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**A critical appraisal of the monitoring and impact
of a project promoting inclusive education for
disabled pupils in mainstream schools in the city
of El Alto, Bolivia**

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Abstract

The concept of inclusive education is a new one for many developing countries such as Bolivia and most of the legislation regarding disability and education still focuses on the individual or “medical model” of disability, often resulting in the segregation of disabled pupils to special schools. The aim of this study was to investigate the monitoring and impact of a project carried out by an International Non Governmental Organisation (INGO) which promoted the inclusion of disabled pupils in mainstream schools in one of the largest but poorest cities of Bolivia. For many teachers and parents, this was a new concept that had previously never been implemented in their schools.

The project employed a monitoring specialist to carry out a nine month investigation to evaluate the impact and results of its work in the schools where inclusive education had been promoted. Coinciding with the duration of the project, a new Education Law was also passed in December 2010 in Bolivia, mentioning the term “inclusive education” for the first time. My study examines the

results found by the monitoring specialist during his nine months of research and includes follow up interviews with him, as well as a sample of the same actors that he interviewed. I also chose to consult a sample of disabled pupils who were targeted by the project's work in order to gain a fuller perspective of the real impact of the project. This research study aimed to explore the barriers against inclusive education in Bolivia and the positive experiences that can be learned, in order to develop and improve future inclusive education practices and lobby for more inclusive legislation.

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Abbreviations

CONALPEDIS	The National Committee for Disabled People (El Comité Nacional de la Persona con Discapacidad)
DPO	Disabled People's Organisation
(I)NGO	(International) Non Governmental Organisation
EFA	Education for All
MNR	Nationalist Revolutionary Movement (Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario)
PNIEO	The National Plan for Equal Opportunities for Disabled People (Plan Nacional de Igualdad y Equiparación de Oportunidades para las Personas con Discapacidad)
SEN	Special Educational Needs

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background

Education is a fundamental human right that all people should have access to. In fact, in 2002, the EFA flagship endorsed this by establishing “The right to education for persons with disabilities: towards inclusion” (UNESCO, 2004 cited in Miles and Singal, 2008: 7) so as to ensure that disabled people, an oppressed group in society (Abberley, 1987, Stone and Priestley, 1996) are included. However, many disabled people attending special schools have still had to face a “low standard of education” (Sutherland, 1981: 33) in comparison with their non-disabled peers. The special education system, which focuses on providing special separate schools that reflect the needs of those pupils with labelled with Special Educational Needs (SEN) (Emanuelsson, et al., 2009) has had its role in the twenty-first century (Oliver, 2000) questioned by many disabled people, academics and education researchers.

One of the most influential documents in challenging special education in favour of inclusive education was “The Salamanca

Statement for Framework and Action” (UNESCO, 1994), a document that is concerned with developing strategies for schools so that they can serve all children, including those labelled with SEN (Save the Children, 2002: 25). It clearly states that:

Education systems should be designed and educational programmes implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs (UNESCO, 1994: viii).

Although the fundamental idea of inclusive education is to provide disabled children with an education in the “regular” or mainstream classroom, using the appropriate support and adjustments (Power-DeFur and Orelove, 1997), since the Salamanca statement, it seems to have “taken on multiple meanings across the globe” (Miles and Singal, 2008: 9). Indeed, it has been argued that “the term ‘inclusive education’ has become so used and abused that it has little meaning” (Corbett, 2001: 10). Educational research is therefore a necessary process in examining the different experiences and methods of inclusive education in order to better

comprehend the meanings of the term and gain a greater understanding of what it really comprises.

There is a considerable lack of inclusive education research in the international field, particularly in the continent of South America. Miles and Singal (2008), when presenting their exploration of international agendas of EFA and inclusive education, explained that they could only cite a few examples from South America, for their work had mainly concentrated in English-speaking countries. The fact that the majority of international educational research focuses on foreign English speaking countries and the Asian continent has been a motivating force in my studies, wanting to give “one of the poorest countries in South America” (Pateman and Cramer, 2006: 37) a voice in the education and disability debate.

I have chosen to evaluate a project that was implemented by a European NGO (EuropeAid, 2009). The NGO is one of many that carry out small-scale projects in “developing” countries, endeavouring to make a difference in the lives of the many socially excluded disabled children. I have chosen the term “developing” to

describe Bolivia, for I feel that it is appropriate for a country to be referred to according to the stage of development that it has reached and its “corresponding classification in one or the other grouping” (Sanford and Sandhu, 2003: 8). Although this term has been criticised by academics (Stone,1999), I feel that it is the most appropriate for this study, for it reflects the social and economic status of the country and therefore highlights the issue of disabled people being a “disadvantaged minority living on the margins of society” (Turmusani, 2003:137).

The project

The local council's education and disability departments' statistical data identified a need to support the northern regions of the city of El Alto in the area of disability and education. The NGO's project, which proposed to promote social inclusion through improving access to education for disabled pupils in mainstream schools, was approved for the duration of two years. Unfortunately, during its implementation, it became apparent that little financial emphasis had been given to paid staff, in the hope that unpaid volunteers would cover a large amount of the support needed. Bolivia does not yet

have a “volunteer culture” and so finding unpaid staff proved to be a difficult task. Therefore, final year university students studying “Education Psychology” were invited to join the NGO's project as part of their work experience module. The students carried out the diagnosis of the children, who had been identified in the schools as needing support, then wrote and implemented intervention programmes, working directly in the schools alongside the teachers.

The project's original proposal included promoting inclusion in eight primary schools solely focusing on supporting disabled children. However, for a number of reasons, the support was expanded to both the primary (morning) and secondary (afternoon) school shifts, a total of fourteen schools, and the beneficiaries increased to include children labelled with learning difficulties as well. Nine months before the project ended, a monitoring specialist, who I shall call William, was contracted to carry out an investigation of the project's impact by implementing focus groups with key actors involved in the project from the education community.

Research questions: why and how

With regards to my research, the questions that I asked were a key part of the process, making sure that they are “answerable” (Andrews, 2003: 2). The research problem was the low standard of education that disabled children receive in Bolivia, either because they are integrated in a mainstream school or because they are in segregated special education which often provides a low standard of teaching (Sutherland, 1981). With regards to my study of the project’s work in promoting inclusive education in mainstream schools in El Alto, Bolivia, my questions were the following:

- How effective were the project's monitoring methods and what difficulties were faced in obtaining the data?
- What were the achievements and successes of the project, as well as its failings and the barriers faced?
- Is the inclusion of disabled children in the mainstream classrooms of El Alto possible?

My interest

As a member of the technical team in the NGO's project, my interest was both personal and political. I was curious to find out about the

effectiveness of my own and the team's overall work over the last two years. Although I obviously had a good idea of how successful we were and of the limitations that were faced, to systematise the impact and success of the project would help me to analyse where we went wrong and what could be done differently next time. It would also enable me to provide suggestions and support to key actors working in the same field, such as other NGOs, local and national government bodies and disabled people organisations (DPOs), for their future work. It should be noted that I have translated into English any quotes from Bolivian legislation or reference books written in Spanish where I could find no official English translations.

Project overview

Chapter 2 will provide a literature review which comprises the definition and arguments for and against special, integrated and inclusive education, as well as giving a more detailed analysis of inclusive education within the context of Bolivia. The models of disability will also be presented and discussed, relating their practices to Bolivia. Finally, I will give an overview of the city of El

Alto and Aymaran culture. Chapter 3 will focus on the research methodology of my investigation, presenting the ontological and epistemological perspectives as well as the methodological approaches, including the processes of sampling, data collection, coding and analysis. It will also discuss ethical issues, strengths and weaknesses of the methodology and the research limitations that I faced.

Chapter 4 will further analyse Bolivian legislation on education and disability, looking at current research initiatives presented by the Ministry of Education. It will examine the reality regarding inclusive education for Bolivian mainstream schools through the results of William's research and the literature review. In Chapter 5 I will present an analysis of my research results, looking at how they respond to the research questions regarding the achievements and failings of the project's work, as well as any difficulties faced during the data collection. Chapter 6 draws together conclusions from William's and my research, taking into consideration the research questions of the effectiveness of the monitoring carried out in the project and whether inclusive education is possible in El Alto. It will

conclude with some recommendations for organisations who are hoping to work in the area of inclusive education process. Chapter 7 highlights important empirical research issues that had to be continually taken into consideration throughout my investigation and will draw together a final conclusion regarding my research.

Chapter 2: Inclusive education, the models of disability and EI Alto; Bolivian legislation and the new education law

From special education to inclusive education

The provision of education for disabled children over the years has progressed and developed from special to inclusive education. Historically, special education was said to be a product of superstition and rejection of people named as being disabled in some way, thus resulting in their isolation, away from the mainstream classroom (Sacks, 2001). A highly influential document regarding special education was The Warnock Report (1978) which created the concept of “special educational needs”, proposing the provision of special ways of accessing the curriculum using equipment, facilities, modifications, special teaching techniques and providing a special curriculum (The Warnock Report, 1978). The report recommended that classifications of disabled students should no longer be medical, but educational. However, even though there was a change in the labels, “the practices underpinning them were still based on an individualised [...] model of educational development” (Oliver, 2000: 10). Although the report promoted a

more positive attitude towards disabled pupils and raised issues for those in both special and mainstream schools (Barton, 1986), it was also criticised for its failure to “give serious consideration to system issues” (Barton, 1986: 147) and for encouraging “a reliance on professional judgement” (Barton, 1986: 147).

