

**EDUCATION, INCLUSION, AND QUALITY. THE SPEECHES OF
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND THE EVALUATION POLICIES IN
RECENT ARGENTINA**

***EDUCAÇÃO, INCLUSÃO E QUALIDADE. OS DISCURSOS DAS ORGANIZAÇÕES
INTERNACIONAIS E AS POLÍTICAS DE AVALIAÇÃO NA ARGENTINA RECENTE***

***EDUCACIÓN, INCLUSIÓN Y CALIDAD. LOS DISCURSOS DE LOS ORGANISMOS
INTERNACIONALES Y LAS POLÍTICAS DE EVALUACIÓN EN LA ARGENTINA
RECIENTE***

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ABSTRACT: The article proposes to analyze the meanings of inclusion from the approach of international organizations and the way in which these are expressed in the orientation of national education policies. To this end, it addresses the proposals for educational inclusion that are part of the development agendas of UNESCO and the OEI and investigates the link between these discourses and the orientation of evaluation policies in recent Argentina. In order to understand both issues, the meanings assumed by inclusive education and promoted by these agencies to link it, at present, to key concepts such as quality and learning are analyzed. In this sense, the article focuses on one of the main dimensions of inclusive education which refers to the relevance of education in terms of learning achievements and its measurement through standardized assessment programmes, issues which have acquired renewed interest in Argentina's educational policies within the framework of the conservative restoration.

KEYWORDS: Inclusive education. International organizations. Assessment policies. Argentina.

RESUMO: O artigo propõe analisar os significados da inclusão a partir da perspectiva das organizações internacionais e a forma como estes são expressos na orientação das políticas nacionais de educação. Para tanto, aborda propostas de inclusão educacional que fazem parte das agendas de desenvolvimento da UNESCO e da OEI, e investiga a ligação entre esses discursos e a orientação das políticas de avaliação na Argentina recente. A fim de compreender ambas as questões, analisamos os significados que a educação inclusiva assumiu e que foram promovidos por estas agências a fim de vinculá-la, no momento atual, a conceitos-chave como qualidade e aprendizagem. A este respeito, o artigo se concentra em uma das principais dimensões da educação inclusiva que se refere à relevância da educação em termos de resultados de aprendizagem e sua medição através de programas de avaliação padronizados,

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questões que adquiriram interesse renovado nas políticas educacionais da Argentina dentro da estrutura da restauração conservadora.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Educação inclusiva. Organizações internacionais. Políticas de avaliação. Argentina.*

RESUMEN: *El artículo propone analizar los sentidos de la inclusión desde el enfoque de los organismos internacionales y el modo en que aquellos se expresan en la orientación de las políticas educativas nacionales. Para ello, se abordan las propuestas de inclusión educativa que integran las agendas de desarrollo de la UNESCO y la OEI, y se indaga en la vinculación de estos discursos con la orientación de las políticas de evaluación en la Argentina reciente. Para comprender ambas cuestiones, se analizan los significados que ha asumido la educación inclusiva y que han sido promovidos por tales agencias para vincularla, en la actualidad, a conceptos claves como son el de calidad y aprendizaje. En este sentido, el artículo focaliza en una de las dimensiones principales de la educación inclusiva que refiere a la pertinencia de la educación en términos de logros de aprendizaje y de su medición a través de programas de evaluación estandarizados, cuestiones que han adquirido renovado interés en las políticas educativas de la Argentina en el marco de la restauración conservadora.*

PALABRAS CLAVES: *Educación inclusiva. Organismos internacionales. Políticas de evaluación. Argentina.*

Introduction

In recent decades, the extension of the right to education in terms of inclusion has become one of the central objectives of the development agendas of most multilateral organizations. In its statements and proposals, inclusive education presents itself as a privileged way to achieve universal education in terms of access and learning and, therefore, to favor the processes of social inclusion. In this sense and progressively, the focus on educational inclusion has moved away from restrictive versions that, in its origins, linked it to the integration and assimilation of subjects with special educational needs, in order to approach broader perspectives in terms of incorporating all children and youth to the system, regardless of the subjects' particular conditions. Along with this process, the concern with learning has become increasingly relevant, and its most recent definitions have been oriented towards the idea of quality, understood by students as the acquisition of relevant and valid learning according to needs of today's productive and scientific world, as well as the learning that can be measured. This perspective on inclusive education was supported and encouraged by traditional agencies with interference in the educational field worldwide such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Likewise, it was taken up and promoted by regional organizations such as the Organization of Ibero-American States for Education,

Science and Culture (OEI), which for decades has been generating, in Ibero-American countries, initiatives aimed at the extension of education as in line with UNESCO's development principles and programs.

