



**Contextualizing the gender issues and inclusive education:
an analysis of the perceptions of Primary Education
teachers**

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Contextualizing gender issues and inclusive education: an analysis of the perceptions of primary education teachers

This study explores the experiences and perceptions of primary education teachers regarding the struggle for gender equality in schools located in an area in northern Spain. In addition, it also analyses the measures carried out in classrooms and schools to achieve this objective that are influenced by social and cultural factors, and does so within a scenario consisting of an inclusive school that advocates equality as one of its fundamental ethical principles. The study is included in the paradigm of qualitative research and eight teachers from three public schools were interviewed. The teachers expressed their broad dissatisfaction with the generally limited involvement of the schools and the educational community in promoting gender equality, which is influenced by different social and cultural dynamics. Lines of action are proposed that motivate teachers to take responsibility for their teaching practice in order to guarantee gender equality in a context of cultural diversity.

Keywords: gender equality; inclusive; perceptions; teachers; qualitative; social and cultural factors.

1. Introduction

Advancing toward a quality inclusive school model that promotes equal opportunities and gives diversity an enriching value entails the need for teachers and the educational community in general to adopt new ways of thinking (Ibrahim-Joseph and Lavia 2019; Sánchez Casalla 2018). In this panorama, teachers design the teaching–learning processes not geared toward the excellence of a few, but oriented toward achieving the maximum performance of all students. In this way, they adapt to their abilities in order to obtain a common benefit. The equal opportunities and diversity mentioned do not refer exclusively to students with specific needs for educational support since, within an inclusive school, all children must be considered (Ainscow 2016; Beach 2019). Inclusive education also deals with cultural diversity, gender diversity and equality, and the practical implications that all this implies, as highlighted

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2
3 by various authors in recent years (Meyer 2010; Shaeffer 2019). In this regard, people's
4
5 cultural background represents a powerful social influence that models the different
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7 expressions and ways of understanding gender equality issues, among others (Bleidorn
8
9 et al. 2013).
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12 Gender equality is a topic of great relevance today. This concept is the opposite
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14 to gender inequality, but not to gender difference, that is, it does not seek to end the
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16 differentiated features of men and women, but to eliminate the inequalities that are
17
18 justified by those differences (Vara and de Vera 2018). The equality of different
19
20 genders is a human right and is recognized as necessary for the development of societies
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22 (Psaki, McCarthy and Mensch, 2017). Indeed, the Spanish Constitution establishes that
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24 all citizens are equal before the law, regardless of their sex, origin, religion, or any other
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26 condition. Although numerous political initiatives have been launched to date, progress
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28 is uneven, insufficient and contradictory (Thébaud and Halcomb 2019).
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33 Within this context, educational institutions carry out the ambitious task of
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35 promoting spaces and actions in which the culture of equality becomes a reality beyond
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37 mere theoretical discourse, that is, it becomes part of educational reality. In this sense,
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39 Bordieu (2008) highlighted the reproductive nature of social dynamics and structures
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41 through language and discourses. Among other elements, school is one of the contexts
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43 that legitimizes the most dominant social paradigms. Schools therefore integrate
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45 mechanisms with the capacity to generate opportunities to recognize rights and gender
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47 differences (Bragg, Renold, Ringrose and Jackson 2018). Consequently, these should be
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49 constituted as places where there are no sexist beliefs and that are directed by the sense
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51 of social justice and values such as equality and equity. However, schools are
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53 reproductive and indebted to certain cultural systems, since these institutions reproduce
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55 their models and values.
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3 The socialization process has a strong influence on different aspects that the
4 school should not ignore. One of these elements is the construction of gender and sexual
5 identity, which is formed in intersubjectivity from interactions with significant people
6 who are the carriers of certain gender formats, especially unconscious ones (Allegranti
7 2013). Gender is therefore a social construct. Consequently, school must pay attention
8 to and promote changes in aspects that are crucial to the construction of gender, such as
9 the expectations that are held about different genders, masculine and feminine ideals, or
10 the behaviours and values that are expected to be conditioned by masculinity and
11 femininity (Aragonés-González, Rosser-Limiñana and Gil-González 2020; Baig 2015).
12 In this way, children are encouraged to freely choose who they want to be without being
13 conditioned by sexist stereotypes. On many occasions these stereotypes are determined
14 by the sociocultural circumstances of each individual's particular context.

