

NOTES FOR REVIEW GROUPS

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Please divide up chapters with Page Breaks, not Section Breaks. Only use Section Breaks if you need to alternate between portrait and landscape pages.

**Structure for a protocol**

<b>Main title</b>	How is social exclusion assessed within education systems in Low and Middle Income Countries?
<b>Sub title</b>	How is social exclusion understood and defined with regards to education in Low and Middle Income Countries?
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<b>Month/year of publication</b>	[To be completed by EPPI-Centre]
<b>This report should be cited as...</b>	
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<b>Acknowledgements</b>	

## Contents

List of abbreviations.....	iii
Abstract .....	iv
<b>1. Background .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1 Aims and rationale for review.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.2 Definitional and conceptual issues .....</b>	<b>2</b>
1.2.1. Social Exclusion: a novel perspective to decipher inequalities in education .....	2
1.2.2. Social justice, human development and the Capability Approach (CA) .....	3
1.2.3. Education in international development .....	4
<b>1.3 Policy and practice background .....</b>	<b>5</b>
1.3.1. Post-2015 challenges for education: Need for a Paradigm Shift .....	5
<b>1.3.2. Education for vulnerable groups: Inclusion and Exclusion .....</b>	<b>6</b>
1.3.3. Impact and Theory of Change .....	7
<b>1.4 Research background .....</b>	<b>7</b>
1.4.1. Social Exclusion and Vulnerability .....	7
1.4.2. Education policies: focus on access as synonymous of inclusion.....	8
1.4.3. Limitations of current assessments of quality education .....	8
1.4.4. Previous systematic reviews .....	8
<b>1.5 Purpose and rationale for review .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1.6 Authors, funders, and other users of the review .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1.7 Review questions and approach .....</b>	<b>11</b>
1.7.1. Specifying the scope of the primary question.....	11
1.7.2. Specific Search strategy .....	11
Appendices .....	Error! Bookmark not defined.

## List of abbreviations

## **Abstract**

(1 page max same as one page summary)

### **What do we want to know?**

The overarching goal of the research within which this review is embedded is to develop an innovative framework for analysis of the processes that lead to social exclusion, inequality and thus hinder quality of education. The review will map existing studies on assessment of social exclusion and will thus provide crucial evidence for structuring the conceptual framework as well as identify methods for analysis of the phenomenon of social exclusion to be further tested in successive phases. In close collaboration with the users of the review (UNICEF, UNESCO and other NGOs), findings will build an innovative framework for analysis that combines relevant theoretical foundations as well as methods/tools that decipher social processes that sustain social exclusion.

### **Who wants to know and why?**

The present review will strongly contribute to on-going debates on quality of education in academia but also in the field of policy making as well as implementation and evaluation of education programmes. Liaising with partners from various backgrounds will be strategic to our aim of strongly building in user-involvement from the very onset of the research. The PI and Co-I will leverage extensive past experience in order to ensure that all stages of the research are defined successively in a participatory manner. Our user involvement strategy will comprise of setting up an Advisory Group that brings together partners of different profiles to provide advise ad feedback on the research. The users of this research include UNESCO, UNICEF, Leonard Cheshire Disability and Handicap International.

### **What did we find?**

### **What are the implications?**

### **How did we get these results?**

### **Where to find further information**

[To be completed by EPPI-Centre]