From their research and programs, and from their enormous capacity for dissemination at a global level, international organizations have become key players with participation in discussions on education issues at the national level; thus, expressing important variations in the composition and power relations between the different groups that intervene in the definition of national educational policies. In fact, it intervenes in the intensification of the processes of political convergence worldwide, defining not only what is considered for educational improvement, but also in the actions and measures necessary to achieve it. They act as protagonists of the negotiation process and definition of the set of themes that integrate the global educational agenda that operates as a guiding framework for government reforms (DALE, 2002; 2007; BALL, 2014).

However, it is not possible to establish a development vis a vis between the meanings linked by international organizations and the orientation of national educational policies, it is undeniable the gravitation that their speeches had (not without tension) over the last three decades on the educational agenda in the Argentina, making its impact on the orientation that evaluation policies took in the context of the recent conservative restoration during the government of President Mauricio Macri (2015-2019)³ more visible. In this sense, the purpose of the article is to analyze the meanings of the educational inclusion proposals present in the development programs of international organizations with participation in the global and regional educational sphere, in the interest of focusing the linking of these speeches on Argentina's recent governmental agenda. To this end, attention is drawn to the way in which UNESCO and the OEI have conceptualized the meanings of inclusive education to link it, at present, to key concepts such as quality and learning. In this line, the article aims at one of the main dimensions of inclusive education that refers to the quality and relevance of education in terms of learning achievements and is directly linked to the centrality that assessment programs acquire in their agendas. Regarding the evaluation proposals, countries like Argentina have shown special interest in recent years, not only reformulating previous and wide-ranging experiences, but also designing new ways of operating and encouraging the country's participation in global and regional initiatives such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

³ Mauricio Macri wins the presidential election in December 2015 under the national political coalition called Alianza Cambiemos.

and the regional tests of the Latin American Laboratory for the Evaluation of Educational Quantity (LLECE) of UNESCO, which at the time was transformed into education management and regulation instruments. However, since the 1990s, these experiences have played an important role in debates and proposals for educational policy at national level, especially during the 2015-2019 period when they gained momentum in the governmental agenda. To a large extent, this momentum coincides with the global educational agenda, defined largely by lines of action from the world of international organizations.

The empirical basis of the article is the study of official and relevant documents from UNESCO and the OEI elaborated and published since the 1990s, but above all, since the beginning of the 21st century, and the norms and documents of the evaluation policies at national level in the period. The presentation is organized into three sections. First, the guidelines and proposals on educational inclusion are characterized from the perspective of both organizations; in this regard, there is an exposition on the historical trajectory of such a notion and its progressive links with the idea of quality. Secondly, the orientation of educational evaluation policies at national level that are closely related to the provisions of UNESCO and OEI is analyzed, paying special attention to the management period developed in the context of conservative restoration in Argentina. Finally, reflections on the scope of the educational inclusion proposals of international organizations are made, and some considerations are made regarding the complex process by which initiatives of this nature participate, or at least try, in the discussion and structuring of government agendas.

Proposals for inclusive and quality education at UNESCO and OEI

In the educational sphere of the last decades, international organizations participate in the process of defining national policies aimed at improving education (MUNDY, 2007; JAKOBY; MARTENS, 2007; BONAL *et al.*, 2007; SANTOS; PETOUR, 2019). Through the production and circulation of research and programs, as well as financing credits for its execution, they intervene in the creation and diffusion of a certain social imaginary, on the educational improvement and on the instruments necessary to achieve it, collaborating with the intensification of the processes political convergence worldwide (CARUSO; TENORTH, 2011). It should be noted that the capacity of international organizations to influence national policies varies not only between countries of greater or lesser economic development, but also in relation to the historical and power configuration of each organization. In fact, both the mechanisms of influence and the magnitude of their effects are not only uneven among the

agencies, but also among the countries receiving their recommendations, technical assistance, financing, etc. (DALE, 2007). However, in addition to these differences, the literature on the historical transformations of educational multilateralism agrees to highlight its influence both in the delimitation of meaning of the world order, which currently converges with the neoliberal interests of globalization and worldwide spread of capital (MUNDY, 2007; JONES, 2007). Thus, they highlight the relevant place of international organizations in defining the themes that conform to the global agenda, which acts to guide local and national educational reforms (DALE, 2002; 2007; BALL, 2014).