Research on special education schooling has shown that a big part of such schools' functions is not actually related to the provision of special education amenities (Sutherland, 1981). It has also indicated that, “educational standards experienced by disabled people in segregated schools have generally been low” (Barnes 1991, cited in Cook et al., 2001: 296). In fact, comparative studies have shown that those disabled pupils in the mainstream education system show more interdependent living skills later in life than those from special schools (Gray 2002, cited in O’Connell, 2005). Special education differs from a regular educational programme in that it provides something special for the pupils receiving it, that is to say, “special materials, special training techniques, special equipment and special help and/or special facilities” (Dash, 2007:18). Nowadays there is general consensus, by those for and against

inclusion, that special schools do not implement any specific practices that mainstream classrooms are not already carrying out (Audette and Algozzine 1997; Skrtic, 1995a cited in Ballard, 1999). The Integration Alliance (1992) proposed the abolishment of special education to the government due to the socially and educationally damaging effect of excluding young people from the mainstream on a long term basis and the consequences that segregating at a young age will have in adult life.

During the latter part of the twentieth century, “new thinkings and new realisations opened new directions for education of disabled children” (Dash, 2007: 42), which lead to the development of integrated education. Integrating disabled children in mainstream education was considered not only the most effective way of providing educational opportunities for large numbers of disabled children, but also demonstrated social and psychological benefits to the children (Chauhan, 1989). It was viewed as the opposite of segregated education, providing a complementary to special education, rather than an alternative (Dash, 2007). However, integration experiences have failed “because children with

disabilities were placed in settings which were not designed for responding to diversity in the first place” (OECD, 1999: 21). In other words, teachers were unprepared to provide the necessary support and quality of education due to lack of training and experience. Therefore, the term and practice of inclusive education has been preferred to that of integrated education, for it “goes beyond the integrative idea of assimilating children with disabilities into the existing ordinary school system” OECD, 1999: 22) and looks to inherently change the system itself.

Inclusive education therefore fundamentally challenges the traditional approach of putting disabled people second and proposes that disability should be seen as “part of the common experience of humanity” in planning and policies (The Integration Alliance, 1992: page unknown). In order to fully comprehend inclusive education, it should be “recognised and challenged from within a human rights framework” (Rustemier 2002, cited in Barton 2003, page unknown). Human rights for children can be described as a right “by virtue of the fact that they are human beings, that they are the same as any other child” (Morris, 1999: page unknown). Indeed, one of the main

condemnations of the segregation of children in special schools has been that it denies “a right to education in the mainstream” (Farrell, 2010:20).

Inclusive education needs to be seen as a “support for diversity” (Booth and Ainscow, 2002:6). Ballard (1999) developed this different approach towards the process of inclusion by proposing the design of “schools that respond to student diversity without creating differently valued categories of students” (p 174). In other words, the acceptance and recognition of “difference” is a valuable means of gaining access to the “same” as others (Morris, 1999: page unknown). The concept of inclusive education in Bolivia and other developing countries supports an approach that accepts diversity (Ballard, 1999). In fact, it was acknowledged by the Bolivian government, whose Aymaran President, Evo Morales, bestowed the country with the new title of “Multinational State”, in a statement of recognition of the diverse indigenous cultures, namely Aymara, Guarani and Quechua. The new “Education Law Avelino Siñani – Elizardo Pérez, No. 1063” (Ministry of Education, 2010) also states

that the basis of education is “inclusive, assuming the diversity of the population” (Chapter 2, Article 3, No.7).

The models of disability and Bolivian law

When considering definitions of disability, the two main approaches are the official definitions created by non-disabled professionals and academics and the definition that has been approved by the disabled people’s movement and DPOs. The former is known as the “individual” or “medical model” and the latter as the “social model of disability” (Shakespeare, 1996; Oliver, 1990; Bury, 2000). The official definitions were formed from a series of different surveys implemented in order to compile data and statistics about disabled people, with the intention of providing more appropriate services and legislation. The most famous surveys are the National Study of Impairment, Disablement and Handicap, run by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys (OPCS), lead by Amelia Harris in 1971 (Harris et al., 1971), the second OPCS survey carried out in 1988 (Martin et al., 1988) and the International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps (ICIDH) run by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in 1980. Many disability scholars and

advocates who reviewed the ICIDH survey in the 1990s, as members of task forces, heavily criticised it, which resulted firstly in the production of the ICIDH2 and consequently a later version called International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) in 2001 (WHO, 2001). However, there is still widespread criticism of the OPCS and the ICIDH2/ICF definitions of disability for being too focused on the individual's impairment (Pfeiffer, 2000). This is known as the individual or "medical model" of disability, for it places "undue emphasis on clinical diagnosis, the very nature of which is destined to lead to a partial and inhibiting view of the disabled individual" (Brisenden, 1986: 20).

The definition of the term "disability", as developed by the disabled people's movement and DPOs, aimed to reproduce actual life situations and to improve understanding of the barriers and prejudice that disabled people face on a daily basis. The first definition was suggested by the Union of Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) in 1976, who examined and redefined the real meanings of impairment and disability to stand for people with physical impairments who are disabled by socially constructed

barriers (UPIAS, 1976). This definition was further developed by Disabled People's International to include sensory and intellectual impairments as well. It is known as the social model of disability and has been essential for disabled people who want to develop a positive image and promote inclusive and accessible legislation. However, the social model does not recognise the reality that developing countries face and has been referred to as the "urban model of disability" (Whalley Hammell, 2006: 66). The social model "insists that all problems associated with disability could be solved in a just society" (Whalley Hammell, 2006: 66) but does not account for countries that face insurmountable problems in rural or under-developed urban areas, such as physical or attitudinal barriers due to the geographical nature of the country or cultural beliefs. Countries, such as Bolivia, that are economically challenged and struggle with the management of their resources, will undoubtedly prioritise the provision of basic services, such as water supplies and a health care system, rather than concern themselves with issues raised by the social model of disability. This difficulty was reflected during the implementation of the NGO's project.

The concept of the social model of disability is still a relatively new one in Bolivia. The Bolivian “Law for the Disabled Person No. 1678” (Constitutional President of the Republic, 1995) still maintains the individual or medical model perspective in both its definition of the term disability and its perspective on education, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter four. In the “Educational Reform No. 1565” (Honourable National Congress, 1994), the term inclusive education is never even mentioned. Thanks to widespread lobbying over the years, the Bolivian legislation is slowly progressing towards a social model of disability viewpoint, although the arrival of a completely inclusive disability or educational law is still a long way off. In 2006, The National Committee for Disabled People launched “The National Plan for Equal Opportunities for Disabled People” (CONALPEDIS), also known as the PNIEO, which recognised the discrimination of disabled people in the Bolivian education system, calling for ‘an inclusive approach to accessible education for disabled people’ (CONALPEDIS, 2006: 30). Finally, the new “Education Law Avelino Siñani – Elizardo Pérez, No. 1063” (Ministry of Education, 2010), which was passed on 20th December 2010

shows a confused idea of inclusive education, with obvious good intentions but lacking a clear focus that can be easily followed.

El Alto and the Aymara culture

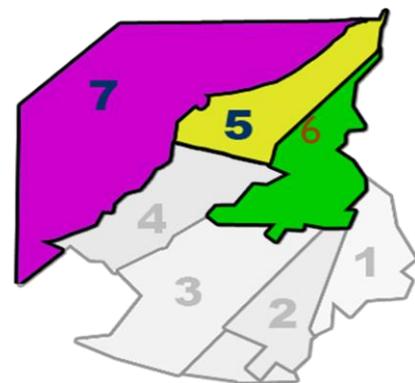
El Alto has always been a transitory city, it developed from being an alternative place to live for those who could not find space in La Paz, to becoming a migrant city with “88% of the population having been born in different parts of the country” (Defensor del Pueblo, 2003: 12). It is also a relatively new city, “formally recognised as such only in 1988” (Lazar, 2008: 30), creating its identity as inherently indigenous. Indeed, in the last census, “74 percent of its residents self-identified as Aymara” (Lazar, 2008: 2). It is also one of the poorest cities in Bolivia, with seventeen percent of its residents living in extreme poverty, according to the 2001 census (Lazar, 2008) and an illiteracy rate of “11.61 percent, with 18.9 percent being women” in 1996 (Defensor del Pueblo, 2003: 16). From an education perspective, there has always been a lack of school infrastructures meaning that the demand for inscriptions in mainstream schools is high and competitive and the teacher-pupil ratio in the classroom is corresponding. In 1993, the teacher-pupil ratio was 1:344 and it still

remains high today, meaning that parents are often forced to send their children to La Paz (Defensor del Pueblo, 2003: 16).

The NGO's project was based in the north region of the city of El Alto, originally encompassing three districts and fourteen mainstream schools. However, some schools refused to work with the project, claiming they did not have time or they were not interested, so it ended up promoting inclusion in twelve schools.



Map of Bolivia



Map of El Alto

The strong Aymara culture and limited awareness regarding disability issues has a great influence on the education of the children in El Alto, as well as the discrimination against disabled children. Aymara families are not known to be democratic

institutions, indeed they are very “authoritarian in terms of the expected relationship between the parents, especially fathers, and children” (Lazar, 2008: 239). Domestic violence and alcoholism are problematic and frequent occurrences in the city. There is also a strong power relationship between the citizens and the state, with great emphasis on work as a collective. The most powerful authorities are the “*junta vecinal*” and “*junta escolar*” (Lazar, 2008: 57), the latter being the school association run by the parents and has tremendous authority, which is potentially dangerous for unwanted pupils. The NGO's project worked closely with the schools associations so that the parents involved became more aware of disability issues in relation to education and discrimination. It was therefore important to include the board of directors in the monitoring and evaluation carried out not only by the NGO's project but also in my own research.

Conclusion

Disabled children in Bolivia face many barriers to education and as we have seen in this chapter, although world wide approaches to education have developed and progressed over the years from

special to integrated education, finally focusing on a more inclusive perspective, Bolivian educational policy still lacks an inclusive viewpoint. For mainstream schools in El Alto, the concept of including disabled children is still relatively new and rarely practised. Although there is now greater recognition of the social model of disability in Bolivia, its application in the education system is limited to a few NGO projects. Bolivia itself is a developing country that is working hard to provide basic services to the population, which means that inclusive practices and accessible education are not necessarily viewed as priorities. These factors coupled with the Aymaran culture and their beliefs have a significant impact on the educational opportunities for disabled children in El Alto, often meaning that they do not receive the same quality and level of education as their non-disabled peers.