# 1. Background

## 1.1 Aims and rationale for review

As the MDGs come to a close, their critique of their scope as well as achievement has been prominent in terms of limited focus on questions of access to primary schools. There is broad agreement that there is a need for a profound paradigm shift to define and evaluate what constitutes a 'good' education. The discussion preceding the elaboration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) - in particular SDG 4 relating to "quality education" - that will serve as benchmarks to assessing success in education strongly advocate for a more prominent recognition of the links between questions of equity, inclusion and quality (Unterhalter and Dorward 2013). SDG Goal 4 embodies the paradigm shift that countries will need to navigate: *"ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong opportunities for all"*. Although the targets that are proposed to monitor progress towards achievement of educational goals do focus on questions of equality and focus of specific vulnerable groups, they may constitute further impediments if crucial and complex questions of dynamic and systemic social exclusion are not given central attention in terms of assessment. If education aims to be inclusive towards all vulnerable groups in a given society, it will have to cross hurdles that have impeded progress in the past by: (i) moving from views of classification of vulnerability towards addressing its complexity and multidimensionality; (ii) shifting analyses from capturing static snapshots towards deciphering the complexity and variation of phenomena; (iii) not attempting to find a "one size fits all" and set up adaptable mechanisms. In order to progress towards these idealistic goals and trigger the required paradigm shift, education and learning frameworks will need to not just re-affirm the theoretical groundings but also to challenge policies and programmes that reflect age-old beliefs as well as critically analyse the implications of the new mantra of standardised tests as the primary indicator to defining what constitutes educational success. There is a strong push in the global arena for reorienting education systems by urging national governments and organisations to target the process of social exclusion differently: by no longer viewing exclusion in terms of silos of vulnerability but by recognising and addressing the continuity between exclusion mechanisms in education and those inherent to the social fabric of a community (UNESCO 2012). Going beyond analyses of the inherent links between quality and equity, the present review will scope the evidence pertaining to understanding and assessing Social Exclusion within the field of education in order to construct a framework that deciphers how education contributes to structural inequalities by maintaining status quo of power dynamics or how, on the other hand, it contributed to combating inherent systems of beliefs and functioning that lead to exclusion.

**The present review will critically examine the concept of social exclusion as it is assessed in the field of education.** Social exclusion originally gained prominence in the field of employment and has traditionally been analysed from a welfare perspective (Atkinson 1998, Levitas 2005). In the field of development it constitutes an integrated lens for comprehending discrimination (Kabeer 2006, Stewart, Saith et al. 2007, Betts, Watson et al. 2010); health inequalities are also being viewed as resulting from complex social determinants (Mathieson, Popay et al. 2008). In education, exclusion has been approached in terms of denial of access of identified vulnerable groups (Harttgen and Klasen 2011). However, the dynamics and systemic nature of the marginalisation process within learning structures has not been approached with aims of re-

thinking policy priorities and implementation mechanisms (Curcic 2009, Erten and Savage 2012, Ballard 2013). In education, questions of exclusion have mainly focussed on exclusion from learning systems and analyses have followed a process of identifying (by labelling) vulnerable groups and finding strategies to get children into formal/informal learning systems. However, in recent years, social exclusion as shaped by educational experiences has been viewed as a crucial hurdle that needs to be addressed [(Mitchell 2005, Kabeer 2011). While it is undisputable that exclusion from education maintains persons in poverty, there is a need to fully understand the role that education plays in contributing to fighting mechanisms of social exclusion not just in school but also beyond the learning years (Sparkes 1999, Sparkes and Glennerster 2002). The Guide to Assessing Education Systems towards more Inclusive and Just Societies (UNESCO 2012) urged all actors of education to shift the focus from conditions for inclusion towards deciphering the mechanisms of exclusion. Policy makers are increasingly recognising the need to better grasp these processes in order to understand the “WHY” of failure of education initiatives. It is clear that existing measures of achievement need to go beyond acquisition of mere skills such as basic literacy and numeracy. The concept of SE is crucial not just to gauge the commitment to equality of policies but also to assess what constitutes quality of curriculum, relevance of teacher training and acquisition of evasive “soft skills” (beliefs, attitudes, etc.) within a given context.

In national policy documents, education is charged with improving knowledge, transmitting culture, and providing human capital to support economic structures. As a historical consequence of colonialism, Western educational systems have been highly influential throughout the world and place high value on instruction and rigorous assessment in the basics of reading, writing, and mathematics (Guttek 1997) based in tests such as PISA. In the field of Inclusive Education, research has widely discussed the issues of access (Mitchell 2005) evaluation as well as policy (Booth 1996, Peters 2003, Alur 2007, Raffo, Dyson et al. 2009). However, a 2010 cross-country comparison on quality indicators in OECD countries stated, “*processes at the classroom level are rarely considered*” p2 (Poliandri, Cardone et al. 2010). The report also confirmed that most indicators that are currently used to inform policy “*have a descriptive value*” and “*(do not) form a basis for any particular judgement*”; the authors conclude by advocating for the requirement for a system of indicators. In agreement with authors we argue that any such system in LMICs will need “*a theoretical frame of reference (...) an explanation of the connections between the features described by the indicator and the procedures and techniques of data collection*”. The present review will aim to map existing methodologies that decipher Social Exclusion processes within education and identify the gaps that exist in assessment of education quality and equity.