However, the proposals of the multilateral agencies are not homogeneous, there is a consensus to consider education as one of the priority areas of intervention to obtain the economic, political, and social development of the countries. In this sense, achieving universalization of the primary and secondary levels, the reduction of illiteracy and the search for quality in terms of learning achievements, are currently goals shared by almost all organizations, in close relationship with the political discourse of capital appreciation which they also encourage and legitimize (BONAL *et al.*, 2007).

In fact, it was from the 1990s that the expansion of the years of schooling of the population worldwide and the improvement of teaching in terms of learning turned into the main purposes of most international agendas. During the 2000s, these objectives and proposals were articulated in broader definitions such as the notion of inclusive education, which in the international discourse gained momentum and centrality. The search for inclusion has thus become one of the main axes of global actions in the field of education, and has been linked to access, permanence, participation, quality and success in the educational trajectories of all children and young people. In this regard, UNESCO has been configured as one of the agencies that has most given space to this notion; in fact, the materialization of the right to education was linked in its guidelines both with the incorporation and participation of sectors traditionally excluded from the sector, and with the creation of conditions that guarantee quality school paths in terms of learning.

Within the scope of the worldwide Education for All (EFA) initiative, UNESCO takes on a central role in promoting the right to education. In this regard, it should be noted that the EFA agenda assumed the commitment of the participating countries to extend the schooling years of their population and to improve the quality of education. It thus establishes itself in one of the main international references aimed at expanding formation opportunities within the scope of the concept of learning and throughout the life of education as a right (TORRES, 2000; 2018). Over time, and due to the advances achieved, EFA's original objectives and deadlines

have changed; in fact, it was in 2000 that a new meeting was held that led to the agreement to extend its purposes for another fifteen years (2015). The extended deadline coincided with the time stipulated for complying with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), adopted in 2000 at the United Nations. Since then, these new goals have set the course for the educational agenda of organizations such as UNESCO, which have subsumed the broader purposes of EFA to the general need to expand and improve the quality of schooling in countries (ibid.). In 2015, the MDGs were replaced by a new initiative also agreed within the framework of the United Nations General Assembly and called the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This program was endorsed by all Member States of the United Nations and consisted of 17 objectives to be achieved within 15 years, among which highlights the one aimed at guaranteeing inclusive, equitable and quality education and promoting learning opportunities throughout life for all (SDG 4). In relation to this, among the goals to be achieved within the framework of this objective, the one aimed at guaranteeing school trajectories at primary and secondary levels, and producing relevant and effective learning results, stands out.

Taken as a whole, the aforementioned initiatives affected the configuration of UNESCO's development agenda and guided the direction of definitions and actions linked to educational inclusion and quality, which gradually became central to their proposals (MUNDY, 2007; RAMBLA *et al.*, 2008; UNESCO, 2020). In parallel, from the organization itself, a whole series of spaces and events that operated as scenarios that nourished the senses granted to the inclusion of quality were also generated. In this regard, both notions were made explicit at the International Education Conference (IEC) of the year 2018, the purpose of which was to promote “quality educational systems, which are more inclusive and more sensitive to the enormous diversity of learning needs that arise over a lifetime” (MATSUURA, 2008, p. 3, our translation). Precisely, it was at such a meeting when inclusive and quality education was defined as that process oriented to respond to the diversity of students, favoring their participation and reducing exclusion in and from education (UNESCO, 2008). Thus, together with the purpose of guaranteeing access to education, the need to develop appropriate teaching environments in terms of learning opportunities and achievements was highlighted. Inclusive and quality education was considered a mechanism of change to achieve social inclusion; in this line, it was proposed the universalization of teaching, the improvement of school trajectories, and the search for “success” in terms of learning.