Chapter 3: The methodology and reasons behind my research study

Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss and analyse the methodology behind my research study. In the research perspective, I will explain the different standpoints that I hold regarding the rationale behind my research and how I came to those conclusions. I will also demonstrate why I chose the research methods, providing details of the processes that I implemented. This includes the data collection methods I adopted, the sample choices of my research participants, coding and analysis of the results and ethical issues that I faced.

Research perspective

A detailed analysis of the extensive literature reviewed on inclusive and special education, international perspectives, Bolivian legislation and background literature regarding Bolivian culture has provided me with a sound basis on which to develop my project. My conclusions from the literature review helped me to further understand the importance of adopting a right's based perspective

and to be wary of the blatant abuse of the term “inclusive education”. It also helped me take a step back and view the NGO’s work from an outside viewpoint, realising its ambitious attempts to implement inclusion.

When it comes to the research rationale, there are certain claims to be made considering my ontological and epistemological viewpoints. When regarding my project from an ontological standpoint, being “concerned with the ‘what is’” (Crotty, 1998: 10), the social model of disability plays an obvious leading role. I therefore consider that mainstream schools in El Alto are under prepared to provide a good quality education for disabled children. Epistemologically, when looking at “claims or assumptions made about the ways in which it is possible to gain knowledge of this reality” (Blaikie, 1993: 4), I have recognised the lack of teacher training on subjects and areas that promote inclusion; poor accessibility for disabled pupils with regards to infrastructure and technology; the lack of statistical research which would help produce better legislation; and attitudinal barriers not only within the school but in the general community as well. My main objectives to finding the answers to the research questions

were the analysis of the processes and reports of William who was employed by the NGO. This was followed up with interviews not only with William, but also a sample group of those actors included in the original monitoring process. In addition to the original actors, I chose to involve the project's most important participants, the disabled children who had received support in the schools, in order to ensure that they were given a voice and to consequently gain a fuller perspective of the impact of the NGO's work.

With regards to my methodology, I adopted an interpretive tradition, taking into account that, with the interpretive approach “there is less interest in the laws of objective reality than in the reality as it is experienced and interpreted by individuals” (Ten Dam and Volman, 2001: 763). I had to consider different factors to come to this conclusion, such as the size and nature of my research, which did not concur with the positivist paradigm that bases its research on explanations taken from statistical findings and the creation of “empirically testable hypotheses” (Taylor and Tilley, 1998: 39). I also considered the more inclusive emancipatory approach, which addresses the ‘inequalities of power between researcher and

researched' (Priestley, 1997: 88). As described by Stone (1997), the emancipatory paradigm is fundamentally a "reversal of the social and (ultimately) the material relations of research production" (p 207), using the social model as a basis for the analysis and action of the research. However, there were many implications that prevented me from pursuing this paradigm, such as the size of my project, the available resources and the difficulty of involving Bolivian disabled people's associations in the planning, data collection and analysis, this mainly due to the conflictive nature of the associations and the need to carry out appropriate training for those organisations in order for the research to be effective. Hence, although my approach was based on the social model and my objectives included the viewpoint of disabled children, I could not claim to call it emancipatory.

Methods

Before discussing the methods that I chose to apply in the project, it is important to clarify that my choices were influenced by the

successes and difficulties faced by William, which will be detailed throughout this chapter with each different method that is presented.

Data Collection

I had originally decided to carry out focus groups as part of my data collection, however, through learning more about the difficulties faced by William, my conclusions changed. William had carried out a series of focus groups with the following actors in the community involved in the education process:

- Teachers who had participated in a diploma on inclusive education organised by the project.
- Parents of disabled children or children with learning difficulties who were receiving support from the project.
- University students carrying out practical work training in the schools for the project.
- The board of directors from the school association (junta escolar), made up of parents, who have great influence on the running of the school.

- Children who participated in the inclusive out of school academic support service provided by the project.

The NGO's project's technical team, including myself, who worked on a more regular basis in the schools, helped William to set up the focus groups. It was not easy to get the different groups together, mainly due to the participants' time restraints and other commitments, as well as a lack of interest shown by some people. For the majority of the schools under my jurisdiction, the participants did not turn up and we had to reschedule. In the end, only a maximum of five people took part, when approximately twenty had been invited in the hope that the optimum number of six to twelve people would actually turn up (Stewart et al., 2007).

As a result of the aforementioned problems faced by William, I had to look at the most realistic option for my data collection, taking into account such factors as time restrictions and working as an individual, not part of an NGO. I therefore decided to use the qualitative data collection method of semi-structured interviews, in keeping with the interpretative paradigm. From an analytical

standpoint, interviews were more favourable than questionnaires for my research, as they are more flexible and open-ended, as well as focusing on “people's actual experiences more than general beliefs and opinions” (King and Horrocks, 2010: 3) From a practical point of view, I believed that it would be easier to pinpoint one person at a time for an interview and therefore considered questionnaires not to be a viable option, for I would most likely still need to carry out a follow up interview afterwards. When wording my interviews, I had to keep in mind the aim of my research and its questions, ensuring that my interviews would provide sufficient “insight into the participant perspectives” (Amos Hatch, 2002: 97). I therefore felt it important to mention specific topics, such as the participants' understanding of inclusive education and disability (Appendix 2), to gain a greater insight into the effectiveness of the NGO's project training. With the children, I wanted to find out about how comfortable they felt at school, hence questions about friends and their teachers (Appendix 3). I also wanted to learn about the effectiveness of the university students' support from their viewpoint and so included a question about the pupils' feelings towards the university students (Appendix 3).

Sampling choices and qualitative interviews

With regards to my sampling choice, I had to be strategic in who I chose to interview, in order to gather as much valuable information as possible. I therefore chose the method of nonprobability sampling, basing my fundamental sample on availability of participants or other non-statistical criteria rather than a “predetermined probability” (Guo and Hussey, 2004: 2). As I had no existing sampling framework, probability sampling would have been harder (Eckhardt and Anastas, 2007), for I had no statistical information on disabled children included in mainstream schools in El Alto.

My original decision in the preliminary research process was to interview a representative sample of the same actors involved in the focus groups carried out by William. However, after careful analysis and thought to the information that I wished to obtain, I realised that I had to reconsider my original idea. This was partly due to the fact that the NGO's project involved both disabled children and those with learning difficulties and partly due to the implication of bias. As

my area of study and professional work has always been in disability, rather than learning difficulties, I felt it important to maintain that focus throughout my research. Although both areas are important and in need of support with regards to inclusion, the people working on the NGO's project realised too late in the process that they should probably have specialised only in one area. I therefore decided not to make the same mistake.

I was also conscious of the fact that William had only carried out research with teachers who had participated in the “inclusive education” diploma and therefore were likely to be more open-minded, knowledgeable on inclusion and maybe already practising inclusive education strategies. I wanted to include the viewpoint of a teacher who had not participated in the diploma but who had a disabled child in their classroom, in order to gain a fuller perspective and reality of the situation. Another observation was that William had not carried out a focus group with disabled pupils. I felt it to be of vital importance that the pupils involved in the project gave their point of view regarding its success, for it is rare to find research that

considers the views of disabled pupils themselves with regards to accessing mainstream education (O'Connell, 2005).

My own research therefore involved interviews with ten participants, with different names in order to maintain anonymity, indicated as follows:

- Primary school teacher who did not take the diploma:
Victoria
- Primary school teacher who took the diploma: Mary
- Final year university student studying educational psychology, supporting pupils with a learning disability:
Amanda
- Mother of teenager with cerebral palsy: Sarah
- Mother of child with a hearing loss: Cristina
- President of the school association (father of a non disabled child): Stephen
- Monitoring specialist: William
- Sixteen year old male pupil with cerebral palsy: Martin
- Fourteen year old female pupil with Down's syndrome:

Janet

- Six year old female pupil with a hearing loss: Claire

Finally, I selected three of the twelve schools that were involved in the project, basing my decision on the good relationship that I had with the schools and their location. Two of the schools were based in an urban setting, principally a residential area with easy access to the city centre. The other school was situated considerably further from the city, in a totally residential location with very few shops.

Coding and analysis

I coded the results manually, firstly identifying key themes and patterns in William's research and coding them appropriately, ensuring that I retrieved the most relevant data to my research questions. I then carried out the same for my notes and transcripts of the interviews and looked at all the coded data to see "where codes could be combined, collapsed and refined" (Ashby, 2010: 439). I further developed the analysis in order to produce secondary codes which gave me the primary themes to present as my key findings (Ashby, 2010: 439).

Ethical Issues

When regarding different ethical issues, there were many considerations that I had to address. My research involved two oppressed groups (Abberley, 1987, Stone and Priestley, 1996) namely, disabled people and children under the age of sixteen years and was taking place in a developing country, which involved cultural and language implications. I therefore had to ensure “full accountability” (Stone and Priestley, 1996: 706) of all those involved. Bearing this in mind, I requested permission to carry out the research by presenting letters that summarised my intentions and the research focus to the person responsible for the NGO at country level, as well as the director of the project, the head teachers and schools associations' presidents of the three schools participating and a final letter to William (Appendix 4). All the aforementioned participants provided me with written consent to carry out my research and I promised to maintain complete anonymity and to provide copies of my results if they so desired.

