty. So that makes it very difficult, even for me, to persuade him that he needs to study and needs to do the exercises. So, I asked, "Why is that since he took the tests?" [The teacher replied] "No, it is because he is "special", he is registered as a student with autism...." He has autism by name, he has Asperger's syndrome, but I study alongside him, I go to school with him... My son was highly frustrated. He asked to see his report and it had absolutely no entries. So, he was highly upset by that.' (Mother of a student)

In all the municipalities covered by the study the representatives of the Municipal Departments of Education reported concern for the participation of students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and gifted/talented students in external national evaluations. Regarding the development of evaluations in more accessible formats, it was reported that the Federal Government evaluations presuppose the existence of suitable conditions and accessibility for them to be conducted, such as, longer time allowed, the presence of an interpreter, oral tests, and so on. In the case of evaluations run by the states, the situation varies. In one municipality, the person responsible for education declared that the evaluation conducted by the state does not have the necessary type of material available for all the different forms of disability and emphasised that:



'They still have not grasped the need for adaptation. There was one unusual incident. We requested that the test should be presented in extra-large type. They sent us extra-large paper with the test in the same regular type.'

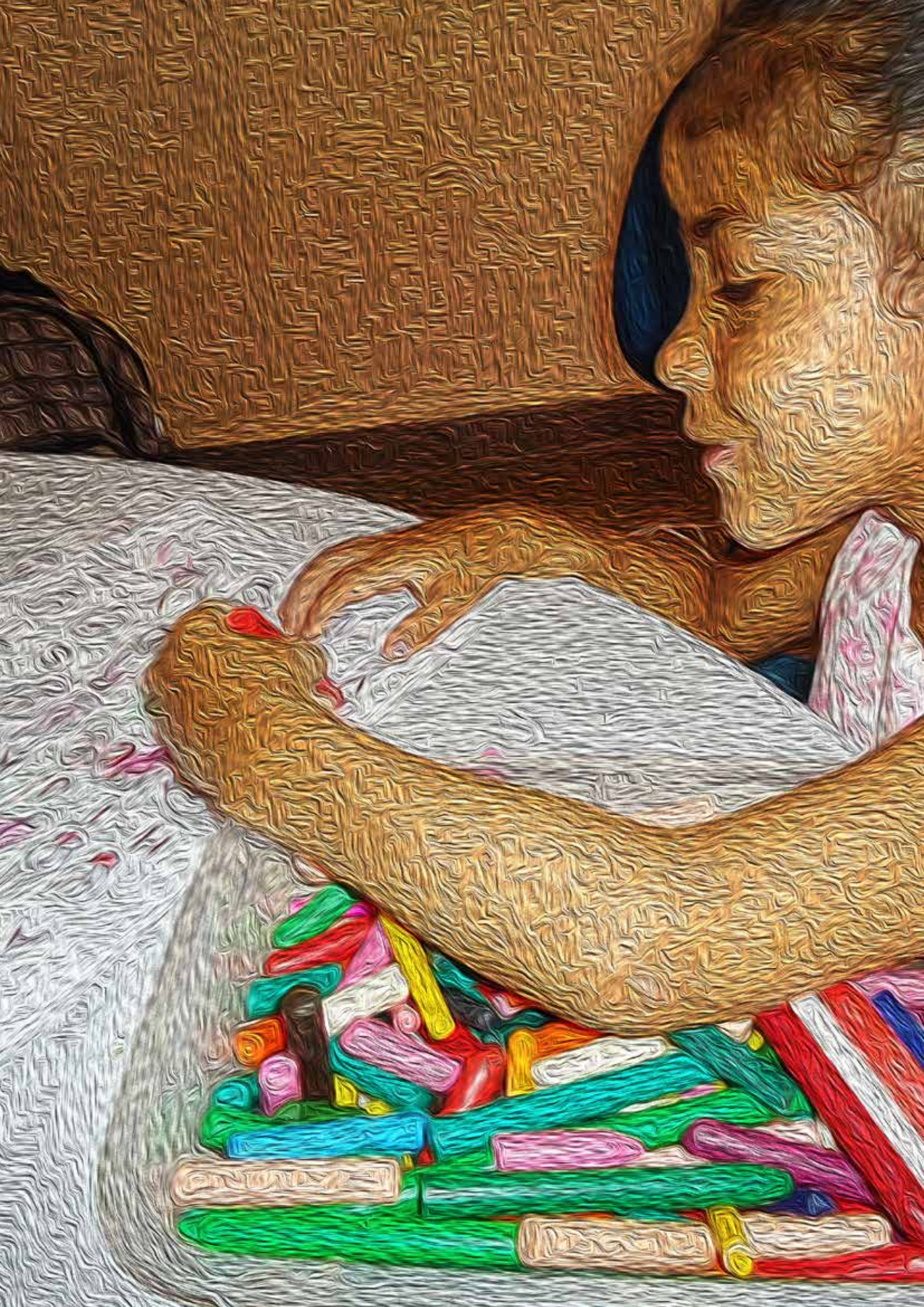
However, in the questionnaires that were administered to pedagogical coordinators, regular classroom teachers and SEA teachers, only 50% of the respondents declared that students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and high ability/giftedness actually participate in those evaluations. The other 50% was divided between those who stated that there was no such participation and those that failed to answer the question. The figures are set out in Table 9 below.