Taken together, these guidelines are progressively incorporated into the design of proposals and policies, whether associated with the generation of relevant curricula, or the development of dialogue between families and the community. Actions and measures aimed at

assessing school performance have also become relevant. In this regard, countries were encouraged not only to participate in international and regional evaluation experiences, such as the PISA tests or the LLECE tests, but also to consolidate their national evaluation systems as privileged mechanisms for reporting on the level and relevance of acquired learning (UNESCO, 2008; AINSCOW; MILES, 2008; OREALC-UNESCO/LLECE, 2008).

Thus, within the framework of the EFA and MDGs international agenda, inclusive and quality education is a guiding principle for achieving the effective integration of all students in the school, both in terms of access and learning. In this regard, two modifications should be highlighted. The first is linked to overcoming the debate about exclusive and conflicting options between special education and integration. The second, associated with the idea of thinking of educational institutions as spaces to include everyone (ethnic, gender, cultural and socioeconomic minorities, etc.), both in terms of access and participation, and in terms of the quality of teaching and learning. Inclusion under the new terms thus began to refer to the general and broader idea of quality education for all; Thereafter, UNESCO not only sought to expand the terms of access, passing from a group to all students, but also proposed an emphasis on the pertinence and relevance of the lessons taught in schools.

This particular look at inclusive and quality education has meant advancing in the design and development of measures aimed at universalizing and improving educational systems. Indeed, and as already noted, the proposals to diversify the school offer and the curricular spaces gained strength. In turn, assessment of learning was encouraged, especially through standardized and large-scale tests to measure school performance. Thus, a set of measures and actions were promoted to address the presence and permanence in the school, the participation in relation to the quality of the learning experience and the achievements in terms of learning processes and results. It was also proposed that actions be developed to respond to the diversity of children and young people through personalized education that takes into account their diverse social and cultural profiles (AINSCOW; MILES, 2008).

At the regional level, the perspective of inclusive and quality education promoted by UNESCO, adopted and disseminated by government cooperation agencies such as the OEI, which is not only aligned with the postulates of such an organization, but also assumes the commitments agreed in the world forums such as EFA, the MDGs and, currently, the SDGs. It is worth remembering that the themes linked to access have been part of the discourse of OEI's proposals since their origins, adding to the end of the 2000s quality as a problem associated with the pertinence of learning, in line with the centrality that acquires the perspective of inclusion with quality during this period. Precisely, it will be within the framework of the

celebration of the Bicentenary of Independence from Spain by the Latin American and Caribbean countries, when the OEI develops the “Educational Goals 2021” program approved at the XVIII Iberoamerican Summit in 2008. It is important to highlight that this plan was oriented to make the member countries comply during the period of 2011-2012 with the objectives of the EFA, which had been projected for the year 2015. In order to discuss goals, in 2010, the OEI celebrated a new Ibero-American Congress of Education entitled “Educational Goals 2021: the education we want for the generation of bicentennials” held in the City of Buenos Aires, and which operated as the anteroom of the XX Cumbre Iberoamericana “Educación e Inclusión social”, where the plan was finally approved (OEI, 2010). Thus, in the declaration of such a meeting, educational inclusion was defined as a development strategy to achieve the democratization of education systems and social inclusion. In fact, it was presented as a process to face “the outstanding educational challenges”, especially those related to literacy and basic education for young people and adults, access to education in general and the quality of education. Part of these definitions were previously stated at the 20th Education Conference in the same year, where education was proclaimed as an instrument for development, the fight against poverty and social cohesion. The commitment in favor of educational inclusion was also expressed and, in this line, it was maintained that the policies require the joint support of society, not just the State, to make their universalization effective under quality conditions.

Within this scenario, the “Educational Goals 2021” program was presented as the educational policy strategy of regional scope aimed at obtaining inclusive and quality systems (MARCHESI; BLANCO; HERNÁNDEZ, 2014). With changes in time, it was destined to fulfill a series of linked goals, fundamentally with the search for social participation in educational matters, with the expansion of opportunities for all, with the improvement of quality, with the evaluation of education systems, and with improved financing, among others. In order for countries to achieve these objectives, the OEI promoted and coordinated the so-called “Shared Action Programs”, among which stand out those linked to improving the quality of education. In this vein, and similarly to UNESCO's recommendations, the OEI encouraged countries to implement educational strategies aimed at developing and strengthening local evaluation programs, as well as participating in global and regional initiatives.

