FANNI TRENDL

Institutional Responses to Inclusion from Around the World

Jaimie Hoffman, Patrick Blessinger and Mandla Makhanya (Eds). (2019). Strategies for Facilitating Inclusive Campuses in Higher Education. International Perspectives on Equity and Inclusion. Innovations in Higher Education Teaching and Learning. Volume 17. Emerald Publishing Limited. Howard House, UK. p. 309.

In this review, a volume will be presented which presents and supports the understanding and practicality of inclusion and equity. This book was published in the UK, but the authors and the practices presented come from different parts of the world. As this is part of a series, the book begins with the series editor's introduction.

The aim of the series is to present innovative teaching and learning practices around the world, the latest adaptation methods that educators should consider when putting a model into practice, and the relationship between theory and practice to policy and strategic planning.

In the editorial foreword to Part 1 of the series, the editors briefly describe the structure of the publication and the concepts and terms included in the studies. In this introduction, there are many connections with the inclusive policies in higher education in Pécs, Hungary (ARATÓ &VARGA 2015):

- inclusion is a process, and diversity is a state rather than the result of some kind of stand-alone, one-time event
- when creating an inclusive campus, it is very important to involve and engage decision-makers
- the process of reception affects all actors and participants of the environment and institution
- In the 21st century, diversity in higher education is essential for achieving academic success

Sticking to the introduction, it is necessary to present some concepts in this review in order to see the similarities between international and local goals for inclusion. The authors interpret diversity as an all-encompassing concept that includes parts of social identity (race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability), parental status, educational attainment, religious affiliation, and socio-economic status. In addition, in order to gain a deeper understanding of inclusion and diversity, a pictorial metaphor may help with visualization: imagine a garden in front of you in which the different kind of plants represents diversity and the environmental conditions that are essential for the flowering of plants symbolize inclusion. It is important to note here that although the authors do not name it, the concept of equity is also clarified. Continuing with the extended metaphor, they write that in this process each plant has different needs and values, for which it is

necessary to provide different conditions. In order to ensure these conditions, according to the authors, a complex approach to institutional development is needed, which again represents a commonality with the approach of the University of Pecs in Hungary (ARATÓ & VARGA 2015:8).

The authors cite Chen (2017) when discussing the basic principles that a higher education institution must consider in order to become inclusive. Three highlights include the following: (1) developing trust and implementing policies that are fundamentally inclusive; (2) operating a receptive admission system by their very nature; (3) understanding diversity across the entire institution and system. In addition to the characteristics of the desirable process, the authors also mention the challenges of development, which were outlined in the studies in the volume: (1) possible failure of minority groups and women in their work; (2) isolation and feelings of exclusion among students belonging to minority groups; (3) sexism.

After clarifying their introductory reflection, the editors briefly review the contents of the collected writings. In this section, the main conclusions illustrate the diversity of thought in the volume and provide practical examples.

By reviewing the writings, they can be categorize according to their topics and the target groups studied. Regarding their subjects, there are writings that examine a segment of the process of inclusion in different institutions. Based on the target groups, studies also vary widely. Some examine a specific group of participants in the reception process (e.g. disadvantaged, disabled, etc.) and there is also writing that involves all participants in a given institution in the study.

In the second part of the volume (Part 2), seventeen separate studies can be read. The studies present the various inclusive practices and aspirations of higher education in different continents (North America, Africa, Australia, Europe). The studies follow a uniform structure: in the introduction, the authors outline the geographical, economic, and social environment, the institution under study, and challenges they face. The discussion takes place to present the concepts, scientific theoretical frameworks, and methods used in the studies. The authors outline the results of the research and frequently suggest opportunities for moving forward.

Studies can be divided into two main groups based on their topics. In one group, the writings examine the approach to inclusion and the necessary attitude for this to be successful. The other group include writings that prove the tried-and-tested models and the concrete tools supporting the reception process and their effectiveness.

The approach to inclusion and the behaviors and attitudes necessary for the realization of inclusion are discussed in four studies. In the study Removing Glasses of Exclusivity, Caterina Valentino stresses the creation of basic environmental conditions such as openness and respect for diversity, strengthening positive interactions between learners and leaders' commitment to equity. At the launch of the Inclusive Excellence Movement, Milem (2005) emphasized the importance of this concept, which was confirmed by Hurtado's (2012) research. Hungarian researchers have also written about the details of attitudes and dialogicity that ensure the foundation of an inclusive environment and the continuous maintenance of inclusion as a basic approach (ARATÓ & BIGAZZI, 2015).

Joshua Spier's Authentic Caring examines the moral role and responsibility of educators based on in-depth interviews and case studies. From the quotations highlighted in the study, it is clear that understanding and supporting the individual needs of students is very important when it comes to authentic inclusion. This is in line with lessons learned from studying the development process in the disadvantaged Gypsy/Roma student community at the University of Pécs between 2013 and 2018, which confirms that in the

process of inclusion the understanding and supporting individuals should be part of the reception (Varga 2018).

