



SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN BOYS, GIRLS AND ADOLESCENTS: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH FROM PRE-PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE AND LINK WITH SOCIETY

NECESIDADES EDUCATIVAS ESPECIALES EN NIÑOS, NIÑAS Y ADOLESCENTES: UN ABORDAJE INTERDISCIPLINARIO DESDE LA PRÁCTICA PREPROFESIONAL Y VINCULACIÓN CON LA SOCIEDAD

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ABSTRACT:

The research was carried out in the Diagnostic, Research, Psychopedagogical and Inclusion Support Unit -UDIPSAI-, created in November 2014 within the framework of the research and community outreach project "Psychopedagogical Support", funded by the Catholic University of Cuenca, in order to achieve the substantive functions of higher education such as the resolution of society's problems facing needs and demands of the Cuenca canton. The largest population served comes from public institutions 65%, private 33% and fiscomisional 2%; the intervention has made it possible to significantly improve the teaching-learning processes as well as the personal, family and community life conditions of the beneficiaries. The research was developed during the period September 2016 - September 2019, having a universe of 2056 users without significant difference based on gender; the area of greatest attention was Educational Psychology (57%), followed by Clinical Psychology (19%), Language Therapy (8%), Social Work (6%), Dentistry (6%) and Pedagogical Recovery (2%). Information was collected through the application of a structured survey to teachers of the beneficiary educational institutions and parents of the students who were attended; The results show that 96% of the respondents rate UDIPSAI services as excellent, and that the evaluation process and psychopedagogical intervention promoted the achievement of the inclusive education principle.

Keywords: Disability, Inclusion, Psycho-pedagogical Intervention, Special Educational Needs.

RESUMEN:

La investigación se llevó a cabo en la Unidad de diagnóstico, investigación, psicopedagógico y apoyo a la inclusión -UDIPSAI-, creada en noviembre de 2014 en el marco del proyecto de investigación y vinculación "Apoyo psicopedagógico", financiado por la Universidad Católica de Cuenca, en aras de alcanzar las funciones sustantivas de la educación superior como la resolución de problemáticas de la sociedad frente a las necesidades y demandas del cantón Cuenca. La mayor población atendida proviene de instituciones fiscales con un 65%, particular con el 33% y el fiscomisional con el 2%; la intervención ha permitido mejorar significativamente los procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje así como las condiciones y el entorno de vida personal, familiar y comunitario de los beneficiarios. La investigación se desarrolló durante el período septiembre 2016 - septiembre 2019 teniendo un universo de 2056 usuarios sin diferencia significativa en función del género; el área de mayor atención fue la Psicología Educativa con el 57%, seguida de Psicología Clínica (19%), Terapia del Lenguaje (8%), Trabajo Social (6%), Odontología (6%) y Recuperación Pedagógica con el 2%. Se recopiló información mediante la aplicación de una encuesta estructurada a los docentes de las instituciones educativas beneficiarias y a los padres de familia de los estudiantes que fueron atendidos; los resultados evidencian que, el 96% de los encuestados califican como excelentes los servicios de la Unidad, y que el proceso de evaluación e intervención psicopedagógica promovió el alcance del principio de la educación inclusiva.

Palabras Clave: Discapacidad, inclusión, intervención psicopedagógica, necesidades educativas especiales.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) to strengthen education, implemented the Inclusion Support Units (UDAI), made up of professionals in educational psychology whose mission was to carry out the psychopedagogical evaluation of students with or without disabilities and presented learning difficulties, to place them in the educational system that best suits them, this educational service was available to students with special educational needs in zone 6.

The Catholic University of Cuenca's motto is "Educational Community at the service of the people" and based on this moral and human principle UDIPSAI Project is created in Cuenca city, for children, adolescents and young people with special educational needs, with or without disabilities, where they have a space to be comprehensively evaluated from an inclusive psychopedagogical perspective, in order to provide better opportunities to develop skills and abilities that allow them to be included in ordinary education classrooms along with their pairs.