Next, the orientation of educational evaluation policies at national level that are closely related to the provisions of UNESCO and the OEI is analyzed, placing special attention in the sense that this link is adopted within the framework of conservative restoration in Argentina.

Evaluation policies in Argentina: from the integral approach to the revaluation of the measurement of learning

Although, as mentioned in the introduction, the links between the meanings promoted by international agencies on educational inclusion and the orientation of educational policies at the national level do not occur in a linear manner and are not exempt from mediation and conflict, it is possible to trace the characteristics of these speeches in the development of evaluation policies in Argentina.

Thus, from the 1990s, the impulses provided by international organizations both to extend the years of schooling of the population worldwide and to improve teaching in terms of learning, echoed in the reform processes of the time that affected the organization and the functioning of national education systems, and have also been replicated in different countries in the region (Brazil, Mexico, Colombia and Chile, among others).

In Argentina, the Federal Education Law (LFE no. 24,195) of 1993 provided that the Ministry of Education of the Nation, in coordination with the provincial jurisdictions, would permanently assess the quality of education as an indicator of so-called inclusion. Under this legal framework, the National Educational Quality Assessment System was created in 1995 and began to apply National Evaluation Operations (ONE) (NARODOWSKI *et al.*, 2002; GVIRTZ *et al.*, 2006). During these years, the country has also started to integrate global and regional assessment frameworks, according to the recommendations of international organizations. The data provided by these tests were considered a privileged indicator of the teachers' performance, establishing a causal relationship between the teachers who teach and the students who learn which puts the suitability of teachers and their training under suspicion (FEENEY; DIKER, 1998).

The arrival of the new century implied the promotion of discourses that link the quality of education with a rights perspective, in line with some of the definitions exposed by international organizations in this period on inclusion linked to access, permanence, participation, and creation conditions that guarantee quality school paths in terms of learning. In Argentina, under the “Kirchnerist” governments (2003-2007; 2007-2015) “inclusion with quality” became one of the main axes of educational policy at the time (BRENER; GALLI, 2016). From an official discourse, inclusion was considered as an act of social justice and quality as the result of integral actions aimed at guaranteeing the material conditions of education and the improvement of teaching and learning processes (FELDFEBER; GLUZ, 2019). As a result of this broader and more complex way of understanding quality, the evaluation distanced itself from reductionist interpretations that limited it to measuring income

and rendering accounts, in order to approach views that highlight its most formative and less technical aspects, such as expressed in the National Education Law (LEN No. 26,206) of the year 2006 in force. Under this norm, the evaluation policies extended their look not only to the results, but also to the context and conditions in which the teaching and learning processes are produced (PASCUAL; ALBERGUCCI, 2016). Thus, at that time, the implementation of research and alternative assessments for institutional diagnoses was promoted.

This more complex and comprehensive way of conceiving assessment continued to be accompanied by traditional ONE, which, to a large extent, failed to broaden their senses and were limited to measuring learning through standardized and large-scale tests. Something similar happened with the OECD PISA tests, which, in addition to internal discrepancies about participation or not, the country continued to integrate, although showing little interest in its data (RODRIGO, 2016; 2019). However, the truth is that within the scope of LEN and during the three “Kirchnerist” governments, the meanings adopted by the evaluation sought to expand in parallel with the redefinition of the notion of process quality, which, as we will show below, will again be restricted from 2015.

The arrival of President Mauricio Macri to power inaugurated a new historical situation for the country. Quickly, the economic adjustment and the progressive dismantling of social policies proceeded with important repercussions in the school field (GLUZ, 2019; FELDFEBER; GLUZ, 2019). In this sense, the concern with educational inclusion was associated with the issue of quality assessment, which became one of the key and transversal axes that articulated the educational policy of the time (RODRIGO, 2020). This trend has crystallized in a new institutional architecture that has placed the areas of evaluation and information of the system at a high level of hierarchy within the Ministry of Education, while new management programs and instruments have been designed, which have revalued the evaluation as the privileged device for inform and improve the processes of educational inclusion (RODRIGO; RODRÍGUEZ, 2020).