Kately Romsa and her colleagues studied a public university in the Midwestern United States. The premise of the research was that an inclusive learning environment is essential for all learners. To support this, the critical race theory (CRT) study also found that it is very important for students from different backgrounds to be aware of inequities and inequalities when studying as a prerequisite for inclusion, as Bauman and colleagues (2005) described. In the process of inclusion Roma students and colleagues emphasize the creation and strengthening of the possibility of positive interactions, which can help students develop competence and understand the functioning of society.

Patrick Swanzy and his colleagues examined Ghana's higher education policy and the institutions' approach, and they made suggestions for moving forward. The study described legal efforts towards inclusion in higher education in Ghana, such as the application of affirmative action at entry, which is necessary to make higher education more accessible as Williams and colleagues (2005) mentioned in the Change Modell of Inclusive Excellence. During the application process in Hungary, we can also find points which create real possibilities for underrepresented groups to enter higher education such as plus points for disadvantaged students (Márhoffer 2015).

In the other large group of studies, there are writings that present a tried-and-tested model or specific tool. This includes most of the writings for a total of 13 studies. Examining these according to the process-oriented model of inclusion (Varga 2015), there are two writings about the issue of *Input*, though studies about *Output* (effectiveness) did not appear as independent writing. The studies focus mainly on the process of inclusion and services. Based on the content similarities, consider the following groups:

INPUT
- presentation of tools to support the accessibility of higher education institutions (two articles)

PROCESS
- writings on the effectiveness of programmes, projects and tools supporting the inclusion process (six articles)
- introduction of mentoring as an inclusion support tool (three articles)
- presentation of inclusion support tools for higher education lecturers (two articles)

The presentation of two preparatory programs to facilitate access to higher education was included in the volume (Chapters 11 and 14). One is based in Scotland and the other in Australia. In the Scottish example, the preparation of young people with disabilities for university is discussed, while in the Australian example there is a program that deals with the transition between secondary school and university. The importance of a supportive process to strengthen continuing education aspiration is instrumental (Pusztai 2015; Arató 2015). Both papers highlight the importance of support and the fact that legally binding equal opportunities in continuing education are no longer sufficient, but it is also necessary to operate fair activities in Hungarian higher education (Takács, 2015).

Six articles address institutional efforts to support the process of inclusion (Chapters 4, 9, 12, 13, 15, 17). Two of these present a comprehensive program in Europe known as *Access4All* and the *Bridge* programs in the USA. The European program focuses on creating accessibility and quality education, and the American programs focus on strengthening self-efficiency and empowerment. These programs can be traced back to the Roma Student

Society scholarship program in Pécs, achieving similar results (Arató et al., 2015; Bauman 2005; Trendl 2020; Varga, 2015; Varga, 2018; Varga et al., 2020)

The other four papers cover a somewhat narrower area. An Australian example shows how ICT technology can be used effectively to engage disadvantaged rural students. In the process of learning and teaching, through an example in Africa, there are methods of successfully teaching people with disabilities, and two articles form North American also cover this topic. One presents the DSDM model, which discusses the impact of student coexistence on student effectiveness, and in the other study covers the importance of study abroad trips.

In the next larger group, articles emphasize the role of mentoring in the process of inclusion (Chapters 5, 7, 8). The importance of mentoring (which can include both younger and older mentors) may be unnecessary. It is also a common practice in higher education in Hungary (Takács, 2015; Orsós. 2018). What is perhaps less common is the social experience and students feeling they are not alone with their problems. As the studies in the volume show, the most important thing for young people participating in mentoring programs is to experience how the environment of higher education becomes home for them. They become part of a community where they meet students who have similar problems and they have mentors who understand, respect, and help them to solve their problems (Milem, 2005; Varga, 2018; Varga et al., 2020).

The last group included articles that provide practical solutions for teachers engaged in the process of inclusion and for organizational personnel working with them to achieve fairness and mutual inclusion (Chapters 6 and 10). One of the tools is Group Coaching and Mentoring, which helps educators to constantly reflect on their teaching practices together with other instructors, taking into account the approach of inclusion. They help each other to develop a critical approach and more equitable teaching, planning, and organizing. Another tool is the Knowing Your Students report, which can help educators get to know their students better. Based on the study presented, it is clear that the instructors who received the materials on their students' backgrounds during the design of their courses were much more committed to designing the content of the courses with the diversity of students in mind. The awareness and skills of the instructors were indispensable for successfully implementing inclusion, which had led to paying close attention to the process-oriented model of inclusion (Varga, 2015).

After reviewing the content of the volume and identifying the connection between different themes, it is possible to see how the geographically, economically, and socially diverse content, experiences, and goals are relevant for the educational context in Hungary. That is why it would be desirable to keep inclusion on the agenda in educational science. The basic principles of the overarching aims related to inclusion are vital for all academic institutions and communities.

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