Finally, I had to consider the implications of involving disabled children under the age of sixteen, ensuring that I was giving them the right to express their views (Morris, 1999) and providing a true interpretation of their opinions. I therefore ensured that there was total communication between myself and the young person and that my data collection methods were creative. For example, with the young girl with a hearing impairment, firstly I explained my intentions to her as simply as possible, supporting my verbal explanation with writing and pictures. When I was assured that she understood, I asked her to draw a picture of herself at school, as I knew that drawing was her favourite pastime and it would be the best way to access information regarding her inclusion. I also received written consent from each parent to carry out the interview and data collection (Appendix 5).

Conclusion

By carrying out a qualitative research project, I was able to gain the perspectives and viewpoints of the participants in the NGO's project in order to better understand how successful the work had been in

including disabled children in mainstream schools. My research methodology was in keeping with the interpretative paradigm, ensuring that the interviews I conducted contained questions suitable not only for obtaining the required data but also in providing the participants an opportunity to express what they felt and believed with regards to inclusion in their schools and the NGO's work. Likewise, my interview and analysis of William's work was conducted so that I could understand his reasoning behind the data collection methods he used and the barriers he faced. The participants I interviewed were chosen in order to gain sufficiently varied and different insights, for they ranged from professionals working in the schools to children studying there. Finally, I carried out a detailed analysis of the many ethical issues I would be facing, in particular with regards to the disabled children involved in my data collection and the participants' cultural beliefs.

Chapter 4: Law and lack of order: Bolivian disability and education legislation versus the real education system

Introduction

Not only is there a noticeable difference between the education laws and the reality of the Bolivian education system, but the Ministry of Education is also regularly coming up with new initiatives and ideas on how to “improve” the education system for both disabled and non-disabled pupils. It is therefore my intention in this chapter to provide a brief overview of each of the aforementioned points, in order to clearly show the current failings in legislation and consequently the future needs. In order not to confuse my analysis of William’s work and my own research, in this chapter I will only focus on William’s methods and results. My findings will be presented in Chapter 5.

Inclusive education in mainstream schools according to the law

My literature review of Bolivian education and disability legislation spanned from 1990 to date, which meant that it comprised the most current legislation and included the new education law approved at

the end of 2010. The two laws that have been dominating education and disability over the last twenty years were both passed during the office of the controversial president Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada from the “Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario” (MNR) party. Sánchez de Lozada, self described as a conservative and social progressive, carried out a series of constitutional, social, economical and political reforms during his presidency, including the “Educational Reform No. 1565” (Honourable National Congress, 1994), famously known for the introduction of classroom teaching in the local indigenous languages. When looking for references to the education of disabled people in the above-mentioned law, I found that only four of the fourteen chapters mention special or alternative education and not one chapter mentions inclusion. Article 9 of Chapter 4 in the second title “The National Education System” explains the structure of curricular training. It states that the structure is divided into two areas, formal education and alternative education, the latter being for those who can not develop their learning in the formal area of education (Honourable National Congress, 1994). These two areas are further divided into four modalities, the first and most relevant to my research, being the

modality of learning which is split into “regular” and “special”. Special learning is described as aimed at students with “special learning difficulties”, who learn in classrooms with specialist support within the regular modality (Honourable National Congress, 1994).

The law is therefore suggesting that students with SEN should be taught within the regular or mainstream classroom with the support of specialist teachers, which is certainly a significant step towards inclusive education. There is another chapter dedicated to the different types of alternative education, consisting of adult, permanent and special education, the latter referring to those pupils with SEN who require specialised teachers. It therefore appears to be stating that the majority of disabled children should attend mainstream schools except for those who are severely disabled and require more specialised attention.

The new “Education Law Avelino Siñani – Elizardo Pérez, No. 1063” (Ministry of Education, 2010) was only recently approved at the end of 2010 and generally has not yet been put into practice. The law adopts the original indigenous teachings that were re-introduced and

practised by the Ayllu School of Warisata in 1931 (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2008). The fundamental principles of the Warisata experience were the reconstitution of Ayllu community values, promoting a productive school based on the indigenous cosmology and the promotion of productive, social and creative work that will enrich the local communities whilst strengthening cultural identities at the same time (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2008). That is to say, a radical change to the curriculum, promoting more practical and vocational subjects, which I would even suggest are more akin to those implemented in special schools.

When it comes to inclusive education in the new law, there is significantly greater reference to disabled learners, as well as inclusion and equal opportunities. Definitions of regular education do not mention the inclusion of disabled pupils in the mainstream classroom, but specifications regarding other areas of education imply a country that now recognises the basic human right of access to education. The objectives for alternative and special education, Article 17, Number 3 state that disabled people should receive an “education with equal opportunities and conditions through the

development of policies, plans, programmes and inclusive education projects” (Ministry of Education, 2010). Continuing articles mention the importance of accessibility for disabled people, such as the adoption of other communication systems and the correct application of methods and instruments. One can therefore deduce that there is definite progress with the new “Avelino Siñani” law.

The Bolivian “Law for the Disabled Person No. 1678” (Constitutional President of the Republic, 1995), which was also approved during the MNR government’s time in power, has very little to say about the education of disabled people. At the beginning of the law, in the first article named “definitions”, there is a short description of special education, but no mention of inclusion. There is only one more mention of education in the rest of the law, in Chapter 3, which specifies the rights of disabled people and states in Point G of Article 6 their right to receive an education at all levels without any discrimination “depending on the type and grade of disability” (Constitutional President of the Republic, 1995: 3). This is indicative of the “get out clause” that many laws and acts adopt, such as the UK’s Disability Discrimination Act 1995. By stating that the “grade of

disability” will influence the type of education received, the law is legally supporting educational institutions in the further discrimination of disabled students. A review of these laws helps to understand why there has been so little support and awareness regarding the educational rights of disabled people in Bolivia over the last twenty years, even with the introduction of the PNIEO.

The PNIEO, which was launched during the first office of Evo Morales, the current Bolivian president, has a whole chapter dedicated to education. The main objective of its chapter on education is “access for disabled people to an education with a focus on inclusion” (CONALPEDIS, 2006: 30). The seven strategies that are included in the chapter all focus on inclusive education or the effective use of resources and investigation, even the fourth strategy on special education, indicates that training professionals should work with an inclusive education perspective. It is evident from the PNIEO that there was significant involvement from DPOs in the writing of the document, which was published by the National Committee for Disabled People, whose director at the time was a

very proactive disabled woman. However, the reality is that there is insufficient implementation of such an outstanding piece of work.

The reality of inclusive education – current initiatives

In an attempt to focus on the practical application of inclusion, the Bolivian Ministry of Education's Department of Alternative and Special Education decided to carry out research and data collection in 2010, with the intention of creating a statistical database on which to develop better practices and education systems for disabled members of the community. This involved sending out teams nationwide to carry out a survey of the current schools and rehabilitation centres who work with disabled people. The first stage of the research was to register special education schools and the second stage was to collect data regarding mainstream schools who implement inclusive education or current private inclusive education centres. This has been applied alongside another government initiative to register all disabled people in Bolivia, called the "El Programa de Registro Único Nacional de Personas con Discapacidad" (National Registration Programme of Disabled People). The registration programme is into its fifth year, but still

depends heavily on disabled people finding out about the scheme and physically going to their closest registration centre, which suggests that those living in rural areas will not register. It is hoped that these much-needed data collection exercises will provide valuable statistical information for the government to identify the reality of disabled people's needs and work towards meeting them. CONALPEDIS provided me with the current registration list, so that I could gain a realistic idea of what they have achieved to date regarding the registration of disabled people. The statistics that I discovered showed that only a small percentage of the population of disabled people had registered with the programme. In the districts covered by the project, there is an approximate population of 400,000 inhabitants yet only 499 of those residents have registered as disabled, according to the figures dated up to May 2011. Of those registered, the number of pupils attending special education centres in the same districts was recorded as a mere 110 (CONALPEDIS, 2010).

Inclusive education according to those involved – the monitoring specialist's findings

In order to find out about the inclusive education experiences in the schools where the project was working, William carried out a series of focus groups with different actors in the education community. He came up with some concurring findings in his final reports, as well as some conflicting ones. Some of the recurring themes extracted from the results of the focus groups were the support provided by the project; positive and negative aspects of the inclusive education process; and school conditions. The participants involved in the focus groups were thirteen university students carrying out their practical module at the schools; thirteen teachers who had participated in the inclusive education diploma; 23 parents of children with learning difficulties or disabilities; eleven parents who were members of the school association and an unknown quantity of children participating in the services provided by the project or being supported by the project at school. Although William provided me with the templates for his focus groups and his final report, there were no direct quotations from the participants, but rather a summary of general points indicating their opinions and experience. I also asked him if he had involved any disabled children participating in the project and he confirmed that he had interviewed

two children with physical impairments, a female wheelchair user and a male with a congenital hip disorder, both in their early teens but regrettably, he did not provide me with a final report. There were therefore some difficulties with my analysis due to the limitations in the provision of data from William. Nonetheless, with the results that were available, I was able to gain a good perspective of the outcomes of his data collection, as well as the barriers faced.

Project Support

An important point raised with regards to project support was the provision of materials by the NGO. Both the university students and the teachers stated that not enough education and stationery materials had been supplied by the project to enable them to carry out curriculum adaptations and the schools did not supply sufficient materials. In this context, the socio-economic situation in Bolivia must be taken into consideration, as reflected by Artiles and Dyson (2009) who suggest that in economically poorer countries “special education has never been fully developed and regular education is desperately lacking in resources” (p 37). Unfortunately, education is competing with other financial concerns such as “health care, social

welfare and defence budgets” (Artiles and Dyson, 2009: 41) which means more reliance on private entities or international projects for basic school materials.

