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## Inclusive approaches in Portuguese border and rural schools facing social challenges: school staff perspectives

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### Abstract

The aim of this study is to identify school practices that promote the educational inclusion of students, considering the most recent regulatory changes in Portugal in terms of inclusive education, analysing inclusive approaches of rural border schools in mainland Portugal and their educational actors amid the social challenges faced by these schools and considering the context of the health emergency. At a theoretical level, we start from a vision of inclusion and inclusive education based on quality education for all in a democratic and equitable way, paying attention to diversity and students' social, cultural and individual characteristics. Methodologically, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 38 school heads and 24 teachers coordinating the citizenship education component. The results allow us to identify various inclusive approaches in border schools, namely in promoting students' academic success, responding to structural asymmetries (geographical, socio-economic), including young people with diverse cultural backgrounds, and promoting students' participation in the school environment.

### Keywords

Inclusive education; rural schools; social challenges; school staff

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# Enfoques inclusivos en escuelas fronterizas y rurales portuguesas ante desafíos sociales: perspectivas del personal escolar

## Resumen

Este estudio tiene como objetivo, atendiendo a los cambios normativos más recientes en Portugal en materia de educación inclusiva, identificar prácticas escolares que promuevan la inclusión educativa de los alumnos, analizando los enfoques inclusivos de las escuelas rurales fronterizas en Portugal continental y de sus actores educativos frente a los desafíos sociales que enfrentan estas escuelas, considerando también el contexto de emergencia sanitaria. A nivel teórico, se parte de una visión de inclusión y de educación inclusiva basada en una educación de calidad para todos, de forma democrática y equitativa, prestando atención a la diversidad y a las características sociales, culturales e individuales de los alumnos. Metodológicamente, se realizaron entrevistas semiestructuradas a 38 directores de escuela y 24 profesores que coordinan el componente de educación para la ciudadanía. Los resultados permiten identificar diversos enfoques inclusivos en centros educativos fronterizos, concretamente en la promoción del éxito académico de los alumnos, en la respuesta a las asimetrías estructurales (geográficas, socioeconómicas), en la inclusión de jóvenes con diversos orígenes culturales y en la promoción de la participación de los estudiantes en el entorno escolar.

## Palabras clave

Educación inclusiva; escuelas rurales; desafíos sociales; personal escolar

## 1. Introduction

Inclusion has received a great deal of attention in the field of education. The concern for education for all has been present with greater incidence in international and national guiding documents, emphasising the need to develop educational practices adapted to the context and the school population (e.g., Council of the European Union, 2018; DGE, 2018; UNESCO, 2016, 2017). Inclusion is embodied in a democratic logic, not only of access to education through school but also of knowledge and promotion of social cohesion (Apple and Beane, 2000; Escarbajal Frutos et al., 2012; Green et al., 2006).

The role associated with the school as a social lift, access to powerful knowledge (Young, 2011) and social mobility are coupled with concerns about the diversity of its students, embedded in values around inclusion, educational equity and recognition (Abrantes, 2021; Vargas-Castro et al., 2024; Fraser, 2002), to combat the potential reproduction of social structures (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970). These concerns have emerged with greater prominence since the Salamanca Statement, which affirms education as an essential right of children (taking up the Declaration of Human Rights), in a paradigm shift in which inclusive education, which until then was based on a model centred on special educational needs and a segregating logic, has moved towards a model of social and de facto inclusive education, i.e. involving all learners and focusing on their particularities (Ainscow et al., 2006; UNESCO, 1994). Documents such as the Dakar Declaration (UNESCO, 2000) and the Incheon

Declaration (UNESCO, 2016) reinforce this line, affirming inclusion and equity as a concern, highlighting them as a ‘cornerstone’ for combating all forms of exclusion and inequality in access, participation and learning, establishing as a principle the importance of guaranteeing quality and inclusive education not only to those who are in a more vulnerable position (economic, social, among others) but also an education that recognises diversity as a motto for inclusion and social cohesion (UNESCO, 2016). More recently, UNESCO has emphasised the importance of developing and deepening inclusive logic in the school context, particularly considering the effects of the pandemic context and the aggravation of inequalities and vulnerabilities and their effects on access, success and quality of education (UNESCO, 2020, 2021).