Based on the current legislation LOES (Organic Law of Higher Education), on the

social responsibility of the university through projects of community service, UDIPSAI sets up an area where students and teachers, from different careers are benefited in this project. In the same way, it constitutes a unit where students and teachers create a pre-professional preparation and practices at the service of the community.

State of the Art

The Unit for Diagnosis, Psychopedagogical Research and Inclusion Support (UDIPSAI) began in November 2014 as a research project financed by the Catholic University of Cuenca for two years, whose general objective was to provide a specialized educational service, through comprehensive evaluation, counseling, psychopedagogical intervention and support for the inclusion of students with or without disabilities, who present special educational needs (NEE), understood as the difficulty shown by the student to learn at the same rate as his peers (Marchesi, 2012). Once two years have passed and the research project has concluded, thanks to the reception of internal and external users, UDIPSAI in November 2016 becomes a project of connection with society, with a



transdisciplinary approach including several careers of the University; the educational service of psychopedagogical evaluation and support for inclusion is expanded to university students. Finally, in 2019, it comprised a diagnostic unit. (UDIPSAI, 2020).

According to the National Council of Equality for Disabilities (CONADIS), it indicates that the total number of students with disabilities in Ecuador is 49,109 which are spread in Elementary and High School education; the type of disability found is as followed 51.39% intellectual, 26.25% physical, 10.49% auditory, 5.96% psychosocial and 5.92% visual; While there are 5,917 students with disabilities who are enrolled in Universities and Polytechnic Colleges until 2018, nationwide. (CONADIS, 2020).

At the Higher educational level, 168 students with educational needs associated or not with disability have been attended; 114 require curricular adaptations to achieve learning outcomes; 1 Pedagogical support has been recommended in reading and writing skills, 1 student received speech, the rest of them needed psychological support. It is important to highlight the level of impact

showed that 60% of the students, who belong to higher educational inclusion, improved their academic, social and family quality of life.

To adapt the learning development of people with NEE, the Ministry of Education implemented Inclusion Support Units (UDAI) to guarantee access, permanence, and participation of children and adolescents in the regular educational system. The UDAs are technical-operational agencies in charge of providing technical, methodological and conceptual basis support through professionals. However, one of the problems within inclusive education has been the lack of district units to support inclusion, due to a limited interest of relatives of people with NEE to actively participate as members of a free prejudice society. (Ministry of Education, 2013).

In the Constitution of Ecuador, 2008 establishes that education must be centered on the human being and will guarantee its holistic development, within the framework of respect for human rights, a sustainable environment and democracy; It will be participatory, mandatory, intercultural, democratic, inclusive and diverse, of quality



and warmth; will promote gender equality, justice, solidarity and peace; It will stimulate the critical sense, art and physical culture, individual and community initiative, and the development of competencies and capacities to create and work. (Const., 2008, art 27).

Likewise, in the Organic Law of Higher Education (LOES), UDIPSAI in adherence to article 117 merges the practical exercise of the three substantive axes such as teaching, research and linkage, complementing theory with practice, as well as promotes places for pre-professional practices, experiential experiences and critical reflection (LOES, 2008.art 117)

In 2019 the Council of Higher Education (CES). Art. 5 mentions the rights approach in higher education, as the foundation that guides the policies, programs and plans of the High Education Institutions (IES), in order to settle on specific and preferential affirmative actions towards the priority attention groups of society, in compliance with what is established by current regulations and the search for social inclusion. The same that will be incorporated into the institutional equality plan. (Council of Higher Education, 2019) .

In observance what CES mentions, the university responds by generating affirmative actions through this unit that provides attention to priority groups with a social inclusion approach.

Intervention from the different areas in UDIPSAI.

UDIPSAI has strengthened its attention due to the different areas of intervention, one of them is educational psychology, which is different from other branches because its goal is an approach to educational process (Alarcón Hernandez, 2001). Within this area, 1171 students of different educational levels: Preschool, Elementary, High school and Higher level were treated, focusing on cognitive aspects, visual-manual coordination, abstract reasoning, concepts and basic functions related to the curricular level to issue a diagnosis by identifying students' potentialities, abilities, skills to provide resources, recommendations and strategies to educational institutions in teaching-learning process to be successful.