In relation to the area of training, all the parents who had participated in the workshops on community based rehabilitation, mental health and parent education expressed how useful the sessions were. The teachers who had participated in the five month inclusive education diploma, set up and subsidised by the NGO, were in resounding agreement that it was an excellent experience, providing them with useful knowledge regarding disability, the social model and inclusion strategies. The diploma was particularly valuable to them, considering that training for newly qualified teachers in Bolivia, as in other parts of the world, has greater emphasis on SEN, historically based on the individual or “medical” model of disability. This is due to the continuing belief that only teachers interested in the area of supporting disabled children need to receive that specific training (The Integration Alliance, 1992). The university students studying educational psychology were also a valuable feature of the project’s work, particularly in the identification

and intervention work for pupils with learning difficulties, where they were more specialised. Their support was recognised as a key theme in the focus groups' discussions and both parents and teachers felt that they contributed towards a visible improvement in the children's learning.

Positive aspects of the inclusive education process

Part of the implementation process regarding inclusion, as realised by the project, was the intended direct support of disabled children within the classroom. However, the participants had differing views on whether this was beneficial and some stated that having the children in a separate room to carry out intervention work was more successful from the point of view of their improved understanding. Teaching strategies for disabled children vary all over the world, with countries such as England adopting a variety of methods depending on budget, the current education system and legislation. Some children are placed in segregated or semi-segregated units within mainstream schools, which provide separate teaching but alleged improved social inclusion. Others considered to have disciplinary issues are even placed off-site in "Pupil Referral Units", causing

further exclusion (DfEE, 1997b cited in Dyson, 2009: 64). Bolivia has not yet reached the stage of trying out these different practices and to a certain extent, those university students who perceived the creation of separate onsite classrooms as a positive aspect of the inclusion process were simply identifying the “units” strategy already applied in other countries.

Negative and discriminatory attitudes are seen as key barriers towards an inclusive education system and yet the often perceived “negative self-image” (The Integration Alliance, 1992) in the disabled pupils themselves was not identified by those participating in the focus groups. In fact, both the university students and the parents noted that the disabled pupils receiving the support showed a positive attitude and were interested in working with the students; what is more, they really enjoyed them being there. A reason for this could be that “indigenous groups have far fewer education opportunities” (Fletcher and Artiles, 2009: 208) which means being given accessible opportunities to learn is exciting and new.

Negative aspects of the inclusive education process

The question of attitude has already been mentioned from a positive viewpoint in relation to the pupils, however, some parents stated that teachers only supported non-disabled pupils, showing discrimination towards their children or seeing them as a burden, doing nothing to try and improve their learning. A lot of research regarding teacher attitudes has concentrated on their feelings towards the education of disabled children. This research has identified a principle cause of teachers' negative perceptions concerning the inclusion of disabled children as being their feelings of "uneasiness" and thinking they have less knowledge on the subject (Siperstein et al., 2007:142). A negative teacher attitude could therefore be related to lack of knowledge and training in the area, leading to fear of the unknown and hence preferring not to receive disabled children in their classrooms at all. Poor planning and preparation was also identified by the teachers as a weakness in all their schools, emphasising the need for education authorities and higher management figures to receive relevant training to guide the schools more effectively. Indeed, a challenge faced by educational authorities and head teachers, as highlighted by January et al. (1995) is that of "providing direction and assistance whilst at the same time ensuring

participatory planning, site based authority and teacher autonomy” (cited in Power-DeFur and Orellove, 1997: 8).

School conditions

Effective planning and preparation for inclusive education also requires mainstream schools to be adequately equipped with the necessary infrastructure, which entails not just trained teachers, but also equipment, books, appropriate technology and an accessible physical environment (Mitchell and Desai, 2009). When this topic was discussed in the focus groups, they highlighted problems such as inadequate infrastructure; lack of specialist teacher training; and inaccessible learning through inadequate materials and equipment. In fact, there were no positive observations in relation to general school conditions. In my opinion, the comments that were made highlight the lack of awareness regarding the real extent to which their schools conditions are inadequate, for although important points were raised, there was a tendency to focus on the lack of training and knowledge rather than poor infrastructure, technology, lack of personnel and accessibility of the school.

Conclusion

Bolivian legislation related to education and disability has changed focus over the years, from an individual or “medical model” of disability towards the social model of disability. The Ministry of Education has also been active in presenting new proposals and implementing research that favours the inclusion of disabled children in mainstream school and a revision of the current education system. Unfortunately, even with a combination of these research and data collection initiatives and the new education law having been launched, they are still at an early stage of implementation, meaning that Bolivian schools, both mainstream and special, are yet to see any visible changes. This was also reflected in William's findings from the focus groups implemented, using different actors in the education community. These findings will be discussed further in Chapter 6 which draws comparisons between these and the results of my research.

Chapter 5: Evaluating the impact

Introduction

This chapter will comprise a presentation of the results of my study, taking into consideration the relevant research questions and the literature review. I will discuss my findings according to the different research questions asked, namely the achievements and failings of the project. I will also examine the difficulties faced by both William and myself in carrying out the research.

Project achievements

Inclusive education can be effective when it has been carefully planned and implemented (Power-DeFur and Orelove, 1997). An investigation of the project's achievements was therefore important to detect the successful practices and learn from them for future reference. The principle themes from my findings were those of "knowledge and understanding"; "attitudes and feelings" and "support and training". Each theme was then broken down into more specific areas, relevant to the research question regarding the project's achievements.

Knowledge and understanding

In order for inclusive education to be successful, there is a fundamental need for all those involved in the process to have a clear theoretical understanding and knowledge of how to implement inclusive practices (Hick et al., 2009). This was therefore a key research area in order to gain a clear understanding of how and if those involved had improved their knowledge. The project had provided training workshops on different subjects related to inclusion, disability, inclusive approaches and education methods. Thanks to these strategies, most of the people I interviewed demonstrated a basic understanding of the term “inclusive education”. I also discussed with the informants how successful they felt the project had been in raising awareness and commitment in the schools, particularly with the teachers. Victoria explains the following:

Before you arrived, we did not do virtually anything, even though the law said that we should receive all children, so we did not close the door in their faces. But once you arrived, we took it more seriously [...] now we are more committed to our

work.

There was also evidence of knowledge application, such as curriculum adaptations, which are “modifications in the presentation of instruction, expected performance, response modes, changes in materials” (Mangal, 2007: 404). Sarah told me about the situation regarding her son:

The teachers now understand more about his disability, they can teach using curriculum adaptations, because before they just treated him the same as anyone else but I have seen that [...] they are progressing in how to educate him, for example, in classes they have to draw a lot, but now they do not make him draw, they let him stick pictures on with glue.

Attitudes and feelings

Attitudes in society have an enormous influence on the opportunities and experiences that disabled people can encounter (Chambers and Forlin, 2010). Maintaining a positive attitude is important for all those involved in the education process and as a researcher I am not alone

in studying the different attitudes towards disabled pupils in the mainstream classroom (Chambers and Forlin, 2010). There has been little research regarding social experiences of disabled young people or the impact that segregation in special schools has had on their inclusion in society later on in life (O' Connell, 2005). It is therefore important to research whether the methods adopted by the NGO's project helped promote a change in attitude regarding inclusive education so that any successful practices can be learnt from for the future.

There was a divided opinion from the different participants regarding the attitude of teachers and parents, which is understandable considering the heterogeneous nature of people. Amanda, for example, did not observe any visible improvement in the teachers and parents who had shown a negative attitude. However, Mary described a significant change in outlook from a parent of her pupil, Hannah, who has a learning difficulty:

With Hannah [...] her mother stopped working in the afternoons, she left her job to dedicate herself to working with

her daughter and now her daughter has shown improvement.

Sarah explained how the project helped improve her own attitude as a mother:

I used to be negative but now, with this project, it is so good that it appeared, because it has made me feel surer of myself.

I know that my son, I am sure that he will finish school.

Therefore, although the project did help to improve the attitude of some members of the education community, at the same time, it was less successful at changing the attitude of others, who continued to be very negative and resistant to improving the quality of education for their children or pupils.

My studies of the pupils receiving direct support helped gain a better insight into how the project's work had affected their attitudes and feelings towards their education. It must not be forgotten that education has an important part to play in social inclusion and disabled pupils are more likely to experience "stigma and exclusion"

(Barton, 1999: 59) at school, causing low self esteem and a negative attitude towards learning. The project constantly took this into consideration with the pupils, particularly working hard with the teachers and parents in encouraging them and concentrating on the disabled children's abilities. All the pupils I interviewed appeared to demonstrate an active social life at school; indeed, both Martin and Janet said that they had close friends at school. Claire had drawn a picture of her school, portraying her teacher wearing a crown and producing an interesting interpretation of the school as a classic brick building, surrounded by gardens, trees and animals. This, coupled with her mother's explanation of how much she loves going to school and playing with her friends, helped me deduce that she enjoyed being at school and had a positive attitude towards her education and social life. These positive attitudes also concurred with William, who explained:

The interviews with the disabled children were particularly interesting. The vision they have regarding their problems is different from adults, they confront their impairment and the disabilities they face with more strength and optimism.

It was therefore encouraging to see that the pupils themselves did not display negative attitudes towards their learning. However, there was no clear indication from the pupils as to whether the project had actually influenced any changes in their attitude.

Support and training

The last theme that arose from my research analysis encompassed the topic of training and support provided by the project for the participants. As previously highlighted in William's focus groups, the university student support in the schools proved to be a great success. When asked about her son's relationship with the university student and how that support had helped him, Sarah exclaimed the following:

It has been a battle for him, but since your centre arrived [...] we have taken a huge step forward [...]. I feel surer of myself and quite relieved because before, when he was at school, my mind was racing. "How is he? What is he doing? What are they saying to him?", but now when he comes home and I see his

face with his eyes shining, I feel much happier.

In fact, the question of whether educational psychologists make a difference in inclusive education has been subject to mixed opinions over the years, due to their tradition of working in segregated education. Yet even the students studying in a poorly resourced public university in an undeveloped South American city were very open to inclusive practices and keen to learn more. There are also various examples of educational psychologists both overseas and in the UK working on how to directly promote inclusive practices in schools and local authorities (Farrell and Venables, 2009). The research therefore confirms that it is not a consideration that should be ruled out in future practices.