Regarding the first question, the creation of the Educational Evaluation Secretariat in 2015 gave the sector an unusual relevance, which assumed new hierarchies and functions in the area, expressed in an organization chart that reflects the priorities and alignments of the political agenda in question. The direction is in charge of an Evaluation Secretary, and has two directorates (the National Directorate for Quality and Educational Equity and the Apprenticeship for Learning Assessment) and three coordinators (Information Coordination: Federal Implementation Coordination and Methodological Coordination). The new institutionality created reflects, in effect, the priorities and alignments of the political agenda of

international organizations, and accounts for important changes in the assessment devices and tools, as well as the place given to the dissemination of data to obtain the objectives proposed to improve educational quality and equity.

The evaluation programs were promoted within the scope of the so-called National Evaluation System for Educational Quality and Equity, approved by the resolution of the Federal Council of Education (CFE)⁴ in 2016 (Resolution no. 280/16). SEEN's new management instrument was committed by all jurisdictions, and it was proposed to apply evidence in order to obtain “representative” and “quality” information. Hence the centrality that the issue of transmitting information about the results of the evaluations acquires in the official discourse with the aim of building “transparent”, “relevant” and “objective” information.

The national assessment system was organized into four areas of intervention. The first, linked to the design and application of national, regional and international evaluation programs; in this line, the traditional ONE were replaced by the “Learn” tests, as will be analyzed below. The second, associated with the processes of institutional self-assessment at the levels of compulsory education. The third, related to the evaluation of programs and projects by government agencies. Finally, the fourth is aimed at strengthening federal evaluation capacities.

In the same way and with the purpose of developing a comprehensive, inclusive and quality educational policy within the scope of organizing a work agenda between the national government and the provincials, the National Strategic Plan 2016-2021 “Argentina Teaches and Learns” was approved (CFE Resolution no. 285/16). In such a program, the concern for quality was linked to the learning obtained by the students. In fact, the aim was to achieve “quality education centered on learning, which provides all children and adolescents, young people and adults with socially significant knowledge and the capacities for their integral development under conditions of equality and respect for diversity” (PLAN ESTRATÉGICO NACIONAL, 2016, p. 3, our translation). At the level of learning, knowledge and skills obtained by students then become synonymous with quality of education.

The evaluation and use of information thus appear as privileged means for improving teaching and learning. In this sense, it is maintained that knowledge is a fundamental input for planning and decision-making at all levels of management, from the national and provincial to the school level. In short, the information provided by the tests, such as “timely” and “reliable”, would make it possible to monitor educational actions and anticipate obstacles and difficulties in their implementation, actions that are in accordance with the recommendations sustained and

⁴ The Federal Council of Education is the body for consultation, agreement and coordination of national education policy that seeks to ensure the unity and articulation of the Argentine educational system.

disseminated by international organizations such as the World Bank and the OECD (JAKOBI; MARTENS, 2007; VERGER; BONAL, 2011; PEREIRA, 2019).

In this context, the “learning” tests were presented as SEEN's privileged tool to revitalize the assessment. An important aspect to highlight is that, through its application, it was proposed to obtain periodic information for analysis and decision making on student performance at primary and secondary levels. Along with the “Learn” program, there was also progress in developing proposals to evaluate the teacher formation system, a plan unprecedented in the history of our country. These strategies were promoted not only at the national level, but also at the regional level, within a political scenario of suspicion and mistrust in relation to the work of teachers and their schools, as evidenced by international organizations such as the World Bank (2014) or “*Enseña por Argentina Program*”. (FRIEDRICH, 2014; AMARO, 2016). On the other hand, they tend to be oriented towards the establishment of associations between the level of teachers' performance and economic incentives, questioning and jeopardizing the stability that historically has distinguished the work of teachers in the countries of the region (ROCKWELL, 2018; FELDFEBER, 2016). Under this scenario, it was in the year 2017 that the country implemented the “Enseñar” operation, which consisted of a diagnostic evaluation of students in teacher formation institutions for compulsory education that was applied only once.