In the area of clinical psychology, 390 users with different diagnoses were treated. This area responsibly focused on each NEE requirements of children and adolescents, in



some cases extending to the family, encompassing each of the required needs such as: mental health, research, diagnosis and treatment through psychotherapy, counseling, advice and assessment, approaching to psychological evaluation, (Cardona, Chiner, & Lattur, 2006). Each of these processes are personal, however, they are governed by a protocol that involves their educational, family and social environment.

According to Anzola (2005) "the clinical psychologist then acts as a consultant in the educational process" (p. 153) by intervening on students and their circumstances, to favor a better mental disposition in order to actively participate in the learning process.

Provide attention to boys and girls with special needs who show difficulties at the language level, should receive a speech therapy treatment (Moran, Vera, & Morán, 2019). Within this area, 164 users with difficulties of speech, articulation and other were treated. The Pedagogy area is present " whose purpose is to determine the nature of the difficulties, their severity and the underlying factors to provide educational aid" (Alvarez, Alcazar, 2010, p. 2).

Among Psychopedagogy, some techniques such as psychopedagogical evaluation, it is a constant and systematic process through which the degree of development of a student can be appreciated as a consequence of the educational process plus the natural and social interaction. (Llanezca, 2007). 41 users were treated in this area. Another important area is Early Stimulation, the main purpose is to enhance the child's brain functions by using teaching materials and recreational activities, which improve the linguistic cognitive functionality. (Esteves, Avilés, & Matamoros, 2018).

Social Work in the face of special educational needs, sets clear goals to improve people's well-being, quality of life, violation of rights, social awareness, and promotes active participation within society. (Lima, Disability, social services and social work. [Blog entry], 2019). Consequently, this area opens socioeconomic files, to identify different aspects such as: family composition, health, education, income, expenses, and follow-up cases, in total 123 users were attended. Regarding the area of Social Communication, the talks, counseling, supporting in organization, planning, program execution, coverage, application of surveys and



organization of workshops were the activities that carried out fully in UDIPSAI.

Another UDIPSAI area is Dentistry, responsible for the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of diseases that affect the stomatognathic system as well as teeth, gums, jaws, periodontal tissue, which is paramount in this science. Dentistry area is essential, 123 users with oral difficulties were treated (Nocchi, E, 2008).

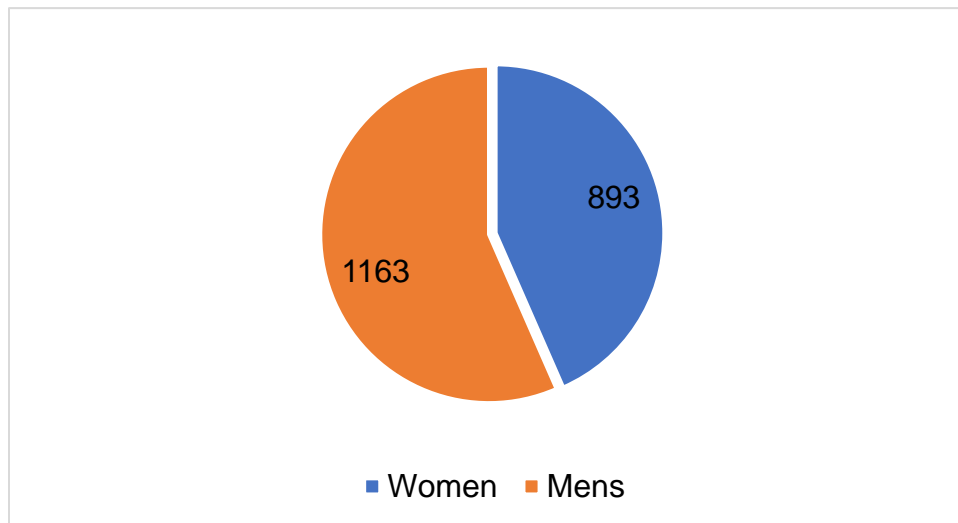
2. METHODOLOGY

The type of research was quantitative, the technique for collecting information was the structured survey for teachers of the beneficiary educational institutions, and parents of students who were treated in different areas.