Finally, with regards to training, the adults that I interviewed agreed that the workshops had been very useful for them, particularly for filling the gaps in their knowledge, as Amanda explained, “we have been further trained to understand what we were missing”. Mary described how the diploma in inclusive education also affected her attitude and way of thinking:

When I started the diploma, I had to put many things that I knew into practice, which was something else; it was different from just theory. So now [...] I want to understand better how to deal with these children [...], so at least I can contribute, do something to help.

It is vital that the Bolivian government focuses on a standard training programme that provides all mainstream teachers with a basic knowledge on the subject of inclusion (Forlin and Nguyet, 2010). Although the project did carry out lobbying related to the new education law and provided short training sessions, as well as a diploma (for teachers) on inclusive education, it barely scratched the surface in the area of training. However it did help to contribute towards greater awareness and the training was unanimously regarded as a positive aspect of the project.

Project failings

The weaknesses of the project highlighted in the interviews broke down into the same topics as the achievements with an additional

category of “resources and infrastructure”. These topics are very much in keeping with generally considered barriers to achieving inclusion, such as attitudes, environment, teacher training, language and communication and socioeconomic factors (Sharma and Mahapatra, 2007).

Knowledge and understanding

The question of “who defines disability” (Stone, 1999: 3) must not be taken lightly by a foreign NGO in a developing country. The original needs investigation for the project’s funding proposal was in coordination with El Alto’s local authority disability department. This meant that the project ensured that its ethos was in keeping with the local DPO’s and the Ministry of Education’s vision regarding disability and education. The project could therefore be satisfied that its commitment to promoting the “social model of disability” (Shakespeare, 1996; Oliver, 1990; Bury, 2000) was not projecting external and foreign impositions on Bolivia’s cultural and indigenous values. However, it was transmitted by all the participants that the parents of non-disabled pupils in particular did not have a basic understanding of the term disability or inclusion. During my interview

with William, he explained:

It was concluded that it is the parents of “normal” children who discriminate against the disabled students, this indicates that there must be more training workshops for them.

Although training sessions and general marketing promoted the social model view, my investigations revealed that none of those I interviewed had yet grasped its basic significance, highlighting a greater need for all local organisations to provide clearer explanations of the social model of disability.

Attitudes and feelings

Teacher attitudes towards the inclusion of disabled pupils in their mainstream classrooms is “a key element in furthering inclusive practices” (Sharma et al., 2008 cited in Forlin, 2010: 6). Although the project focused on improving the attitudes of teachers and others involved in the inclusion process, those interviewed still identified continuing negative attitudes and discriminatory practices towards disabled pupils. Whilst interviewing both Janet and Amanda (who

was supporting Janet), the negative attitude of the teacher was suggested by both. When asking Janet about her teacher she said “no, no, no, no, I don’t like her, no” and Amanda explained “she is afraid of her teacher. She does not even want to show her the work that she has done”. However, further investigations would have to be carried out in order to ascertain whether the reason for the teacher's negative attitude towards Janet was specifically because of her disability.

With regards to parents’ attitudes towards inclusive education, research in this area has proved problematic and even “plays a part in compounding exclusion” (Slee, 2011: 49), thanks to a long list of negative attitudes which go against the promotion of inclusion. Unfortunately, many participants in my research also agreed that there was a significant negative outlook shown by many parents of both disabled and non-disabled pupils. Mary explained that the mother of one of her pupils, who has a learning difficulty, did nothing to support her daughter and that Mary only saw the mother at the very end of the school year because her daughter had failed her exams. Another important point mentioned by William was that the

parents he interviewed reported incidents of peer discrimination. Research has shown that the amount of discrimination suffered by disabled children affects their “social and academic competency” (Roberts and Zubrick, 1992 cited in Fishbein, 2002: 235) and therefore is an area that needs to be taken seriously and focused on more in future work.

Support and training

Everyone who was interviewed felt that the NGO’s project had only given superficial and short term support. This was clearly expressed by Mary:

We have had a taste of the cake but we are not going to be able to eat all of it, no, you are not letting us. I mean, you have told us what the needs of the disabled children are, physical, mental; you have given some theory but now in the practical is where we need more support.

This is indicative of the difficulties faced by INGOs running traditional projects in continents like Latin America, for they are inevitably only

able to make a difference for a few people and most likely only for the duration of the project (Grugel, 2003).

Training, particularly for teachers, is perceived as “a critical factor in addressing attitudes and in promoting a greater commitment to inclusion” (Forlin, 2010: 6). Although the participants recognised one of the project achievements to be the training sessions, which helped raise awareness on the subject, they also identified a need for further training and more detailed knowledge. This was conclusively confirmed by the teachers interviewed, as Victoria explained:

We are distanced from the reality that there are children with difficulties. Now we cannot get any training and I am interested in more training courses in order to be able to work with children who have those kinds of difficulties.

This aspect of superficial training also concurs with aforementioned problems faced by traditional NGO projects, highlighting a greater need for organisations to be focusing more on policy changes relating to teacher training, rather than the training itself.

Resources and infrastructure

The last topic of discussion identified as a failing by the project was the provision of available resources. It is a challenge for any school to identify the exact costs needed to become a fully inclusive school, having to consider personnel, transport, facilities, material and equipment and staff development in their budget (Jones and Power-deFur, 1997). This is yet another argument towards changing the role of NGOs from their traditional function to focusing on lobbying and advocacy work, in order to influence policies and budget allocation (Grugel, 2003). My research showed that the adults interviewed were in conclusive agreement that the project had not provided enough materials or equipment for the schools. William explained:

With regards to the university students [...] the inclusive education process would have been improved if they had received the educational materials in time and in sufficient quantity to be able to support pupils with difficulties.

Educational research has identified some of the principle resource needs as time, materials and knowledge, as well as the problem of teachers having limited access to additional resources (Jan Pijl and Meijer, 1997). My research concluded similar problems, for example, Mary stated that the university students could have performed better if they had been given the necessary materials by the project, but also that the school did not provide appropriate materials for adaptations.

Another weakness was the lack of accessible infrastructure and even basic facilities, which is a fundamental necessity for an inclusive school (Jones and Power-deFur, 1997). The NGO's project had attempted to tackle this problem on a small scale by coordinating with the relevant local authority department to analyse infrastructural needs, but was never successful in carrying out any physical changes. Talking about her son's school and bearing in mind his physical impairment, Sarah indicates:

They are not well equipped, because my son [...] needs to be more comfortable on the benches. I remember when he was in

seventh grade that he was doubled over doing his work.

However, it has to be remembered that basic facilities such as running water in the bathrooms, which the schools currently do not have (Appendix 6), are going to be a priority for the local authorities, as opposed to building ramps and wheelchair-accessible rooms, for example. In the meantime, examples of “creativity by school personnel” (Jones and Power-deFur, 1997: 70) to solve some expensive accessibility issues have also been displayed in the schools supported by the project, such as ground floor classrooms for wheelchair users.

Difficulties faced in collecting the data

Even though the research carried out by both me and William was on a small scale, there were still difficulties faced in data collection. In theory, I should have faced more problems than William, considering that I was not from the same country and faced such issues as not being accepted or the risk of asking inappropriate questions (Stone, 1997). However, it was William who faced more barriers in obtaining information. This may have been due to the

fact that I had been working in the project since it had started but William had only been contracted just nine months before the end of the project. He explained that:

I had some initial difficulties with the participation of parents because they were not very open with me, perhaps due to an initial lack of trust.

The fact that he had been unable to carry out data collection from the beginning of the project meant that his monitoring results were less effective, for he had not been able to compare the schools performances “before and after intervention implementation” (Cihak, 2011: 420).

I was also able to learn from the barriers highlighted by William in our interview and pre-empt those difficulties when carrying out my data collection. This was particularly relevant to my data collection methods with the disabled children, who had differing methods of communication. In order to ensure that I was using “interviewing techniques which get as ‘close’ to the individual as is possible”

(Jones and Hirst, 1990 cited in Parker and Baldwin, 1992: 199), I had decided to use the medium of drawing, principally with the two younger participants, as I hoped it would be more enjoyable and interesting for them. This being said, I then had to compensate for the validity of my results and potential bias (Eckhardt and Anastas, 2007) in my interpretations of the drawings.

My main difficulty in carrying out the data collection was finding a suitable environment to carry out the interview. This was due to the lack of available time that most of the involved participants had, which meant I had to adapt to their needs, making it harder to find quiet and appropriate settings. Apart from that, I faced no hostility from anyone regarding the questions I asked, nor was I refused permission to carry out an interview. Another obvious issue that I faced in relation to the data collection from the children was that of child protection (Roberts, 2000). I felt it was not acceptable to carry out an interview without the presence of a parent or family member, considering their age. In the case of Martin, the interview was carried out with the presence of his mother and although she hardly intervened during the interview, I needed to take into account the

influence of her presence on Martin's answers. Janet's interview took place at her home but there was no physical presence of a family member in the room during the interview. Finally, Claire, who is only six years old, drew the picture in her mother's presence, which may have influenced what she included in the drawing, as well as my interpretation being affected by the need for her mother's help in understanding it, due to communication difficulties.

Conclusion

Through a more detailed analysis of my results, I was able to conclude a number of important findings regarding the impact of the project's work on the schools and their communities. My findings highlighted some optimistic results from the NGO's work, including a generally more positive attitude towards disabled pupils and their inclusion in mainstream schools; improved support for the disabled pupils in the schools and a better understanding of disability, discrimination and inclusion. I also learnt about the day to day difficulties faced by those involved in the NGO's work, such as attitudinal and environmental barriers and lack of materials. Having analysed the positive and negative outcomes of the research, it was

important to examine the obstacles faced by both myself and William in the data collection process to demonstrate the steps taken to overcome those barriers and to present the reasoning behind data collection methods and issues related to bias and ethics that were considered. In the following chapter, I will discuss the relationship between my results and William's findings.