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Currently, in gender relations, the presence of barriers that prevent cultural changes or transformations is not ruled out. From the perspective of discourse and language, it is possible to find resistance to cultural change that very often has its origin in the agents of the educational systems themselves, namely, family, teachers, and classmates, among others. In turn, the discourses and limiting mental representations may be different depending on the characteristics of the particular context in which the school is located. As an example, and as evidenced in previous studies (Bock and Shortall 2006; Edwards and Perumal 2014; Little 2002), the pressure and cultural barriers generally tend to be more pronounced in the rural context than in an urban setting.

At the educational level, the role of teachers is essential in achieving a type of education supported by values of equality and which are free from sexist behaviour (Álvarez-Uria, Lasarte and Vizcarra 2019). In fact, teachers' personal ideals and cultural

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3 baggage, in addition to their own experiences, cannot be separated from everything that
4 is transmitted and taught in schools (Cordero 2013). In this regard, the hidden
5 curriculum, understood as everything that is unconsciously taught in the classroom, is
6 even more important than any other planned and explicitly taught learning. An example
7 of this is observed in Cordero's research (2013), in which there are signs of sexism
8 among the mental representations of teachers that irremediably condition their daily
9 educational practices and manifest themselves in differentiated behaviours.
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19 In the Spanish educational system and, more specifically, in the Autonomous
20 Community of Aragon (located in the north of the country), educational initiatives have
21 been launched that aim to equalize equal opportunities between men and women (Giner
22 et al. 2007). These proposals, at the legislative level, prioritize cooperation, negotiation,
23 and the improvement of coexistence through what is known as "coeducation". These
24 initiatives have mainly materialized in continuous training programs for teachers (for
25 example, training courses offered on the design of equality plans or the virtual platforms
26 in which materials are available to incorporate issues on equality and the prevention of
27 gender violence into the classroom) in which they are encouraged to understand such
28 important issues as the formation of gender roles and stereotypes, the influence on
29 relationships between boys and girls and how to offset inequalities from the educational
30 system and from specific practices in the classroom. Teachers' perceptions are
31 inevitably conditioned by their previous experiences, by the type of education and
32 training they have received, and by other contextual and personal variables.
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Consequently, their ways of thinking and understanding how to educate boys and girls
and the need to promote gender equality in schools will be different in each case (Voyer
and Voyer 2014).

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3 Precisely for this reason, it is essential to analyse the particular perceptions and
4 positions of these educational agents regarding the management of gender diversity.
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6 The aim of performing such an analysis is to identify and assess outstanding challenges
7 within the particular context of a school that guides its efforts toward a fairer and more
8 equitable inclusion day after day. Research on teachers' perceptions of gender equality
9
10 in educational practices has been mainly focused on the field of Higher Education
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12 (Albinsson and Arnesson 2017). In general terms, the results of previous studies carried
13 out with university students have shown positive attitudes. For them, gender equality is
14 established as a completely achievable objective (Mendoza, Sanhueza and Friz 2017).
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16 However, there are few studies in which the voices of teachers from the initial
17 educational stages are revealed.
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22 Inequality between genders is an evident issue in society in general and, as such,
23 it is appreciated in all social spheres, including education (Hendley and Charles 2016).
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25 Consequently, the need arises to conduct an analysis to determine the starting point of
26 these issues, to find out in which areas the problem can be located and whether there is
27 knowledge about it and, finally, to evaluate and solve them (Albinsson and Arnesson
28 2017). Since school as a key tool in achieving social changes, it also becomes necessary
29 to research the commitment and involvement of school teachers with respect to gender
30 equality.
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34 In light of these premises, this study aims to analyse the opinions of teachers on
35 gender equality from the perspective of inclusive education. As a follow-up objective,
36 the actions or strategies that are carried out to achieve this equality from the schools are
37 studied. This research therefore intends to identify the current panorama regarding
38 inclusive education and gender equality, and the actions that are implemented to favour
39 it. In addition, it also seeks to shed more light on how teachers' mental representations
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3 have a cultural influence on the construction of gender and its multiple implications in
4 children in a particular context. Hence, knowing the personal interpretations of teachers
5 in a given educational context can help to identify the underlying conditions and
6 mechanisms responsible for the gender identity defined by a specific educational
7 institution. This fact is based on the view of education that is beginning to see it as a
8 social right, with it being the public institutions that are responsible for guaranteeing
9 gender equality (Blackman, Conrad and Brown 2019). From an intercultural
10 perspective, this type of research contributes to expanding the existing literature on the
11 different representations and mental considerations related to gender equality and
12 identity that influence the dynamics of a school.
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28 **2. Materials and Method**