In this process of revitalizing the “culture of evaluation” carried out by SEEN, the dissemination of results and information has become a fundamental issue. The “Open Learning Consultation System” was created to improve access to educational information for “users” and the online processing of assessment databases. Along with the interest in the dissemination of results, there was a resurgence at the time, especially in the speeches of officials and politicians, of the intentions of publishing information by school as a mechanism for improving quality. It is worth noting that in Argentina this is a sensitive and controversial issue, as it is in tension with the ban on the publication of data obtained by institutions in use tests, as established in article 97 of the LEN which affects the publication of information related to research or educational assessment, and national law on the statistical system (No. 17,622). To a large extent, these tests are related to the intention to move towards the development of performance ratings between schools to give families more freedom to choose the type of education and to encourage competition between schools. In this sense, the political and media use that the publication of results involves has been an issue analyzed and that has shown its influence on the representations and assessments that the actors involved - families, teachers, directors and public officials - make of the system and themselves (RODRIGO, 2016; 2019).

Finally, international and regional operations promoted by international organizations played a key role in the improvement plan and the evaluation system. In this regard, we highlight the PISA tests and the LLECE assessments, which were considered during this administration as privileged parameters for reporting on quality at an international level. In this sense, it is interesting to note that PISA started to integrate the objectives of the educational plans proposed at the time (such as the so-called “*Plan Educativo Maestr@*” and its respective goals oriented to quality and evaluation⁵), as well as the promotion so that the jurisdictions participate as regions awarded in such an assessment.

Final considerations

This article sought to highlight the importance of the communication circuits built and legitimized by international organizations that seek to influence the diffusion of a particular educational horizon that, in turn, is presented as a universal reference to national and local problems. As the specialized literature highlights, in addition to the different macro and micro political contexts of the countries, the similarity in government programs and agendas is related to the complex process by which these organizations contribute to the institutionalization of certain ideologies, structures and practices that act as representatives of global values of the current system of domination and world politics in education (BONAL *et al.*, 2007).

In this line, it is possible to understand the current conceptualizations about the right to education in terms of educational inclusion, which have become “slogans” on the agendas of the world of multilateral cooperation. In this sense, not only access to education, but also its quality, in terms of the acquisition of relevant and effective learning, came to define this notion, giving impetus to the proposals for the evaluation of education in terms of programs to measure school performance.

However, as already pointed out, the impact of these speeches on the educational agenda at the national level does not occur in a linear way, since it is subject to local power relations and competing political approaches on social and educational issues. In this sense, since the arrival of the Mauricio Macri government in Argentina, at the end of 2015, there has been a strong neoliberal emphasis on the orientation of public policies in general and on education in particular, which has been a fertile ground for strengthening the definitions that predominate in global level on the quality of education as the “universal neutral”. From that moment on, the

⁵ This plan was presented as a bill (draft) that circulated during 2017 from the National Ministry of Education.

teaching and learning processes sought to be limited to the acquisition of knowledge and skills according to the needs of an increasingly flexible and competitive labor market, reflecting an attempt to install new meanings around educational inclusion, different from those seen during the twelve years of the Kirchnerist governments.

It seems that this is a characteristic of the hegemonic discourse of some multilateral organizations, which promote the implementation of measures aimed at inclusive education as a monolithic and unilateral response capable of solving the complexity of the multiple problems that make up inequality and social exclusion. The meritocratic perspective that places responsibility on the learning subjects themselves is legitimized by the ideology of equal opportunities, which promotes competition for merit and leads to the weakening of the vision of education as a social right (DUBET, 2011). From this approach, it is considered not only that free public education is the guarantee of education, but also the right to appropriate a wide range of knowledge that allows the construction of social relationships that transform the established order and hierarchies. Within this structure of the law, the notion of quality is included, but avoiding reducing excellence and measurement through tests, “as if the definition of 'educational quality' were just one, unquestionable and measurable through evaluation” (SVERDLICK, 2020, w/p, our translation).

In this line, it is also worth highlighting two aspects present in the hegemonic discourse of international organizations. The first refers to the frequent recommendations and initiatives to “measure” quality through standardized school performance assessment programs, which transfer and express the private sector management methods linked to the New Public Management Paradigm (FALABELLA, 2015). The second is related to proposals for diversification of financing that favor the privatization and commercialization of education, which are so frequent in Latin American scenarios, as recent research shows (FELDFEBER *et al.*, 2018; CASTELLANI, 2019). Together, these issues express neoliberal conceptions of public policy, which multilateral organizations help not only to export, but also to legitimize and reproduce at a global level.

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