Chapter 6: Comparing and contrasting the research results: is inclusive education possible in EI Alto?

Introduction

In this chapter I will be bringing together the results that I presented in Chapters 4 and 5, highlighting their similarities and differences, as well as discussing the conclusions reached with regards to the research questions. The chapter will finish with a discussion around the final research question that asks whether inclusive education is actually possible in mainstream schools in AI Alto.

How effective was the project's monitoring?

Certain factors need to be taken into consideration with regards to the effectiveness of William's monitoring of the project. Firstly, Bolivia is not as developed as other countries in the area of research, which means that any type of research will most likely be considered as valuable in some form. Secondly, the organisation that implemented the project and likewise carried out the monitoring has a good reputation both countrywide and globally. Finally, there has been very little research carried out regarding inclusive

education with the social model perspective, particularly in El Alto. All these factors help to improve the odds of the results being suitably effective in showing how inclusive education practices can be improved.

In spite of difficulties faced in the implementation of his focus groups, William was still able to produce useful results regarding the project's impact. This consequently presented some general information that may be helpful for other organisations in the future, if dissemination is effective. It is important to highlight two points with regards to William's results and those of my interview with him. Firstly, the project itself only had a superficial impact on the inclusive education process in the schools, which is representative of the traditional INGO role in developing countries (Grugel, 2003). Indeed, some research has shown that:

To date, nothing has indicated that, measured against developmental benchmarks such as effectiveness, efficiency and significance, the quality of NGO inputs in such sectors as infrastructure and advisory services for parastatals is better

than that of government implementation organisations
(Narasaiah, 2007: 9)

The short term and minimal impact of the NGO's project coupled with research findings to dispute the effectiveness of such work in developing countries could present an argument for reflecting on NGOs' roles and objectives in the future, when working on a small scale in areas such as education.

Secondly, it could be suggested that William had needed more time at the planning stage of his research, in order to identify the most appropriate methods to gain effective, practical and specific results. The importance of the researcher's role and the need for sufficient planning is highlighted by Hughes (1980) when he explains:

Every research tool or procedure is inextricably embedded in commitments to particular versions of the world and ways of knowing that world made by researchers using them (cited in Corbetta, 2003:12)

However, when considering this, it is important to remember that the

NGO contracted William in the second year of the implementation of its project and therefore he faced some avoidable barriers to the fulfilment of his work. Indeed, if the NGO intended to present William's results to relevant actors in the education field, there was probably very little new information to show in the findings. However, it would demonstrate a good example of the practical difficulties and successful practices in the promotion of inclusive education, as opposed to theoretical suppositions.

Bringing it together

As can be seen from both William and my own findings, the NGO's project appears to have provided only a superficial amount of support regarding inclusive education in the schools involved. Although it succeeded in raising awareness in the twelve schools where it worked, with more teachers, parents and pupils now aware of the term disability and having a better understanding, there is still an individual or "medical model" viewpoint even from those who received specialised training in the social model. What is more, the application of that knowledge gained is impeded by many factors. The project had an ambitious objective that was impossible to

reach, yet if it had applied similar work to a smaller population, such as one or two pilot schools, it could have produced some really effective and practical results that could have benefited the Ministry of Education and local education authorities.

Is inclusive education possible in El Alto and does it have a future?

From the analysis shown in my conclusions, inclusive education could be achieved in El Alto, but mainstream schools and local communities are not yet fully prepared and require well planned long term solutions. It is clear that a “system-wide view and restructuring is necessary” (Fletcher and Artiles, 2009: 211) which requires a long term plan set out by the Ministry of Education and full commitment by the government both financially and in the implementation process. The different themes highlighted in the research analysis may act as a basic initial guide to some of the areas that need to be taken into consideration during the planning of an inclusive education process.

Fletcher and Artiles (2009) recommend that to improve the inclusive education process, “pilot inclusion models in local public schools or

districts to test their effectiveness with different groups of students” (p 213) are needed. Indeed, if the project had focused on being a pilot venture in just one or two schools and had worked only with disabled children, rather than expanding its remit to other children with, for example, dyslexia or even psychological problems, then its findings would have been more applicable and useful to the government in how to plan the inclusive education process over the next five to ten years.

In order for inclusive education to be successful, the disabled population has to stop being considered as an “after-thought” (The Integration Alliance, 1992) and start being acknowledged as an integral part of our society. The NGO's project worked hard on the aspect of work that involved promoting inclusive education, particularly raising awareness on how disabled people should be viewed. My recommendation is therefore twofold in that, firstly, there should be an implementation of pilot projects in mainstream schools in different parts of the country, in order to examine different pupils' needs, test effectiveness (Fletcher and Artiles, 2009) and highlight regional differences. If the projects are governmental, with specialist

consultants, it would be a more efficient use of time and more applicable for the future, as long-term sustainability is essential. If projects are run by INGOs, they would need to create strong links with the public bodies and show commitment in sharing their findings with the Ministry of Education and local education authorities. Pilot project results would need to be efficiently and clearly recorded in order to be able to “disseminate information about effective practices and to create systems of support for practitioners” (Fletcher and Artiles, 2009: 213).

The other part of my recommendation relates to political lobbying and effective legislation. In concordance with Jenny Corbett’s (2001) view of inclusive education being a “political issue” (p 15), the inclusion of disabled children is more likely to be successful by lobbying and pressurising the country’s government into producing effective legislation, committed long-term planning and clear frameworks (Jan Pijl and Meijer, 1997). The Bolivian government has recently passed a new education law that shows little promise in seriously addressing issues regarding the inclusion of disabled pupils. It would therefore be more beneficial to the country if INGOs

concentrated their efforts on working alongside national charities, institutes and networks in promoting a “reconstruction of schooling” (Slee, 1998 cited in Oliver, 2000: 4) to ensure that there is sufficient investment in school materials, equipment, technology and infrastructures, as well as lobbying for an accessible curriculum and obligatory modules on inclusive practices and disability equality in teacher training (The Integration Allowance, 1992).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have brought together my conclusions regarding each research question, in accordance with my findings and those of William. I have discovered that both sets of results demonstrate similar outcomes; that the work of the NGO's project only had a superficial impact, raising awareness and increasing basic knowledge in the area of disability and inclusive education. William faced several barriers during the planning and implementation of his research, such as time, resources, bureaucracy and attitudes. Even though he was unable to present a profound analysis of his findings or any ground-breaking discoveries in his research, he was still able to practically demonstrate the difficulties faced and the tools that

were effective in promoting inclusive education. As can be seen from both the research results, mainstream schools in El Alto are under-prepared in receiving and including disabled pupils and without intense government intervention, will be in a similar position for many years to come.

Chapter 7: Research issues and final conclusions

Introduction

This final chapter will be discussing the wider implications of my results in relation to other parts of Bolivia and examining the seriousness with which my research can be taken. Throughout my research, I took into consideration the importance of the reliability and validity of my findings, for as a researcher I want those who read my results to take the work that I have carried out in earnest. If my work is taken seriously, then its dissemination is invaluable and could play an important part in raising awareness about disabled children and their right to receive an education. I will finish this chapter with final thoughts regarding my research, presenting a concise conclusion and leaving my readers with food for thought and reflection.

Benefits on a wider scale

When looking at the extent to which the findings of my research study could be generalised and applied to broader populations and settings (Van de Riet and Durrheim, 1999), I was always aware that

the very nature of my study was going to limit its generalisability. This is mainly due to Bolivia's size, changeable environments and its pronounced region-specific indigenous cultures, for Quechua and Aymara make up 55% of the population (Lougheed, 2004). Indeed, bearing in mind that "linguists believe that there are more than 30 languages spoken in Bolivia" (Newton, 2010:17) and the many cultural customs and beliefs that exist, it would be my suggestion that the research study findings are best applied only to the city of El Alto and, on a superficial level, to other urban areas in Bolivia.

The usefulness of the findings in rural areas is not as applicable, due to the visible difference in economy, practices and ways of life compared with urban regions. In fact, a number of participants in the focus groups, as well as both the teachers I interviewed, highlighted the need for a greater emphasis of support in the rural areas. Fletcher and Artiles (2009) identified a school drop out rate of 90% in the rural areas of Bolivia which is due to many factors. Indeed, Bolivia is such a low populated and vast country, that some children can spend hours just walking to their nearest school. This means that rural areas require a much higher level of funding and

attention in order to recover from their current conditions in comparison with urban schools. However, despite the limited generalisability of my research at the very detailed level, it is hoped that insights can be gained for similar projects and in particular demonstrate the ways in which inclusive practices can be applied.

Validity and reliability

Throughout my research, ensuring a continual validation of my work was considered very important, for it is “a process whereby the researcher earns the confidence of the reader that he or she has ‘gotten it right’” (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011: 48). In order to provide a trustworthy and worthwhile (Cohen et al., 2000) piece of research, I have made certain that the NGO's project's work has been clearly explained and that the contextual framework has been outlined in order to provide an image of Bolivia's cultural, educational legislative and socio-economic situation. I presented basic descriptions of the participants involved, whilst honouring their anonymity, as well as depictions of school conditions (Appendix 6). I also explained my personal position with regards to the research, having been an original member of the technical team. Achieving

objectivity is considered “one of the most important properties of social research” (Robson, 2002: 23) and so throughout the research I always made a conscious effort to maintain an impartial view, particularly during the analysis and presentation. Another key issue that I was conscious of during my study was the fact that my research was carried out in Spanish, I therefore had to make certain that I provided a true representation in English of the comments given by the participants.