3. RESULTS

The work carried out by UDIPSAI during the period September 2016-September 2019 shows the following results:

Figure 1. Number of beneficiaries served by UDIPSAI.



Source: UDIPSAI: Database, UDIPSAI 2019.

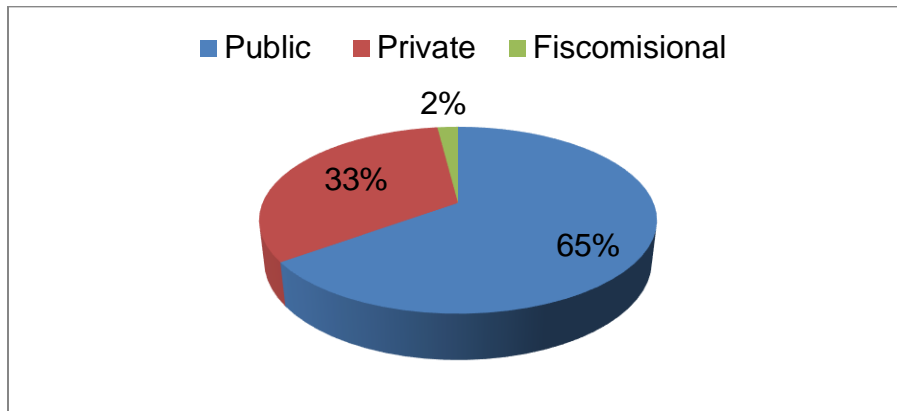
Elaborated by: Cárdenas Janneth, Herrera Blanca & Flores Elizabeth.

Users who were treated in the unit were considered to be the total population of 2,056 students with special educational

needs, 1,163 men (56%) and 893 women (43%).



Figure 2. Educational institutions served by UDIPSAI.



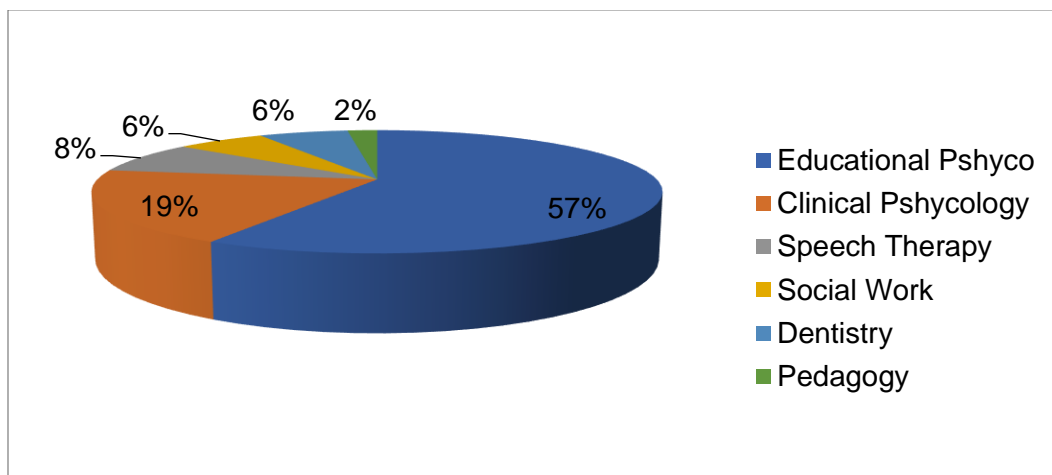
Source: Database, UDIPSAI 2019.

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UDIPSAI committed to the educational service to support those who do not have the necessary resources such as: children, adolescents and youth with NEE the same that are in the different levels: Pre-school, Elementary, High school and Higher level.