## **1.2 Definitional and conceptual issues**

### **1.2.1. Social Exclusion: a novel perspective to decipher inequalities in education**

Discourses of social exclusion (SE) gained prominence in France with the notion of “*les exclus*” or the “*persons who had slipped through the net of the social insurance system and were thus administratively excluded by the State*” (Levitas 2005). The idea that there are sections of society that are not being taken into account in the policies is central to this perspective. The concept of SE in the second half of the twentieth century was used mainly by sociologists and political scientists in the European context to define exclusion from employment and housing and denial of civic rights. A general and widespread understanding of the concept of SE focuses on the non-participation in society. The Centre for the Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE) of the

London Schools of Economics has carried out research focusing on policies in the UK. The findings have highlighted the dynamic nature of the process of exclusion that is always multifaceted and complex. *“It is conceptually differentiated from poverty and deprivation, primarily by having a focus on the process of disengagement. Indeed, tracing this process from source to outcome emerges as a key issue (Room, 1995), and as a result social exclusion perspectives recognize the dynamism of individuals’ trajectories over time. In addition the term moves the unit of analysis from the individual, to socially structured disadvantage”* (Sparkes 1999).

In the field of education, the analyses and discourses with regards to exclusion have focused on access/non-access to schooling. Policies and programmes have been framed mainly around the concept of ‘inclusion’ and participation. However, there is an urgent need to look at the inherent links, and re-enforcing feedback loops between equality, equity and poverty. As a result there is a need to focus not just on exclusion from education, but also to analyse how education can maintain or combat inherent systems of beliefs and functioning that lead to exclusion and discrimination within the classroom. “Inclusion” unfortunately often becomes synonymous of presence of vulnerable groups in classrooms, “bums on chairs”. However, it is clear that this dual dimension of exclusion –from school, but also from learning within schools – needs urgent attention. “Addressing Exclusion in Education” (UNESCO 2012) lays out the guidelines to “reorienting today’s education systems” by urging policy makers to become more aware of the dynamics of exclusion by recognizing that “exclusion in education can feed into social exclusion”. In order to do this, it is imperative to understand the various facets that exclusion can take. The review will aim to identify any initiative/analyses of education of children that specifically address questions of exclusion within education systems.

### **1.2.2. Social justice, human development and the Capability Approach (CA)**

Social Justice theories will constitute the cross-cutting theoretical framework that will sustain our interpretations of the evidence identified in the review. Social justice theories, with all their variations, have shaped the vision of equality, equity, freedoms as well as the human rights frameworks and conventions that are in place in the United Nations (UN) system and that define and hold accountable countries and governments. Most specifically, the present review will refer to the various UN conventions that have impacted education of children in general and children with disabilities in particular. These international frameworks include general Human Rights conventions (UN Declaration of HR, Convention for the rights of Children), conventions for the rights of persons with disabilities (UNCPRD), The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (Salamanca) as well as frameworks that impact rights to education (Education for All EFA).

More recently, theories of Human Development in general and frameworks related to the Capabilities Approach have contributed to the human rights discourse by providing a more nuanced and multidimensional perspective within which quality of human life can be gauged and understood. The Human Development Framework that has led to the HD-Reports and the HD-Index proposes an idea that progress of nations and societies needs to take into account not just measures of income but also aspects of education as well as health. Amartya Sen’s Capability Approach, proposes the concept of human “freedoms” that comprise of “capabilities” as well as “functionings” and are closely defined by the notion of “agency” of an individual (Sen 1999). The term “agency” gives the individual a central role in determining the conditions and the means to achieve well-being. *“Functionings are the valuable activities and states that make up people’s wellbeing – such as a healthy body, being safe, being calm, having a warm friendship, an educated mind, a good job. Functionings are related to goods and*