In line with this trend, in the Portuguese context, Decree-Law 54/2018 follows the model centred on student diversity as an ‘added value’ and as a motto for the development of an inclusive school ‘where every student, regardless of their personal and social situation, find answers that enable them to acquire an educational and training level that facilitates their full social inclusion’ (AR, 2018a). To this end, educational centres must recognise diversity, adapt teaching processes to students, and include lines of action in favour of an inclusive school culture, responding to diversity, promoting equity and combating discrimination. The postulate of more inclusive and diversity-friendly education can also be found in Decree-Law 55/2018 (AR, 2018b), which regulates the curricula of primary and secondary education, highlighting curricular autonomy and flexibility, specifically in the postulate of greater curricular justice that is attentive to the contexts and particularities of children and young people (Riddle et al., 2023), and also the National Strategy for Citizenship Education, which stresses that citizenship education should be developed in ‘educational practices that promote inclusion’ (DGE, 2017, p. 6).

This study is based on a perspective of inclusive education that considers the diversity of the school population. Following the proposal of Delgado et al. (2021), diversity is conceived considering the social condition of students, i.e. aspects related to socioeconomic status, origin, and religion, paying attention also to the intercultural condition in reference to cultural diversity and considering the individual condition, which includes issues related to individual needs, in a logic more focused on the capacities of the student. Following the contributions of Abrantes (2021), Ainscow et al. (2006) and Escarbajal Frutos et al. (2012), inclusion is perceived as a process, recognising diversity and exclusion factors, taking diversity as a driver for education and learning, and for the construction of a democratic and pluralistic society and social cohesion (Ainscow et al., 2006; Culque et al., 2024; Green et al., 2006), secondly, in promoting equal access, learning and educational success for all pupils up to the end of compulsory schooling. Thirdly, in fostering student participation and involvement in the democratic geometry of schools, aspects that are important to them, in accordance with their interests and expectations, must be considered. Finally, in the well-being and belonging of pupils in the school context.

Analysing inclusive practices also involves reflecting on the school contexts in which they occur. Statistics and studies show that border contexts are marked by socioeconomic, educational and cultural asymmetries (Silva, 2014; EU/ERDF, 2017). In terms of education, higher illiteracy rates are observed in border regions compared to the coast, lower levels of school enrolment of the population when analysing secondary and higher education data, and higher rates of early school dropout (PORDATA, 2021). In addition, there is a less

diversified educational offer, and, in some contexts, there is no offer of secondary education (PORDATA, 2022a), which since 2009 has been configured as a level within compulsory schooling. At the cultural level, access to cultural opportunities and infrastructures is lower overall (PORDATA, 2022b, 2022c). At the economic and social level, these regions are characterised by a smaller working population compared to coastal areas (INE, 2021), and overall, lower opportunities for participation are observed (Silva et al., 2023). In addition, there is a growing number of students with diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds (DGEEC, 2024), a result of increased immigration in Portugal, although lower compared to more populated regions such as the coastal ones (PORDATA, 2024).

Studies in rural and border regions highlight the importance of schools as a mechanism for the inclusion of their students, especially for their role as agents in their communities (Amiguiño, 2008; Nuñez et al., 2021; Silva, 2023). Furthermore, they point to the compensatory tendencies of schools and communities in their search for effective responses to the quality of their young people's educational trajectories (Silva, 2023). The literature also highlights the resilience of these schools, not only as a response to adversity but also as a culture resulting from a compensatory logic about the territories and considering their characteristics and those of their populations, showing particular concern for promoting the inclusion of young people and opportunities for participation, as well as the commitment of educational agents to the educational trajectories and success of their students (Silva & Silva, 2022a). Rural contexts have also been associated with the fact that the proximity established between communities and the school, as well as a greater valuing of aspects of local culture and local knowledge (Beach et al., 2019), can favour inclusive dynamics and a greater connection between young people and belonging to place (Gelís, 2004; Silva, 2023).

In synthesis, this article aims to analyse how border schools try to respond to aspects related to the diversity of the school population, as well as to the needs and particularities imposed in their geographical contexts and a situation of social alertness. The aim is to analyse, from the perspectives of teachers and principals, what priorities and strategies underlie the inclusion of pupils towards quality education and towards equity and social cohesion.

## **2. Methods**

This article analyses data collected in the framework of a study in the 38 bordering municipalities of mainland Portugal. This study, developed between 2018 and 2023, aimed to study communities, schools and young people in border contexts, focusing on educational strategies and trajectories. The doctoral research included in this project aimed to simultaneously analyse the practices of territorial appropriation of citizenship education in different educational contexts.