Intervening with those cases coming from zone 6, the biggest reception was from the public sector 65%, followed by the private sector 33% and the fiscomisional sector 2%, as shown in figure 2.

Figure 3. Attention by Area



Source: Database, UDIPSAI 2019.

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The area of greatest attention is Educational Psychology 57%, followed by Clinical Psychology (19%), Speech Therapy (8%),

Social Work (6%), Dentistry (6%) and Pedagogical Recovery 2%.

Figure 4. Quality of service provided by UDIPSAI.



Source: Database, UDIPSAI 2019.

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To measure the quality of the service provided by UDIPSAI, information was collected through the application of a survey to the parents of the beneficiaries and

teachers, obtaining the following information: 96% of those surveyed consider the quality of the service provided by UDIPSAI is excellent.

Figure 5. Level of impact of the UDIPSAI intervention.



Source: Database, UDIPSAI 2019.

Elaborated by: Cárdenas Janneth, Herrera Blanca & Flores Elizabeth.



On the other hand, in the measurement of impact, 91% of the users emphasized that the process of evaluation and psychopedagogical intervention contributed to the user's needs fulfillment.

4. DISCUSSION

In the present research, a strong association between the importance of psychopedagogical evaluation and the identification of special educational needs is observed, as it is shown in the investigation "Psychopedagogical evaluation of children with special educational needs: An interdisciplinary methodological proposal", a process that enables to take actions in the educational field, eliminating barriers for inclusion and integration (Euan & Echeverría, 2016). Besides, it reaffirms the need and importance of a psychopedagogical diagnosis that allows the integration of students with special educational needs into regular education. (Vergara & Fernández, 2017) The studies previously mentioned, corroborate the results of this research where the specialized educational service of psychopedagogical evaluation has benefited teachers and students with special educational needs,

allowing the improvement of the teaching-learning process and the quality of personal, social and family life of the users.

It should not be underestimated what has been expressed in different studies, which show the functionality of the educational psychology evaluation in cases of special needs, taking as a priority, to implement designs of multidisciplinary educational psychology evaluation to face real situations from different areas of intervention that students with special needs live daily into the teaching-learning process (García, Mendoza, & Toro, 2019). Similarly, Gutiérrez & Gómez (2017) in an investigation on "The interdisciplinary work. Reflections of the support teacher on its functionality in special education services" state that the multidisciplinary work that serves students with special needs at the individual and group level, consider teamwork as a substantial element for making decisions to get an efficient intervention. Criteria that validate the performance of the UDIPSAI from the different areas of intervention through the multidisciplinary team: Educational Psychology, Clinical Psychology, Speech Therapy, Pedagogical Recovery,



Social Work and Dentistry guarantee an integral intervention.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The number of users served in the unit during the period September 2016-September 2019 was 2056 students with special educational needs, 1163 men and 893 women.

The educational institutions served by UDIPSAI belong to the levels of Pre-school, Elementary, High school and Higher education that presented special educational needs (NEE) with or without disabilities from different Educational Units of Zone 6.

The acceptance obtained by the Educational Institutions has had a high impact mainly in the public sector, due to the fact that the specialized educational service of psycho-pedagogical evaluation has benefited both teachers and students with special educational needs, allowing them to improve the teaching-learning process and the quality of personal, social and family life of the users; for this reason, authorities of the Educational Institutions indicate that UDIPSAI project should remain due to its free and high quality; leaving in

consideration that up to date the opening of new individual files continues and the demand for educational needs is growing.

UDIPSAI areas of intervention are: Educational Psychology, Clinical Psychology, Speech Therapy, Pedagogical Recovery, Social Work and Dentistry, activities that students carry out to fulfill their hours of Linking with Society and Professional practice.

The quality of the service provided by UDIPSAI is excellent according to data obtained from surveys conducted to the parents of the beneficiaries and teachers from the beneficiary institutions.

The impact measurement shows that the service provided by UDIPSAI has been excellent, strengthening the processes of evaluation and psycho-pedagogical intervention and contributing to the fulfillment of educational needs.

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