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30 To analyse the mental representations of the main agents in the development of an
31 inclusive school that ensures gender equality, a study involving a group of schools in a
32 certain area of northern Spain was designed. This study belongs to the qualitative
33 research paradigm. It allows us to understand and interpret the reality of the study
34 phenomenon as understood by some of its main players (Rodríguez, Gil and García
35 1996), that is, the teachers from the school context in which the study took place.
36 Specifically, it was approached from a phenomenological theoretical-methodological
37 perspective. Accordingly, it was necessary to perform an in-depth analysis of the
38 discourse, opinions and perceptions of these leading players in education.
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52 **2.1. Participants**

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54 To make up the sample, informants were selected through a theoretical-intentional
55 sampling process (Tójar 2006), and on the basis of a series of previously defined
56 criteria. Firstly, all teachers selected were considered to be active professionals in
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3 primary schools. They also had to carry out different professional profiles (specialists,
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5 tutors, etc.) or, where appropriate, teach different grades. Regarding their previous
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7 training, five of them had received general training in attention to diversity to respond to
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9 the different needs within an ordinary class. None of them had taken specialization
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11 courses on educational inclusion. Only two of them had any specific initial training
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13 enabling them to give a specialized and individualized response to children with
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15 permanent or more pronounced needs (with specialization in Hearing and Language and
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17 in Therapeutic Pedagogy). Lastly, an attempt was made to maintain a gender balance
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19 among interviewees, although the authors were aware that there would be a majority of
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21 females due to the reality of this professional sector. The sample is made up of eight
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23 teachers: six female teachers and two male teachers, who agreed to collaborate by
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25 responding voluntarily to the interview. Table 1 shows the sociodemographic
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27 characteristics of the sample.
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34 All of them worked in three public schools in a city in northern Spain. The teaching–
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36 learning processes of these schools are inclusive. In them, students with very diverse
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38 educational needs are taught and are offered the educational response they need. The
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40 educational action of these schools is established by Decree 188/2017 of November 28
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42 of the Government of Aragon (Boletín Oficial de Aragón, 2017), which regulates the
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44 inclusive educational response and harmonious coexistence in the educational
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46 communities of the Autonomous Community of Aragon (the city where the schools
47
48 included in this study are located). Although the teaching practices and strategies
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50 carried out in these schools are inclusive (because they adapt to the rhythms and ways
51
52 of learning of each child), the Spanish legislation that guides the schooling of children
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54 with permanent needs still allows them to be enrolled in special education schools. If
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56 these ordinary education schools consider that they do not have the capacity to provide
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3 a child with an appropriate educational response, that child is enrolled in a Special
4 Education school. Precisely for this reason, and although attempts are always made to
5 ensure that the internal dynamics and activities of ordinary schools are inclusive, there
6 are some weaknesses in the legislation. Regarding the economic and social context of
7 these schools, all of them received financial support from the public system. In addition,
8 the socioeconomic level of the families of the children enrolled in these schools is
9 medium. In general (although with some exceptions) the family context of the students
10 is actively involved in the educational process of these schools.
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26 **2.2. Instrument**

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28 The semi-structured interview was used as an instrument to collect information. This
29 tool offers the possibility of freely setting out the points of view and opinions regarding
30 the questions asked. In addition, it allows an interpersonal relationship to be struck up
31 with the interviewee and makes it possible to obtain a more realistic image of how he or
32 she understands the object of study (Kvale 2011). The interview consisted of a set of
33 eight questions, all of them open-ended to facilitate freedom of expression and opinion.
34 The questions were organized around the two main themes of this study, namely, the
35 constructs of inclusive education and gender equality (Figure 1).
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50 Firstly, regarding inclusive education, respondents were asked for information
51 about their concept of it and whether they considered gender equality as an area
52 included under this educational philosophy. They were also asked about the educational
53 actions taken to promote gender equality at school and in the classroom. Finally, they
54 were asked for their opinions on other issues that the literature has considered relevant,
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3 that is, the priority needs regarding the current situation of inequality, the educational
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5 community's general opinion about this position, non-sexist language and, finally, the
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7 areas in which greater inequalities are observed at school and the strategies adopted to
8
9 deal with these circumstances.
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13 ***2.3. Investigation procedure and information analysis***