The reliability of my studies depended on showing a link between the data I have documented and what is actually happening “in the natural setting that is being researched” (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992, cited in Cohen, et al., 2000:19). In the presentation of my research, I showed the connection between the data I have recorded and the setting where it has been researched. My depiction of the participants and their surrounding environment was closely related to the information given by the participants that I have recorded. For example, descriptions of the environmental settings that I, as the researcher, have provided concur with those described by the participants regarding school conditions, training and so on. I have

fully documented the interviews carried out, not only having taken notes but also recording and fully transcribing them (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011). The transcriptions have then be translated into English and revised to ensure that a true interpretation of the original contents has been maintained. I have also displayed examples of interview schedules (Appendices 1-3) and templates of the letters of permission (Appendices 4 and 5), all of which were signed.

Dissemination

It has been proposed by Jenny Morris that every researcher should consider some important points regarding their research, such as who they want it to influence; who they want to be able to relate to it and who they want to make aware of it (Parker and Baldwin, 1992). Although my findings will not be influencing Bolivian policy on the education system, they can highlight important points that should to be taken into future consideration. I need to bear in mind that a short one or two page summary in Spanish is more likely to be read than a longer piece of work. This could be highly beneficial in the dissemination of my findings to key actors who need to take the

subject of inclusive education seriously and if nothing else, it may trigger an awareness of the importance of research in this area.

My original plan had been to present my findings to the La Paz Equality Network, a group of organisations and institutions of and for disabled people who work together to promote equality and fight discrimination in the city of La Paz and El Alto. During the NGO's project, I had been the representative for the Education Commission, participating in, as well as occasionally organising the monthly meetings. I had hoped to give a presentation to the commission regarding my findings, which would have been especially beneficial, considering that a representative from the Ministry of Education and other key members of the education authority participate. However, as had been identified during my risk assessment, visa implications prevented me from carrying this out. As an alternative, I have decided to write an article in the "Inspira" magazine, which is a Bolivian publication that discusses current sustainable development and human rights issues. As the magazine has both a website and monthly publication, it reaches a great deal of people both nationally and internationally. Finally, I am

providing all the relevant actors, including those who I had been hoping to present the findings to in person, with a copy of my translated summary.

Final conclusions

Any resident of the indigenous city of El Alto faces a life which holds “a mix of urban and rural, collectivism and individualism, egalitarianism and hierarchy” (Lazar, 2008: 258). This is hard enough to contend with for non-disabled members of El Alto’s population, but presents even more a challenge for its disabled residents. Most people struggle with every day living and face their battle from an early age, when they attend schools which are visibly lacking in resources, trained educators and adequate infrastructures. A large number of the mothers that I worked with had not been educated beyond primary school level, which begs the question of how their disabled children, along with their numerous brothers and sisters, will receive the appropriate stimulation, support and motivation to develop and progress.

The NGO's project's general objectives had been to contribute towards the creation of a culture that respects the rights and obligations towards disabled people, promoting healthy, participatory and inclusive lives. It also hoped to contribute towards the equitable access of services (EuropeAid, 2009). The project had been staggeringly ambitious from the outset, choosing a greater number of schools than originally planned and taking on the task of supporting not only disabled children but also those with learning difficulties. The combination of the small project team size and the socio-economic position of El Alto meant that only the surface was scratched.

The results of my research showed how William's work was effective on a superficial level but did not generate a great deal of new data, perhaps with the exception of the university students' successful endeavours. All the same, it did provide good, general information regarding the practical difficulties that other organisations may face and highlighted good practices and useful tools that bring effective results. My analysis identified the key issues regarding the promotion of inclusive education in mainstream schools, specific to

those participating in the project. The results helped to highlight future ideas and suggestions, such as the implementation of thorough and detailed pilot projects in schools situated in selected areas of the country, in order to identify specific needs and carry out trial practices (Fletcher and Artiles, 2009). The findings also recognised the need to concentrate on political lobbying to improve education legislation and promote the necessity for governmental budget allocation in the area of inclusive education.

The main achievement shown from the analysis of the results from both my work and William's monitoring was an increased awareness regarding disability and inclusion, as well as improved basic knowledge on the same subjects through training and marketing carried out by the NGO's project's team and other specialists. So the answer to the question of whether inclusive education is a real possibility for El Alto's disabled population lies in the central and local governments taking the education system seriously in their budgeting and planning. That way, they can ensure that in the distant future, they can honestly say that their education system is

accessible to all those exercising their basic human right to education.

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Appendix 1: Interview schedule for the monitoring specialist

- 1) How did you decide to carry out the monitoring – what were the reasons behind your methods?
- 2) Did you feel that the way the monitoring was carried out gave enough information regarding the impact of the project?
- 3) Is there anything you would do differently and why?
- 4) What were the main obstacles you faced in getting the information?
- 5) What were the main achievements in getting the results?
- 6) Did you talk to disabled children regarding the support they received?
- 7) How was your experience in interviewing or carrying out focus groups with non-disabled/ disabled children?
- 8) Did the focus groups contribute with ideas in order to improve inclusion?
Can you detail some of their ideas?

Appendix 2: Example of interview schedule for the adults

- 1) What do you understand by the term inclusive education?
- 2) What do you understand by the term disability?
- 3) Do you feel that the project achieved inclusive education? (Grade – how successful)
- 4) What did the project do to help the school in including disabled children? What more could it have done?
- 5) What did the teachers in the school do to help? Do you think that there is an acceptance of disabled children by the teachers?
- 6) What did the university students do to help? What more could have been done?
- 7) What has been the attitude of the parents with non-disabled children?
- 8) What has been the attitude of the parents with disabled children?
- 9) Do the parents you know with disabled children support them outside school?
- 10) Do you have disabled children in your class? If yes, what do you do to support them?
- 11) What hinders you from being able to support them?
- 12) What is needed in the future to be able to include disabled children in your school?
- 13) How has the new law affected the inclusion of disabled children in 2011?

Appendix 3: Example of interview schedule for the pupils

- 1) What is your favourite subject? (try to expand on why)
- 2) What is your least favourite subject? (try to expand on why)
- 3) What do you find hard to do at school?
- 4) What do you find easiest to do at school?
- 5) What did the university student do to help you?
- 6) How did you get on with the university student?
- 7) How do you get on with your teacher?
- 8) How does your teacher help you?
- 9) How do you get on with your classmates?
- 10) What do you normally do when you get home from school?
- 11) What would you like to do in the future? (job, study etc.)

Appendix 4: Copy of consent form given to key actors in the project and schools (Spanish and English translation)

La Paz, 8 de febrero de 2011

A la gentil atención de:

Director
Unidad Educativa
Presente.-

Objeto: Permiso para realizar la investigación de mi tesis con el tema de inclusión educativa.

En primer lugar reciba un saludo cordial.

El motivo de esta carta es para solicitar permiso de realizar investigaciones para mi tesis sobre educación inclusiva y el trabajo realizado por el proyecto “.....”.

El propósito de mi tesis es evaluar con un mayor énfasis en el monitoreo e impacto del proyecto “.....” ejecutado en la ciudad de El Alto, realizando una investigación de las dificultades y logros en el desempeño del mismo. Los resultados de la investigación serán completamente anónimos, sin mencionar el nombre de la ONG, de las unidades educativas y personas involucradas.

La maestría que estoy realizando con la Universidad de Leeds en Inglaterra lleva por nombre “Disability Studies”. Es mi intención adoptar el mismo enfoque que el proyecto utiliza, el cual es el modelo social de discapacidad. Este modelo considera a la discapacidad como resultado de la discriminación por la sociedad. En cambio, el modelo adoptado por otras organizaciones, el cual es el modelo médico, conceptualiza que las personas con discapacidad requieren un apoyo protegido para poder vivir.

Se desean, podría proporcionarles una copia de mi tesis. Si usted está de acuerdo, le agradeceré llenar el formato de aprobación en la parte inferior de la carta.

Sin otro particular y quedando a la espera de una respuesta positiva, me despido con las consideraciones más distinguidas.

Lic. Anna Janota

Yo, Lic. Director de la Unidad Educativa, autorizo a Anna Janota, para realizar su investigación de tesis sobre el proyecto del “.....” con los actores de la Unidad Educativa

Firma

Fecha

Yo, Anna Janota, me comprometo a mantener el anonimato completo en la tesis

Firma

Fecha

La Paz, 8th February 2011

For the attention of:

Head Teacher
School

Objective: Permission to carry out my dissertation research on inclusive education

I am writing this letter to request permission to carry out research for my dissertation on the subject of inclusive education and the work carried out by the project “.....”.

The aim of my dissertation is to evaluate the monitoring and impact of the project “.....” which took place in the city of El Alto, carrying out an investigation of the difficulties and achievements during its execution. The research results will be completely anonymous and will not mention the name of the NGO, the schools or the people involved.

The research is for a Masters that I am studying with the University of Leeds in England called Disability Studies. It is my intention to adopt the same approach as the project, which is the social model of disability. This model considers disability to be a result of discrimination in society, as opposed to the other model used by other organisations which is the medical model that conceptualizes disabled people as needing protection in order to be able to live.

If you so desire, I can provide you with a copy of my dissertation. If you are in agreement, I would appreciate it if you could fill out the consent form below.

Yours Sincerely,

Anna Janota (BA Hons)

I, Head Teacher of the school, authorise Anna Janota to carry out her dissertation research on the project “.....” with members of the school community

Signature

Date

I, Anna Janota, promise to maintain complete anonymity in my dissertation

Signature

Date

Appendix 5: Copy of consent form for parents of disabled children
(Spanish and English Translation)

Yo, Mamá de..... doy permiso a Anna Janota
para realizar una entrevista a mi hijo/a sobre sus experiencias de inclusión en la unidad educativa a la
que asiste.

Fecha

Firma.....

I, mother of give permission to Anna Janota
to carry out an interview with my son/ daughter about their experiences of inclusion in the school that they
attend.

Date

Signature.....

Appendix 6: Sample photos of the schools



Example of school toilets



Example of playground and classrooms



Example of school grounds



Example of playground/ sports area