### **Instruments, participants and data analysis**

Following the research question ‘What inclusive practices and concerns are identified in schools from the discourses of principals and teachers?’ and with the aim of ‘identifying practices of schools for the educational inclusion of their students’, this article mobilises qualitative data collected in the framework of the research carried out. This study is epistemologically situated in the phenomenological-interpretative paradigm, as it seeks to understand how subjects attribute meaning to their experiences and how they perceive the

world (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Schütz, 1994). A qualitative approach was pursued because it allows for understanding meanings, interpretations and processes around social realities (Flick et al., 2004). In this sense, the semi-structured interview was used in this study because it allows access to the perceptions of the interviewees with a less rigid orientation, not circumscribing or limiting the answers or the freedom of the interviewee but valuing their participation in the construction of the data (Punch, 1998). Thirty-eight interviews were conducted with head teachers and 24 interviews with teachers coordinating the citizenship education component. Due to pandemic-related issues, most of the interviews with coordinating teachers were conducted via ZOOM. We opted for synchronous interviews as we felt that their format more closely resembled face-to-face interviews (Salmons, 2010). Ethical principles regarding free participation, informed consent and data anonymisation were followed. The following table attempts to summarise the sample of participants:

Table 1.  
*Participants*

Position at the school	Frequency per region				Total
	North	Centre	Alentejo	Algarve	
Director	16	6	13	3	38
Citizenship education coordinator (teaching coordinators)	13	5	5	1	24

Data were analysed using the content analysis technique (Krippendorff, 2004), considering pre- and emergent categories and triangulating the data based on the contribution of the different actors (Flick, 1998). In this article, data from the subcategories ‘development of compensatory practices’, ‘strategies to promote school success’, ‘strategies to promote inclusion’, and ‘strategies to promote student participation’ are mobilised.

### 3. Results and discussion

The Decree-Law 54/2018 has promoted a paradigm shift around inclusion and inclusive education, an impact felt by principals and teachers. In addition, rural and border schools also face diversified social challenges, forcing them to adapt and respond to them (Silva, 2023). The analysis of the discourses of teachers and principals allowed us to identify different approaches to inclusive educational action for these schools in this context of the interpretation of educational policy guidelines that is intertwined with the particularities of

different contexts and with the situation of social and health emergency, the constraints it has caused and its influence on the promotion of strategies.

### 3.1. Promoting students' success in school

From the coordinating teachers' and directors' discourses, different strategies developed by schools in favour of their pupils' access to learning and success are identified from the coordinating teachers' and directors' discourses, with a particular focus on traditional knowledge and skills around the pupil's occupation (Perrenoud, 1995; Young, 2011). Strategies to combat early school leaving are also identified.

In terms of students' success, pedagogical strategies are identified, both in the promotion of pedagogical spaces beyond the classroom component and in the promotion of diversified strategies that consider the particularities and needs of pupils:

- Promoting pedagogical support spaces, tutoring, and support classrooms: In some schools, initiatives focused on pedagogical support for all students are identified to respond to the constraints caused by the health emergency context or by the needs identified in the contexts:

‘All students taking subjects that are going to be assessed in the exam year have an extra 90 minutes in their timetable with their teacher, normally with the class teacher, only when it is impossible it is someone else so that they can work on these exam revision topics, revision of subjects from previous years’. (School Director 3, Centre)

‘We have a project called ‘Project A+’, which has two compulsory sessions per week and one optional session per week. In other words, the class council refers pupils with poor performance to the project, where teachers of different subjects - mathematics, physics, and languages - support the pupils in their studies. It happens one day a week, it is voluntary, and all pupils can come, even good pupils with educational success. (School Director 8, North)

Diversified pedagogical support spaces are highlighted, some focusing on pupils with learning difficulties and others focusing on knowledge areas or subjects to be assessed through the national exam. The promotion of spaces open to the whole class is also noted, demonstrating an inclusive logic by promoting the success of all, breaking with a segregating vision.

- Promoting pedagogical strategies that encourage more individualised teaching:

Data allowed us to identify pedagogical strategies favouring teaching closeness to students' needs through pedagogical collaborations between teachers. We highlight the development of temporary rotational practices in which parallel classes are created and taught simultaneously as the subject in question, where students can access learning in a more personalised way and receive individualised support, taking into account their difficulties and their pace of learning.