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16 The research was structured as a set of successive phases. Firstly, the interview clusters
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18 were arranged following a thorough review of the literature available to date. Secondly,
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20 the professionals to be interviewed were contacted. The meetings were held in the
21
22 reference classrooms of the people interviewed. This fact created an environment of
23
24 trust, closeness, and calm. The interviews were carried out individually and verbally. At
25
26 the beginning, participants were told the reason for the interview and approximately
27
28 how long it would last, and were assured that the information they provided would be
29
30 processed in a fully anonymous and confidential manner. A numerical code was used to
31
32 identify each interview. In this way, the privacy of the participants was guaranteed.
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35 Although an average of 10 to 15 minutes was established for each interview, the
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37 duration varied according to the will of the interviewees. Thirdly, the information was
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39 transcribed. All the interviews were recorded as audio in order to be able to perform an
40
41 exhaustive analysis of the information.
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47 Subsequently, the speech-content analysis was started following the guidelines
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49 of Miles and Huberman (1994) and Gil-García (2015). Seven categories that had been
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51 predefined in the design phase of the interview were determined. Bearing in mind this
52
53 provisional system of categories, the researchers identified topics by identifying, coding
54
55 and categorizing the information. This process was carried out with each of the cases
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57 and then with all of them together as a unit (Stake 2006). The reduction of these
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59 categories was carried out using the principle of saturation until new concepts, ideas and
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3 perspectives on the question being analysed ceased to emerge. Finally, the relationships
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5 between all of them were specified in order to decrease, as far as possible, the amount
6
7 of information collected (Strauss and Corbin 1990).
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10 Qualitative research strategies were adopted to endow the study with
11
12 methodological rigor (Hernández, Fernández and Baptista 2014). The first was the
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14 dependency criterion, while the theoretical perspective, the design, the sample selection
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16 criteria, the methodological strategies, the data collection context, and the description of
17
18 how the data analysis was carried out were all detailed. The second was the criterion of
19
20 credibility, since the interviews were transcribed and the triangulation of the researchers
21
22 was used to enrich and contrast the information (Onwuegbuzie and Leech 2007). In
23
24 addition, the transferability criterion was adopted because the procedure and context
25
26 were described in depth to enable replication of the research. And, finally, the criteria of
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28 auditability or confirmability were considered, while all the decisions made in the
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30 investigative process were recorded and all the interviews were audio recorded.
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36 37 **3. Results**

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39 After analysing the information, the results, discussion, and conclusions are presented
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41 according to the objective initially set for the study. The main purpose was to discover
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43 school teachers' opinions on gender equality from the perspective of inclusive
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45 education. Another aim was to analyse the strategies or actions carried out to promote
46
47 this equality. In turn, the mental representations that teachers have about the
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49 implications of gender-related issues in the particular context of schools located in a city
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51 in northern Spain were analysed.
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56 As a starting point, the results consider each of the following categories:
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59 conceptualization of the term *inclusive education*, relationship between inclusive
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3 education and gender equality, inequalities at school and strategies adopted, opinions on
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5 non-sexist language, specific actions in the school and classroom to promote gender
6
7 equality, aspects in which greater efforts are required and, finally, positions of the
8
9 educational community.
10

11 12 *Conceptualization of the term inclusive education* 13

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15 Regarding the conceptualization and implications of the term ‘inclusive
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17 education’, most of the teachers mentioned a type of education that accepts differences
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19 and assumes them as an enriching element. In addition, it allows any student to learn in
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21 the ordinary classroom regardless of their condition, and enables the coexistence of all
22
23 the members of the class based on respect and tolerance. In inclusive schools, equity is
24
25 promoted and it is understood that the influence of culture and other social factors
26
27 contribute to enriching experiences and diversity among students. A clear example of
28
29 this can be seen in the testimony of one of the participants, who stated that inclusive
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31 education:
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35 *Participant 8: It is one that seeks the maximum development of all*
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37 *students irrespective of their characteristics and based on respectful and*
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39 *harmonious coexistence.*
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43 Another of the aspects most frequently mentioned by several of the teachers is
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45 that inclusive education should respond individually to each of the students’ needs to
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47 attend to all the dimensions of their development (cognitive, affective and social).
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49 Accordingly, they understand that it is an education that does not exclude any member
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51 of the educational community and that it seeks the success of all. At this point, it is
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53 worth highlighting the answer given by one of the teachers, who pointed out that:
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3 Participant 3: *It is not only about diversity in terms of illnesses or*
4 *disabilities, but includes many other forms of diversity such as sexual, gender,*
5 *cultural, religious, etc.*
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10 *Relationship between inclusive education and gender equality*