Table 9: Do students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and high ability/giftedness participate in external evaluations (*Prova Brasil, SAEB, Provinha Brasil, etc.*)?

Responses/ Target audience	Pedagogical coordinators	SEA teachers	Regular classroom teachers
Yes	47%	50%	50%
No	27%	16%	15%
Do not know	4%	5%	16%
It depends	7%	12%	6%
No answer	15%	17%	13%

Source: Research survey questionnaires administered to pedagogical coordinators, regular classroom teachers and SEA teachers, 2015.

The survey data show that the assessments of students with disabilities, ASD, GDD and gifted/talented students reveal how many barriers still must be overcome regarding accessibility, their permanence in school and their learning. On the one hand, the study observed the use of multiple, processual assessment strategies that could generate non-discriminating and non-categorising practices that highlight the student's context, trajectory and learning progress, more detailed analysis of the pedagogical practices reveals mechanisms of exclusion and disbelief in learning ability and access to the regular curriculum in the public-school networks even when they have abandoned the practice of special schools and special classes.



Closing Remarks

The success of the policies, programmes and projects in the field of inclusive education does not depend exclusively on the validity of its principles and goals or even on the resources invested in it, but much more on the institutional and social architecture within which they develop. Thus, inclusive education implementation does not imply that there is only a single 'up> down' way to achieve it; instead, it depends on articulations and negotiations among the several spheres that compose the public-school networks: administrative bodies of the central government and individual schools as well as other entities involved in education provision such as education committees, disabled persons committees, legal system professionals, etc. It also depends on structuring support networks and inter-sector articulations to address the different aspects associated to the educational inclusion of persons with disabilities. Thus, to come into effect, inclusive education must be able to count on not only the interventions of government bodies, but also the adherence of the community and the effective existence of a will for collective action.

The interactions of inclusive education take place in a field of asymmetrical relations involving actors with different traditions, representations and working agendas. From that it follows that including children, young people and adults with disabilities, ASD, GDD and gifted /talented ones in regular schools calls for organizational strategies and the allocation of adequate resources and it is also necessary to consider that there are certain 'intangible' elements that have an influence on such situations. Social imagery's representations of persons with disabilities, their right to education and their learning possibilities indicate a field for intervention of fundamental importance on building a culture of inclusion. It must also be stressed that it is not just the person contemplated by special education that is excluded from the regular school, but also many people with other singular characteristics or differences.

Administering an inclusive education policy involves a high degree of complexity felt within the education system management, in building strategies for sharing concepts, practices, values and meanings related to inclusive education, and in developing inclusive pedagogical practices.

In that context, it must be understood that the changes in the education systems in a perspective that is inclusive and for all does not exclusively obey the will of the actors involved, nor is it the mechanical result of policy implementation. In either case, the premise of rationality (whether individual or systemic) fails to consider the relational nature of the institutions and their constituent tensions. Furthermore, even the institutional transformations are not built by the application of policies alone nor are the latter the unequivocal result of rationally informed decisions.

Considering all the different levels, stages and modalities of education systems it is of fundamental importance to make a careful assessment of the role of the schools. They are not mere entities for executing the recommendations established by an inclusive education policy. The difficulties they have in successfully administering the implementation process cannot merely be attributed to 'policy application mistakes'. The meaning of the inclusive policy proposals may become diluted in the mesh of innumerable devices and interactions that are present in pedagogical practices. Nevertheless, it is that mesh that constitutes the place in which inclusive education can be built.

Understanding the dynamics of the interactions and negotiations among the federal entities (especially the Ministry of Education), the Municipal Departments of Education and the schools, requires an effort to carefully examine the relations between micro and macro aspects, as well as those between the education policy and its correspondences and discrepancies in the particular interactions that define school life.

In the same way, to understand the peculiarities of the exchanges that take place in the public-school networks it is indispensable to understand the interaction between the characteristics of the organising structures and the attitudes, interests, roles and behaviours of individuals and groups.

Defining a new place for the student with disabilities, ASD, GDD and gifted/talented students means definitively ousting the excluding, discriminatory and segregating models installed in the special schools and the special classes. Inclusive education cannot be developed as, or confounded with a mere transposition of the places, models and timeframes of the special schools to the environment and logic of the regular schools. Avoiding that requires the interpellation of administrators, teachers, technical staff, and other education professionals as well as the families and the community. Inclusive education delineates new questions to be addressed insofar as it approaches and focuses on the different subjects of the institutions: there are relations that could feasibly constitute a space for the construction of identities susceptible to accepting and valuing differences.

It must not be forgotten that the radical nature of the changes that inclusive education proposes presume that whatever time is necessary will be allowed for their implementation and for the development of strategies that will lead to the consolidation of new ways of learning and interacting with students with disabilities, ASD, GDD, and gifted/talented students. In that context, the present research set out to analyse education policy implementation, focusing on the inter-relations among policies, national inclusive education programmes and municipal education networks and at the same time to observe how those initiatives materialise in the schools, in inclusive teaching and pedagogical practices and in the learning and educational experiences of students with disabilities, ASD, GDD, and of gifted/talented students.

The study of those articulations in their various aspects, dimensions and contradictions has made it possible to get beyond the discourse and the intentions to identify both the important advances achieved and the urgent challenges to be met, without which the right to good quality education for all will not encounter the conditions for it to come in to effect.

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