Regarding pupils with special educational needs, the personalised support of a special education teacher who accompanies the pupil in class stands out. This co-teaching allows the

inclusion of the pupil in the class (in contrast to segregation) and inclusion and equity in more personalised access to learning, considering their needs.

- Mobilisation of internal and external structures for a more individualised support:

Following the logic around the formation of multidisciplinary support teams for inclusive education, established in Decree-Law 54/2018, schools are committed to mobilising different educational actors, such as psychologists and special education teachers, to promote pupils' academic success. Some schools also resort to other specialised technicians, such as local intervention and action technicians or mediators, and Family Support Offices at the municipal level.

Finally, strategies to combat early school leaving have been identified, such as promoting alternative educational pathways in the educational offer. Understood in the education system as measures to promote school success and with a view to social inclusion, schools are assuming this offer as part of their integration priorities in favour of inclusion:

‘We have the PIEF, the alternative itineraries. These are students with a very complicated background, with some difficulties in terms of family, integration, and behaviour, to whom we try to respond in some way.’ (School Director 7, North)

These concerns are understood within a logic focused on student inclusion in favour of quality educational trajectories and the completion of compulsory schooling, in line with the guiding principle of inclusive education, which advocates for an inclusive school that guarantees access to education, learning and qualifications for all students, for the full social inclusion of students and a more cohesive society (Abrantes, 2021; AR, 2018a).

### **3.2. Fostering the inclusion of students from diverse cultural and social backgrounds**

Recognising that border regions, while sharing characteristics, are also heterogeneous, data allowed us to understand that including students from diverse cultural backgrounds is not an issue in all contexts. However, the discourse of teachers and directors allowed us to understand the priorities of some schools in relation to the inclusion of students from diverse backgrounds:

- Promoting mediation strategies using the figure of a mediator, who can be a municipal or school technician (including social work technicians, psychologists, social workers, or social services technicians) or including members of the community for the inclusion of young people at school and social level and accompanying families:

‘These three mediators are Roma. One of them is married to a person from the Indian community, so he is more affected by the Indian community, but this is, we are starting, and then we have a fourth mediator who has not started yet, who is more focused, being from Sao Tome and Principe, for students from PALOP (Portuguese Official Language African Countries) countries, because we have agreements with some African countries in order to give them the opportunity to attend training and education.’ (School Director 17, Centre)

- Promoting more personalised support in classes, particularly in languages, and supporting access to educational resources:



‘It is also easier to integrate them, they are accompanied, they have the respective support in schools, both in languages and some have also come here to ask for support with school textbooks.’ (School Director 23, North)

-Valuing the cultures of pupils from diverse backgrounds in extracurricular activities:

‘As soon as I arrived at school, I noticed that there were several gypsy children. What happened to me? I picked up another Roma group in [Name of parish]. The idea was to create a project that had to do with Roma culture, to take advantage of the community that was here, and, on the other hand, the idea was not to question the integration of the children, but on the contrary, to take advantage of their own culture. To turn diversity into an advantage for everyone’. (School Director 36, Algarve)

‘Mainly in the afternoons, and we also eat during the day, but it's more dynamic because of the languages, whether it's French, Spanish or English and that's it, it's more along those lines, in the evenings there's Thai, Nepali, they have a little dinner there from time to time. They use the canteen. Or they bring them in, it's also a way of integrating them, right? There are one or two who also sing, and from time to time, on those more festive days here at school, they also participate with their own songs, which are very traditional, and so they also participate in this area.’ (School Director 32, Alentejo)

The examples allow us to understand an inclusive culture insofar as the discourses represent non-discriminatory logics and show openness to the entry of diverse cultures into the ethos of educational centres, turning them into spaces of presence and experience of diversity and intercultural dialogue and recognition of the diverse identities of their students, contradicting a vision of a culturally homogeneous school, but embracing diversity as a social and educational reality (Delgado et al., 2021; Escarbajal Frutos et al., 2012), both by promoting strategies for the inclusion of children and young people from diverse cultural backgrounds in the school environment and in access to learning, and by allowing students, in this recognition of identity and cultures in the possibility of sharing the experience of their cultural codes, greater well-being and participation in the school environment (Sandoval and Waitoller, 2012).