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12 In line with this, the professionals interviewed (with one exception) considered
13 gender equality as an area to be considered from the perspective of inclusive education.
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15 If the set of arguments and opinions expressed in the interview are analysed, it could be
16 understood that the negative response of that teacher was due to the fact that she did not
17 consider that gender equality should be included in the curriculum of an inclusive
18 school because this form of exclusion simply should not even exist. Furthermore, the
19 different arguments suggest an evident lack of appreciation of this gender equality in the
20 inclusive dynamics of ordinary schools. All these testimonies reflect the fact that gender
21 issues can be considered more or less relevant depending on the context and the social
22 and cultural conditions to which each teacher has been previously exposed.
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35 Participant 2: *If we talk about inclusion, it refers to all possible forms of*
36 *exclusion, and gender differentiation is one of them.*
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40 Participant 5: *It is not the first thing you think of when talking about*
41 *inclusive education.*
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44 *Inequalities at school and adopted strategies*

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46 Regarding the measures adopted at school to promote gender equality, there are
47 clear differences among the teachers interviewed. This is probably a consequence of the
48 different schools where they teach. Broadly speaking, teachers at one of the schools
49 with the highest rates of schooling for immigrant students commented that no strategy is
50 being adopted. On certain occasions, attention is paid to sexist language in circulars, but
51 not in an organized systematic way, as mentioned by participant 8. However, if these
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3 teachers have ever decided to explicitly stimulate gender equality at school, it has been
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5 from a general perspective through the biographies of ‘extraordinary’ women or through
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7 the coexistence and equality committee. This body provides teachers with information
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9 on training activities. However, they point out that these are insufficient strategies that
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11 tend to be left to mere voluntary intentions. Interviews with teachers from the other two
12
13 schools have revealed more positive perceptions. Among other actions, teachers
14
15 emphasized the idea that non-sexist language is used, an example being the neutral
16
17 terms adopted, as far as possible, in the informative circulars of the school. In addition,
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19 the equality committee offers teachers information, activities and training, among other
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21 actions. They also noted that the school’s cultural week was designed on the basis of
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23 gender equality. They therefore revealed some satisfaction with the measures taken by
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25 their schools.
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31 Participant 7: *The school has set up an equality panel at the entrance to*
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33 *which the entire educational community (families, students, and teachers) has*
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35 *access. It contains news, information or whatever is considered appropriate*
36
37 *related to equality.*
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41 Participant 4: *A committee has been created to draw up the Equality*
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43 *Plan. It contains measures and actions that will be introduced by all the*
44
45 *members of the school. To this end, this year we have analysed the situation and*
46
47 *the context.*
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50 Participant 2: *A corridor was decorated to look like ‘La rue des femmes’,*
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52 *where the biographies of outstanding women in science, writing and sport are*
53
54 *put on display.*
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56 *Specific actions in the school and classroom to promote gender equality*

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3 As regards the strategies or actions they carry out within their schools and
4 classrooms, a majority of teachers choose to use inclusive and non-sexist language, both
5 verbally and in writing. Some of them even claim to have presented weekly readings in
6 the classroom that promote values of equality, opening up many possibilities for debate,
7 reflection and research activities with their students. In the activities on biographies,
8 several of the teachers pointed out that the students tend to choose those referring to
9 men. Taking advantage of this fact, they design activities involving reflection and
10 constructive criticism. Given that it is a reality that is commonly present in students'
11 lives, on numerous occasions the possibility of addressing equality as a consequence of
12 conflicts that occur during the school day arises. Teachers therefore try to deal with
13 these conflicts in that moment in the way they consider most appropriate. The teachers
14 of the upper grades of primary education emphasize the importance of stimulating
15 students to reflect on the lyrics of the songs they usually listen to. On the other hand,
16 one participant has exposed hardly any strategies or actions in the classroom. She
17 simply noted that:

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Participant 5: On Women's Day, all the activities were to raise awareness. In my classroom I have a poster from a publishing house that names the women who have made history.

Aspects in which greater efforts are required

Regarding the aspects they consider to be priorities for changes in gender equality, teachers refer to different issues that are necessary for a social and educational transformation. It has been highlighted how paradoxical it is that a large majority of teachers are females, especially in the initial stage of early childhood education. However, when it comes to occupying positions of responsibility, a considerable majority of male teachers are now observed. In light of this evidence, they commented