*income but they describe what a person is able to do or be as a result.” Capabilities are “the alternative combinations of functionings that are feasible for [a person] to achieve.” Put differently, they are “the substantive freedoms he or she enjoys to lead the kind of life he or she has reason to value.”(Sen 1999). This approach will specifically serve as an analysis grid to view the evidence on social exclusion in which we will identify documents that go beyond considering education as a service and deliverable and look to understand the complexity of the various aspects that constitute the quality of education by viewing it as central capability and having an intrinsic as well as an instrumental value (Terzi 2007).*

### **1.2.3. Education in international development**

In the past two decades, the education policy agenda has moved from programmes that focus on functional literacy towards quality education that makes a real difference in the lives of children and adults. However, of concern is the fact that despite the considerable amount of funding being made available for education programmes for vulnerable children, evidence of tangible results is still rare. The aim of this systematic review is to identify from the available literature the tools and methods that are being used, often as proxies, for assessing education quality and equity.

The concept of inclusion and more specifically that of “universalizing access” and “promoting equality” were at the core of the EFA movement that was spearheaded by UNESCO since 1990 and of the World Declaration on Education for All, in Jomtein, Thailand. The idea of inclusion in education originated within the field of disability and was formally put forward in the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO 1994) which stated that education systems needed to change in order to welcome ALL children with respect for diversity. The fact that children with various forms of disabilities were easily identifiable in many cases, made the concept immediately relevant and functional within this field. However, over the last decade, on-going debate has expanded the concept of IE beyond the realms of disability by promoting it as a framework to comprehend and address issues ranging from gender inequality, ethnic or indigenous minorities, conflict, internally displaced populations, migrants, people living with HIV/AIDS, etc. Various documents from UNESCO that have focused on Inclusive education over the past decade have shed light on number of issues that are still inherent to the concept itself. A 2003 documents, referring to the work of Booth 1996, stipulated that *“inclusion is seen as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education”* (p7). In 2008, in the impetus of an international conference in education – Inclusive Education: the Way of the Future - the concept was strongly linked to that of quality education (UNESCO, 2008). The 2008 EFA Global Monitoring Report also presented a number of analyses based on background papers that deciphered the facets of marginalization and exclusion in various countries. As a result, the 2009 Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education, after reiterating previous definitions, strongly linked inclusion and quality: *“in order to realize the right to education (...) the EFA movement is increasingly concerned with linking IE with quality education. (...) Quality education frameworks incorporate two important components – the cognitive development of the learner on one hand and the role of education in promoting values and attitudes of responsible citizenship and/or creative development on the other”* (p10). The five dimensions that are defined as being central to quality education process *“(1) learner characteristics; (2) contexts; (3) enabling inputs; (4) teaching and learning; (5) outcomes”* are undeniably essential to the implementation and assessment of the promise of inclusion. Finally, the 2009 policy guidelines also make a case for the cost-effectiveness of inclusion in the long-term. There is however a lack of coherent data with regards to this issue.



In 2012, there was an impetus to shift the focus from conditions for inclusion towards deciphering the mechanisms for exclusion (UNESCO 2012). The Guide to Assessing Education Systems Towards more Inclusive and Just Societies calls for national level action on issues of inclusion, quality and equity in education. It presents a comprehensive checklist that can be used for an in depth analysis of the dynamics of exclusions that are prominent within the country and calls for a critical scrutiny of how education systems are fighting/perpetuating these mechanisms. It also prompts nation states to work towards accountability on promises of inclusion, going beyond access to schools.