### **3.3. Promoting student participation in school life and decision-making**

The participants' statements enabled us to identify two levels of pupil participation in school life, which respond to a democratic logic in schools. At the first level, strategies that consider pupils' diversity and respond to their needs and particularities are developed. At the second level, strategies are implemented to ensure the inclusion of all young people's voices in the democratic structure of schools.

At the first level, schools are concerned with creating spaces for young people to participate in comprehensive and quality education. Schools are concerned with guaranteeing opportunities for their students to participate in initiatives, both at the level of extracurricular activities (such as school sports) and at the level of curriculum enrichment activities, considering their particularities, as exemplified below:

‘This year we have opened a boccia club as part of school sport, including for these children, and they are participating. They are even participating in a



competition today, and a lot of work is being done here with physical education teachers, special education teachers and principals.’ (School Director 24, North)

This contribution demonstrates a concern for recognising diversity and adapting or promoting appropriate initiatives, taking into account the plurality of the school population and the particularities of the student body, which allows for educational action based on a logic of social justice and recognition, in favour of an adequate response for all (Abrantes, 2021; Ainscow et al., 2006; Escarbajal Frutos et al., 2012; Fraser, 2002), which can foster a sense of belonging among students (Qvortrup and Qvortrup, 2017; Sandoval and Waitoller, 2012).

At the second level, based on the contribution of educational actors, inclusive dynamics have been identified regarding the schools' openness to the participation of young people in the school environment, in particular, initiatives to involve young people in decision-making processes (Cook-Sather, 2006; Riddle et al., 2023):

-Influencing the construction of school guidance documents:

‘The directors and teachers of citizenship took this message to the pupils, held assemblies and, based on the assemblies, tried to elaborate the planning which, in the meantime, will converge in the construction of the strategy for this school year.’ (Coordinating teacher 19, North)

- Influencing school dynamics, the school environment and identifying problems and areas for improvement:

‘He is a director who meets regularly with all the class representatives precisely to listen to them and to hear the problems that the pupils identify in the school.’ (Coordinating teacher 35, North)

- Influencing decision-making at the curricular level, allowing for dynamics of curricular contextualisation, curricular justice and the inclusion of students' aspirations in aspects that influence their lives and educational trajectories.

‘It doesn't start as an imposed job (...). We present the topics, and then we give them freedom, autonomy, they have autonomy, I think that the work on autonomy, self-esteem, and responsibilities start right here in the choice of the topic and the project [referring to the work on citizenship education and the selection of topics and projects and activities to be developed].’ (Coordinating teacher 3, Centre)

In sum, inclusive dynamics are identified to the extent that young people are involved in decision-making, which enables the development of learning to meet their aspirations and needs and can promote a greater sense of inclusion in the school community based on a democratic logic and its influence on schools lives (Edström et al., 2022; Sandoval and Waitoller, 2012).

### **3.4. Promoting the quality of educational pathways and opportunities for students, considering the territories' social and geographical conditions and realities.**

Border schools face geographical and socio-economic particularities that can hinder the socio-educational trajectories of their students, particularly in terms of the distance between schools and more remote regions, forcing their students to move, as well as aspects related

to the economic, social and cultural capital of families (Yndigegn, 2003; Silva, 2014). The data allowed us to identify two lines of compensatory inclusive action in response to the particularities of these contexts.

Strategies to promote inclusion in favour of quality educational paths stand out, intending to blur the structural differences resulting from the geographical condition of the contexts. The creation of compulsory spaces in school timetables for the completion of homework or the adaptation of extracurricular work reveals concerns with equity among students in the quality of their educational trajectories and a response to some of the difficulties arising from the geographical condition of these contexts:

‘We cannot ask a pupil who leaves home at 7.30 in the morning and arrives at 7 in the evening to work for two hours at home doing whatever because it is not humanly possible. So, we have organised the school to do this work indoors. In their timetable, in addition to their subjects, which are curricular subjects, the pupils all have hours of Learning Methods, where they have teachers at their disposal, and they can do homework and do work left over from their classes. (School Director 3, Centre)

This example shows that schools will be configured to include students with different (and asymmetrical) starting points, in this case, mobility and transport to the school context, trying to develop compensatory strategies in an inclusive school culture in favour of the academic success of their students and combating the asymmetries that some face in this journey and for this success.