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3 that greater equity would be desirable. Many of them pointed out the existence of
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5 cultures in which inequality is still highly prevalent. This is clearly seen in the
6
7 organization of the family environment in terms of care, upbringing or attendance at
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9 school tutorials, for example. Some of them underlined the influence that the media,
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11 advertising or toy catalogs have on people's mindsets. Likewise, the teachers
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13 highlighted the scant attention paid to this aspect in equality issues. In line with this,
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15 attention is also drawn to the need to reflect on deep-seated and 'hidden' behaviours,
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17 both for men and for women. Likewise, it is also a good idea to pay attention to the
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19 sexist acts and traditions that still continue in today's society. One of the participants
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21 referred to the workplace and expressed her disagreement on unequal wages or
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23 paternity/maternity leave, as a consequence of the sex of the person who holds the
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25 position:
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31 Participant 1: *It is necessary to reflect on the job interviews that are*
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33 *carried out, since these should be more objective or aseptic.*
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36 The teachers interviewed agreed that the interest shown by the educational
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38 community concerning the need to explicitly promote gender equality is progressively
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40 increasing. However, they considered that there is no general opinion. Sometimes the
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42 appearance is one of commitment and acceptance. However, reality hints at a panorama
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44 in which few resources and strategies are offered to support gender equality and its
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46 necessary generalization to society as a whole. One of the participants stressed that the
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48 majority of the educational community considers that there is no problem and that it
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50 would be unnecessary to introduce equality plans. In this regard, she pointed out the
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52 limited initiative that exists:
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56 Participant 7: *The most widely held opinion is that this is bullshit from*
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58 *the administration.*
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Opinions on non-sexist language

Regarding non-sexist language, diverse opinions have also been obtained. Some stated that it is the most appropriate form of language and the one that should be adopted in general in society or, at least, efforts should be made to make citizens more aware of it. Another of the comments expressed more often refers to the lack of training in this regard. Many teachers are aware that, socially, they have become accustomed to sexist language. In this regard, some less convinced opinions were voiced:

Participant 5: *It is a matter of debate that does not help equality. Also, I think there is too much literature. It's not the most important thing. It sounds good to me, but I consider that inclusive language should be sought, and this is not the same as non-sexist language.*

Positions of the educational community

Finally, and regarding the inequalities mentioned, the teachers' responses were very heterogeneous. Inequalities at the family level were highlighted. For example, the difference in attendance at school tutorials was mentioned. In general, only mothers attend them even when the communication sent is addressed to the whole family. Even with this, the biggest obstacles are observed in the classroom. Here, the students are in their comfort zone for long periods of time. According to one of the participants, many comments, actions and details are detected (who helps or who collects, for example). The importance of these is aggravated especially when most students come from traditionally more macho cultures. All of these behaviours increase as the school stage progresses. Another of the most widespread opinions among the teachers interviewed was the inequalities observed in the playground. Fortunately, all of them have indicated that situations are being studied to apply solutions in this regard.

4. Discussion

Broadly speaking, the teachers interviewed have become aware that, at present, there is a need to promote equality in inclusive schools, since gender differentiation is a form of exclusion. Even with this, it is necessary to clearly establish a series of educational actions from schools that are adopted by all members of the educational community.

This study supposes an awareness of the position of some particular educational organizations that are represented by people whose perceptions and representations are not neutral. Therefore, the missions, visions and values that permeate the actions of each of these schools are different. Although the generalization of the information in this study is limited, the information collected is a true reflection of the variability of gender salience across different contexts that could be determined by social and contextual influences, among other issues. *The question of gender, together with other educational dimensions, constitutes one of the important premises that contribute to the achievement of a school in which practices and strategies are oriented toward equity and the inclusion of all the students' needs.*

It is seen that there is no unanimity in the teachers' perceptions of the term 'inclusive education'. However, the definitions they provided fluctuate around a common general idea. This instability in conceptualization denotes the variability that is observed even among theorists who have reflected upon it. Therefore, it is difficult to resolve discrepancies around the concept of inclusive education. *In turn, and as reflected in the results of this research, these discrepancies can lead to differences of opinion in the way in which teachers understand gender issues.* Consequently, they should 'continue working, and a lot, to consolidate what has already been achieved and be able to tackle it with quality guarantees for all' (Casanova 2011, 13). One aspect that has been internalized by much of society is that we have the theoretical and practical

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3 knowledge necessary to establish a more inclusive education based on equality in reality
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5 (Echeita and Ainscow 2011). Consequently, and as has been shown in this study, an
6
7 essential starting point would include an analysis of those practices and patterns of
8
9 action that are put into practice in schools. **In any case, this analysis should not forget**
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11 **the need to reflect on the gender inequalities that continue to exist in society and that**
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13 **would be the starting point for the design of effective strategies for an early awareness**
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15 **of students on these issues.**