### 1.3 Policy and practice background

A review that attempts to map out the evidence that can be relevant for policy making in the field of inclusive education requires a framework that can help to **piece the evidence together** in order to map the research/studies/policies that are currently being referred to. Most systematic reviews that are carried out on the peer-reviewed literature, especially in the field of health, have a strong focus on the internal validity of the findings, the scientific robustness of the evidence. However, it is clear that for policy, the external validity of the evidence or what it demonstrates with reference to replication in different contexts or “generalisability” of knowledge is the prime objective: what works? It is clear that focusing on outcomes does not suffice to achieve this. This calls for the identification of the causal links as well as of the mechanisms that shed light on what works, but also how, why or why not. *“In order to identify causal connections, we need to understand outcome patterns, rather than seek outcome regularities”* (p22 Pawson 2006). In order to grasp the “process” or the **dynamic chain** that leads to social impact and positive change we need to scrutinize the evidence to identify general **models of explanation**. This in turn requires a clear definition of the theoretical frameworks that will form an analysis lens through which the body of evidence can be organized and understood. This review is at the crossroads of different theories as well as conceptual frameworks.

#### 1.3.1. Post-2015 challenges for education: Need for a Paradigm Shift

The role of education as a process for fighting discrimination, promoting social justice and overcoming poverty has been undisputable (Caillods and Hallak 2004, Raffo, Dyson et al. 2009). The 2008 UNESCO Global Monitoring Report focused on marginalization and ‘educational poverty’ and its links to well-being and human development (Unterhalter 2009). In many countries, education constitutes a fundamental tool to fight poverty (from a human rights perspective) or to promote economic growth (from a utilitarian perspective), and has been recognized in the World Bank’s Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in UNESCO’s Education for ALL initiatives (EFA) as well as in number of national policies. However, as the 2015 deadline approaches, experts are unanimous to say that the Millennium Development (MDG) Goal 2 pertaining to Universal Primary Education and Goal 3 (to promote gender equality) as well as the EFA goals set over 2 decades ago are not on track to be met; there are 69 million children of school-going age that are not in school and over 750 million adults have no literacy skills (UNESCO 2005).

The role of education is crucial in terms of achieving social impact and long-term changes. It seems that development is failing the most vulnerable groups such as girls by falling short on promises of equity and social justice (UNESCO 2012b). For long now, various policies and programs in general, and those pertaining to education in particular, have been analysed through specific silos of high -middle or low-income countries. With current trends in literacy

and poverty rates, it is becoming clear that fundamental challenges are similar across countries and contexts. Social exclusion as shaped by educational experiences is a crucial hurdle that needs to be addressed in various contexts (Kabeer 2005; Mitchell 2005). **There is urgent need to focus on who is receiving what education.** It is clear that low levels of performance in schools lead to a lack of participation in society. Education is thus perceived as indicative of exclusion from different domains of the adult life (employment, political, community). While it is undisputable that exclusion from education maintains persons in poverty, there is a need to understand fully the role that education plays in contributing to - or fighting - mechanisms of social exclusion beyond the learning years (Sparkes 1999; Sparkes & Glennerster 2002). We argue here that the capability approach defined in previous sections, offers a useful framework to analyse these mechanisms. This approach is of crucial importance for designing programmes and even more so for assessing impact as it focuses not solely on what a person actually does (functioning) but the range of possibilities that he/she chooses that specific functioning from – the capabilities set ((Sen 1999). The implications of the CA in the field of defining and assessing education are essential. Firstly, rather than trying to ‘label’ whether a person with a given vulnerability (disability, gender, minority ethnicity or religion, etc.), it focuses on whether vulnerability leads to deprivation of capabilities resulting in lower wellbeing; secondly, the CA has the potential to look at the impact of vulnerability beyond the individual by including the effect on the family and the community (in terms of coping strategies, loss of resources and shared burden) which is crucial in developing countries; thirdly, it focuses on the agency of the person, to take the decisions that s/he has reason to value.