Secondly, initiatives and strategies to promote the inclusion of all in favour of equal opportunities of access to cultural and social capital are highlighted, considering the asymmetries that mark the interior and rural regions and the importance of providing their students with diversified and equitable access in relation to students from coastal contexts, with more opportunities and offers. Some educational centres make decisions about their actions considering the realities of their students and, thus, they are committed to promoting opportunities to which they would not have access or would find it difficult to access:

‘If the cultural activities are not here, we can also get them. In terms of excursions, for example, we are concerned at least to analyse the background of the students and to make sure that our students don't leave the school without having gone to a theatre, to Lisbon, to Oporto or to the beach, because these are also situations, some kids can't.... so, we take care to provide them with these experiences.’ (School Director 10, Centre)

This example shows that schools are concerned with offering experiences to their pupils in a compensatory way, considering the particularities of these contexts, especially in terms of access to aspects of cultural fruition and recreation.

‘The Erasmus+ project is one of the school's most active projects. In fact, it has been a big focus for the school. It has even given visibility and provided the students with unique experiences. This is not only because they are students from the rural world, who are usually more distant from certain cultural realities that escape them (...) This year, I had students of mine who made a trip to Eastern Europe, so they encountered a European reality that was unknown to them.’ (Coordinating teacher 28, Centre)

In turn, this form of appropriation of an international project such as Erasmus + not only demonstrates a concern for an inclusive logic by valuing intercultural dimensions and diversity in favour of the development of young people's democratic competences and the recognition of cultural diversity but also demonstrates a concern, in its appropriation, to guarantee opportunities for young people to enjoy intercultural experiences which, as teachers have said, they would have difficulty accessing if it were not for the school.

In sum, inclusive actions of educational centres are identified, more specifically in the work developed in a compensatory logic around some of the limitations and asymmetries that characterise these contexts to reduce territorial and structural inequalities and access to opportunities for participation and cultural and social capital. This is in line with studies (Amiguiño, 2008; Silva, 2023), which point to the tension faced by these schools, leading them to act in response to some of the problems, inequalities or asymmetries faced by these contexts and some pupils, seeking to foster greater social cohesion between pupils, their experiences and their educational and biographical trajectories.

#### 4. Conclusions

Despite the constraints of recent education policy implementation and the context of the health emergency (e.g., closure of schools), it was possible to identify inclusive school cultures in schools in border regions with diversified approaches. The data allowed us to identify that inclusive approaches in these schools follow dynamics around inclusive education in line with the more holistic and social model (e.g., Abrantes, 2021; Ainscow et al., 2006), thus accompanying socio-normative trends and studies in other contexts. Schools assume their role in the inclusion of pupils in their individual dimension (e.g., pupils with special educational needs) but also pay attention to the social and cultural factors of the student body, seeking greater participation of young people and their inclusion and belonging in school life (Qvortrup and Qvortrup, 2017; Sandoval and Waitoller, 2012).

From the perspective of principals and teachers, schools' different priorities reflect a broad inclusive vision. On the one hand, inclusive practices focus on promoting the academic and school success of students through pedagogical adaptation and the development of compensatory strategies, also considering the effects of the context of social and health emergencies on their educational trajectories. On the other hand, to achieve quality education for all, inclusive approaches are also used that, with the same intention, consider the diversity of students' origins, thus broadening the concept of inclusion to encompass social and cultural aspects. Furthermore, the concern for youth participation in the school context suggests that a democratic culture and practice at the school level can emerge as facilitators of inclusive school cultures. In addition, school priorities were identified in the context of the health emergency around pupils' educational success. This demonstrates that schools are taking on this mission, especially in this period, to respond to and ensure inclusion and equity.

Likewise, particularly in these rural and border territories marked by asymmetries (Yndgñen, 2003; Silva, 2014), it is observed that educational centres seek to respond to the needs and inequalities resulting from these territorial asymmetries through their educational action, positioning themselves as spaces of compensatory dynamisation so that their students have

access to initiatives that blur the disparities between the coast and the rural world (Silva, 2023). In other words, it is a deeply inclusive educational action logic that responds to the particularities of these contexts. Based on a local diagnosis carried out by these educational centres, equitable actions are implemented in the school culture, promoting greater justice for students in their educational trajectories and opportunities for personal and social development.

In sum, the inclusive action of border schools demonstrates a multi-faceted approach to inclusion in the school context, whether it is a response to a democratic drive for access and quality education - in response to individual characteristics, disruptive events, socio-geographical constraints (quality education for all), or, in response to that drive, inclusion as a value in the daily life and ethos of the school through the recognition and participation of its school population.

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