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19 There has been broad consensus among all the teachers interviewed on the
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21 implications of inclusive education that must address, among other things, gender
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23 equality. The fact that inclusive education must incorporate gender equality among its
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25 dynamics is an idea shared by many international researchers (López 2012; Loreman,
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27 Forlin and Sharma 2014; Meyer, Taylor and Peter 2015). In the conclusions of these
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29 studies, the idea is that education is a primary tool through which to identify and
30
31 eradicate segregating attitudes derived from gender issues. Thus, progress would be
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33 made toward a fairer and more equitable society that advocates this gender equality.
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38 Regarding the educational measures carried out to promote gender equality in
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40 school and in the classroom, there is a certain general dissatisfaction concerning two
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42 aspects. On the one hand, teachers are dissatisfied with the insufficient strategies
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44 implemented by some schools regarding gender equality. These results highlight the
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46 effects that differences in social, cultural, and economic factors in the context of each
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48 school can have on the quality of gender equality and on the provision of opportunities
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50 to promote this issue among members of the educational community (Alhassan and
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52 Odame 2015). This means that all these perceptions of resistance can be understood in
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54 the context of the discursive terrains allowed to the interviewees. **Therefore, we would**
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56 **carry on finding certain barriers in this regard that continue to prevent our educational**
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3 systems from being considered truly inclusive. On the other hand, they demand training
4 that offers them tools to respond to that need and implement educational actions that
5 favour the much-needed transformation of these deeply rooted patterns in society. This
6 demand is also seen in the conclusions of the studies by Barodia (2015) and Brundrett
7 and Dung (2018), among others. As lines of action, various authors (Biemmi 2015;
8 López 2012) have proposed a series of ideas or tasks to be demanded as a minimum in
9 educational systems that seek to put an end to gender inequality. If the right decisions
10 are not made and practices and action plans are not designed to eradicate gender
11 inequalities, it will be difficult to defend the arguments of an inclusive, equitable, and
12 quality education.
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26 Currently, the progress observed in gender equality is certainly significant.
27 However, there is still a long way to go. Numerous gender inequalities and sexist traits
28 continue to persist in society (Walker, Pearce, Boe and Lawson 2019). As shown in the
29 study by Fernández-Llebrez and Camas (2012), domestic chores continue to be carried
30 out mostly by women, while the situation is no better in the professional sphere.
31 Therefore, the impact that these inequalities have is not only located in educational
32 contexts but, in addition, the implications of social inclusion are also compromised.
33 This statement has been endorsed by the teachers interviewed here, who pointed out
34 those areas where there are still unresolved needs. Perhaps one of the most troubling
35 responses has been about the family. Gender inequality is a situation that has become
36 naturalized and made invisible both in educational spaces and in family and work
37 (Thébaud and Halcomb 2019).
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54 In general terms, these education professionals considered that the opinion of the
55 educational community is certainly passive. According to the idea that they have
56 concluded, which is supported by other authors (Baron, Sheehy-Skeffington and Kteily
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3 2019), not all of society as a whole is committed to the pursuit of equity and gender
4
5 equality. These results tally with the study conducted by Colás and Jiménez (2006).
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7 They identified three different trends among teachers: a first group does not perceive or
8
9 recognize gender inequality; a second group observes and is aware of it, but considers
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11 that it is not their responsibility; and finally, a third group recognizes inequalities, feels
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13 responsible, and is committed to achieving equity. Following the recommendations of
14
15 various authors (Lahelma 2014), it is essential for the educational community to commit
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17 itself to the subject and its implications and to invest efforts to promote attitudes of
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19 change. It will be difficult to achieve an inclusive quality education if there are no
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Although the general opinion on non-sexist language is positive, the participants' responses revealed a possible confusion between non-sexist language and inclusive language. According to López (2012, 997), it is important to 'become aware of and know the importance of language as a tool for describing and reinforcing reality'. Through this, an image of reality and values is transmitted beyond the literal message. However, it is essential for teaching practice and pedagogical models to incorporate a gender perspective, from all possible points of view, that stimulates reflection and a shift toward change (Warin and Adriany 2015). That which has no name does not exist – a statement that has also been endorsed by different studies (González and Delgado 2016; Tarif 2015).