### **1.3.2. Education for vulnerable groups: Inclusion and Exclusion**

There approaches that aim to enable all children to access education vary according to country, context, funding available, policy and legislations. As the term indicates, inclusive education, promotes the access of children with disabilities within formal school systems. In continuation with the mainstreaming impetus, IE goes one step further to conceive access not just as making room for children with disabilities but truly ensuring that all the elements are in place to ensure that they benefit from learning and realize their potential. The Enabling Education Network (EENET) defines IE as a process that: acknowledges that all children can learn; recognises and respects differences (age, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, HIV status, etc.); enables education structures, systems and methodologies to meet the needs of all children; is part of a wider strategy to promote an inclusive society; is a dynamic process which is constantly evolving; need not be restricted by large class sizes or shortage of material resources<sup>1</sup>. However, IE programmes struggle on the cusp of theoretical expectation and field realities. Certain definitions attempt to reconcile these two aspects by introducing nuances in the definitions. According to UNESCO: *“Inclusive education is a system of education in which all the pupils with special educational needs are enrolled in ordinary classes in their district schools, and are provided with support services and an education based on their forces and needs. Inclusive schools are based on the basic principle that all schoolchildren in a given community should learn together, so far as is practicable, regardless of their handicaps or difficulties.”*<sup>2</sup>

Despite the difficulties faced with implementation, with its strong grounding in human rights, IE constitutes a relevant policy and advocacy tool (Peters 2003). It brings issues related to social cohesion and justice into sharp focus and constitutes a tool for more efficiently addressing the needs of children with disabilities, especially in formal settings. However, as suggested from

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<sup>1</sup> EENET Website accessed July 2015: [http://www.eenet.org.uk/EENET\\_def\\_of\\_IE.php](http://www.eenet.org.uk/EENET_def_of_IE.php)

<sup>2</sup> UNESCO website accessed September 2011:

[http://portal.unesco.org/education/en//ev.phpURL\\_ID=7499&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/education/en//ev.phpURL_ID=7499&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

the definitions given above, the concept remains vague at the theoretical level, which results in difficulties in implementing coherent and sustainable programmes. Many developing countries have initiated mechanisms to ensure that children with disabilities are included in mainstream education programmes. Despite these efforts, schools do not always mainstream all impairment groups. This leads to a hierarchy of the excluded; with some impairment groups being further marginalised and excluded (Kalyanpur 2007). Furthermore, initiatives that are sometimes well-defined at the policy level are often ineffectively implemented due to lack of resources and expertise, as well as persistence of negative social attitudes leading to discrimination and exclusion (Jonah Eleweke and Rodda 2002). Finally, IE remains inherently linked to the field of disability at the level of implementation in LMICs. **We argue that to trigger the required paradigm shift to improve quality and equity of education the need to present an analysis of the social exclusion process is crucial in order to address the multiple vulnerabilities of children and go beyond the focus on disability.**

### **1.3.3. Impact and Theory of Change**

Although the Theory of Change (ToC) discourse originated in the evaluation field is widespread in international development, there is no generally accepted definition in practice (Vogel 2012). However, the guiding principle of ToC is the imperative to tackle complexity through social analyses and decipher dynamic processes in order to understand how and why a given combination of initiatives can lead to desired change within a given context, which “is vital in relation to attributing cause” p441 (Blamey and Mackenzie 2007) . In order to effectively do this, it is essential to have agreement over what change is desired, especially by local actors, to gauge if this desired change is reflected in the broader policy frameworks as well as engaged in discussion at the local level to design initiatives and identify the entry points that can trigger the mechanisms of change. The challenge of ToC is to take a procedural approach that allows for fine-tuning which in turn allows a scrutiny of the education context as well as ensures local ownership and accountability. Such an approach is crucial to better understand how SE occurs within learning systems, beyond simple questions of equity in access and basic skills.

## **1.4 Research background**

Educational policies and structures across various contexts adhere to a central tenet of the flourishing of the child and recognize links between learning and building peaceful societies (UNESCO 2000). However, education processes and outcomes are universally organised in terms of standardized levels of achievement of cognitive skills that, by not being sensitive to differences in children’s abilities (particularly children with disabilities (Dart 2007, Coates and Vickerman 2010), create processes of exclusion and failure and ultimately jeopardize the overarching goal of fostering holistic wellbeing. The review will scope the existence of new and innovative ways to look at discrimination within education by using a social exclusion lens going beyond the sole focus of establishing equitable access for certain pre-labelled groups, with little, if any attention to equality of process and quality of education, and to the ability of programmes to achieve any real social impact.

### **1.4.1. Social Exclusion and Vulnerability**

For the past decades, the inclusion discourse has become prominent in the field of education policy. In this field, inclusion has been most often synonymous of access into learning systems. Similarly, vulnerability has been defined in terms of various labels in order to determine the populations that are not having access to education. The process of labelling who should be included is a political one, which inevitably leads to certain, often the most stigmatised sections

of society, being left aside (Moncrieffe and Eyben 2013). Labelling is also a way of simplifying the approach to programming for actors who often do not have the resources to adequately evaluate appropriately the needs of the population they are targeting. In contexts where resources are often more limited, social policies are defined in terms of who and how many the vulnerable are.

#### **1.4.2. Education policies: focus on access as synonymous of inclusion**

It is undeniable that the concept of Inclusive Education (IE), with its strong grounding in human rights, constitutes a relevant policy and advocacy tool. It brings issues related to social cohesion and justice into sharp focus within educational systems ((Miles and Singal 2010). IE is also viewed as a means of fighting stigma and discrimination in societies where prejudice is widespread and where resources are restricted. However, in its attempt to encompass various forms of vulnerable groups, the concept seems increasingly unclear. More concerning is the fact that despite the considerable amount of funding being made available for IE programmes, tangible results are still rare and within a new implicit hierarchy of the excluded, some vulnerable groups, such as children with disabilities are once more at risk of being relegated to the bottom of the pile.

#### **1.4.3. Limitations of current assessments of quality education**

This inability to overcome certain crucial challenges linked to the complexity of assessment is reflected in the fact that evaluation of quality education is over-focussed on considerations of access/non-access and attendance/non-attendance of children with disabilities. As a consequence, despite theoretical advances and policy breakthroughs, inclusive quality education continues to be a service to be delivered, and on the field inseparable from disability concerns and viewed as synonymous of issues linked to access to schools and classrooms. As a result access, which only constitutes a first step, is often perceived as the objective of educational programmes for children with disabilities. What are the efforts made to look at processes, and even completion of school? Beyond this, are there any attempt to assess qualitative outcomes and impact in terms of social change?

#### **1.4.4. Previous systematic reviews**

Various reviews have been carried out with the EPPI-Centre, Campbell and 3ie on education of vulnerable groups. The present review differs from these and will add to some of the recommendations made by previous studies.

1. The scope and objectives of our review call for a realistic perspective and on-going discussion with future users of the review. As a result, the “intervention” (programme or policy) is not the only unit for analysis.
2. We have defined the quality appraisal tool for scrutinizing the evidence base with the aim of identifying patterns that lead to exclusion within learning.
3. The past reviews have focussed closely on certain aspects of inclusive education mostly in relation to children with disabilities and special needs:
  - Reviews that have a strong focus on children with disabilities (Nind, Wearmouth et al. 2004);
  - Reviews that have a strong focus on a certain type of intervention (Rix, Hall et al. 2006);
  - Reviews that have a strong focus on impact evaluation or cost-effectiveness (Bakhshi, Kett et al. 2013).
4. The present review will be a strong continuation of a review, that was carried out in 2002 that looks specifically at the “effectiveness of school-level actions for promoting

participation by all students” (Dyson, Howes et al. 2002), However the review on promoting participation:

- Was published in 2002. As a result our review will scope evidence that was published after the review;
- Identified a majority of studies and interventions that were from High Income Countries;
- Focused on the various actions without strongly looking at process analyses or lack of these, within the studies identified;
- Did not focus on questions of definition of inclusion and theoretical frameworks on which interventions are carried out.

Our review will be closely in line with one of the recommendations made by the 2002 review: “The systematic review process has proved powerful in enabling us to identify trustworthy empirical evidence in a field where such evidence tends to be embedded in conceptual development, advocacy and illustration. It should therefore become more firmly established amongst the research methodologies in education. However, it should not, in its current form, be seen as the only way to engage legitimately with research literature. **In particular, narrative reviews and non-empirical forms of inquiry (such as theoretical development and conceptual analysis) which are not readily accessed through the sorts of systematic review processes in which we engaged are important in a developing field such as inclusive education.** Moreover, the development of policy and practice cannot always wait for evidence from systematic reviews” (p5).