The greatest inequalities expressed by these teachers at the society, family or workplace level are also supported by international authors (Foces 2015; van der Vleuten, Jaspers, Maas and van der Lippe 2016). In addition, the limited involvement of schools to establish lines of action in this regard has been evidenced. Sometimes this reduced involvement could be extrapolated to the family environment. The family

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3 context is a very important factor that can also contribute to gender inequalities. In this
4 way, the culture of the family (the way its members understand gender roles or
5 sexuality, among others) has a considerable impact on the education of children
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8 (Roman, Makwakwa and Lacante 2016). The family is also one of the most relevant
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10 contexts that, together with school, have the task of stimulating inclusive practices and
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12 activities. Consequently, it is necessary for the entire educational community to be
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14 committed to this if a gender equality that leads to the achievement of a more inclusive
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16 type of education is to be guaranteed.
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22 One of the most important practical implications that can be drawn from this
23 study refers to the lack of training for gender equality in society. This necessary training
24 would entail the implementation of actions, measures and activities that would favour
25 the generalization of this equality to both the social and the educational realities (Liesa,
26 Vázquez, Arranz and Otal 2014). This training to ensure gender equality in schools is
27 required due to the presence of a series of barriers that are still visible in society today.
28 In this regard, the results of this study hint at the existence of certain gender stereotypes
29 that continue to exist in schools, the lack of opportunities to educate in equality, and the
30 influence of some cultural and family determinants in the context of each child.
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43 At the same time, the need for continuous progress in research into this topic is
44 reinforced. Family contexts, the types of training given to teachers or the equality plans
45 that each school has the responsibility to introduce should be involved in these
46 dynamics. As evidenced by different studies (Riegle-Crumb and Humphries 2012;
47 Wilkinson and Pearson 2009), it should be borne in mind that the influence of the
48 family and school background is also part of the sociocultural baggage that determines
49 gender identity in each educational institution. At the same time, it is necessary to
50 consider as a fundamental premise that all children 'need to be included in the
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3 educational and social life of neighbourhood schools and in society in general' (Arnaiz
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5 1996, 26).

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8 In turn, this research has a series of limitations that must be highlighted. The
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10 study is conditioned by the methodological approach used, and the generalization of its
11
12 findings is therefore limited. Nevertheless, 'the purpose of case studies is not to
13
14 generalize, but rather to induce from an analytical point of view' (Latorre and Liesa
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16 2016, 182). The different opinions expressed here serve to know the current situation in
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18 the educational treatment of gender equality at schools. At the same time, they are a
19
20 starting point to continue contributing to and investigating the necessary educational
21
22 and social transformation.
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34 **Declaration of interest statement**

35 No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.
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3 **Tables**
4

5 Table 1. Sociodemographic characteristics of the sample

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7 Participants	Gender	Age	Years of experience	Course/ Educational stage	Job	Level of studies
8 <i>Participant 1</i>	F	37	13	1° PE	Tutor	University Degree
9 <i>Participant 2</i>	F	32	3	2° PE	Tutor	University Degree
10 <i>Participant 3</i>	F	39	14	4° PE	Tutor	University Degree
11 <i>Participant 4</i>	F	27	1	PE	Hearing and Language Teacher	Master's Degree
12 <i>Participant 5</i>	F	39	12	PE	Therapeutic Pedagogy Specialist	Master's Degree
13 <i>Participant 6</i>	M	35	8	4° PE	Tutor	University Degree
14 <i>Participant 7</i>	F	40	15	1° PE	Tutor	University Degree
15 <i>Participant 8</i>	M	41	16	PE	Physical Education teacher	University Degree

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Figures

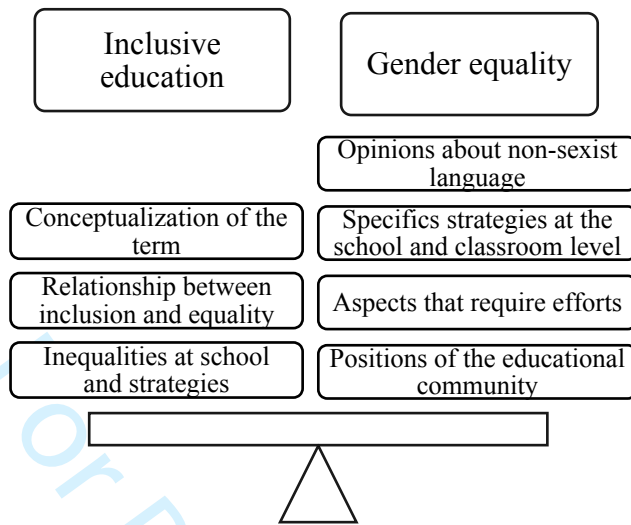


Figure 1. Theoretical content of the interview