5. In order to define the keywording tool we will refer to concepts and tools defined by a systematic review on girls’ education (Unterhalter 2015). In line with this review, we will place importance on identifying the role of the context within which exclusion occurs, focus on questions of policy and changes in norms and behaviours and focus on the triggers of social change. We will also borrow elements of the coding frame used in this study for the mapping of evidence (p83).
6. A Campbell review is currently being conducted on “Education Interventions for Improving the Access to, and Quality of, Education in Low and Middle Income Countries: A Systematic Review” (Snilstveit, Gallagher et al. 2014). *“The primary objective of this review is to identify, assess and synthesise evidence on the effects of education interventions on children’s access to education and learning in low and middle income countries”* (p5). This review focuses on interventions and their impact by looking at experimental and quasi-experimental designs. We believe that there could be strong synergies between this study and ours and will be contacting the authors to get more information on their search terms.

## 1.5 Purpose and rationale for review

The overarching goal of the research within which this review is embedded is to develop an innovative framework for analysis of the processes that lead to social exclusion, inequality and thus hinder quality of education. The research will allow us to carry out the scoping studies and develop user involvement that will lay the foundation for the conceptual framework as well as identify methods for analysis of the phenomenon of social exclusion to be further tested in successive phases. **The systematic review will be carried out within the scope of Specific aim 1:** To review methods, tools and analyses, which have been used to assess social exclusion within teaching and learning processes at the global level. **Specific aim 2** will provide evidence from data collected in Low and Middle Income Countries (LMICs) that supports the need for

viewing learning outcomes beyond indicators currently being defined to determine quality learning. **The findings of the systematic review will feed into specific aim 3** that will build an innovative framework for analysis that combines relevant theoretical foundations as well as methods/tools that decipher social processes that sustain social exclusion.

The present review will aim to:

1. Map the methods and tools that are used to evaluate the process of social exclusion within education;
2. Comprehend how social exclusion processes are being viewed within education in Low and Middle Income Countries;
3. Systematically identifying knowledge gaps that exist in evaluation of social exclusion in education in LMICs;

## **1.6 Authors, funders, and other users of the review**

The conclusions drawn by this review will have relevance for donors, practitioners as well as researchers.

### Authors

- Parul Bakhshi, lead PI, a social psychologist, specialises in education programmes for persons with disabilities. She has conducted systematic reviews on questions of adult literacy programmes and mental health for LCDIDC. She has also carried out evaluations and assessments of education programmes for Save the Children-UK, as well as for UNICEF.
- Jean-Francois Trani has undertaken a range of policy-linked, qualitative, action-based reviews that analyse the social and political implications of policies for marginalised and excluded groups. He has also worked on access to education for children with disabilities in humanitarian contexts.
- Research Assistant: Katherine Kristensen is a Masters Student at the Brown School of Social Work at Washington University in St Louis.

### Review Group Advisors

- Nidhi Singhal (content expert)
- Maria Kett (Content expert)
- Methodology expert (TBD by EPPI-Centre)

### Funders

This review is part of a research funded by DFID ESRC EDUCATION and DEVELOPMENT: Raising Learning Outcomes in Education Systems, Call 2013-2014.

### Other Users of the review

At each stage of the research, results, findings and conclusions will be provided in various formats in order to be disseminated within the academic field as well as be made accessible to various other potential users and future partners of this research (policy makers, NGOs). The findings and conclusions of the review will be made available to different audiences in various formats:

- Peer reviewed publication (1) on conclusions of the systematic review;
- Protocol and final report made available on the EPPI-Centre website;
- Executive summary made available through websites (DFID, Washington University, WSIS Community Forum).

## 1.7 Review questions and approach

Initial Review Question:

**How is social exclusion assessed within education systems in Low and Middle Income Countries?**

Supporting concerns that will frame the systematic review:

- Which definitions of Social Exclusion are prominent in the field of education?
- Is social exclusion regarded as synonymous of inclusion and access?
- What methodologies are being used for the analysis of social exclusion in education as a dynamic process?
- Is social exclusion being used to determine quality of, and equity within education?

### 1.7.1. Specifying the scope of the primary question

The perspective of social exclusion in education of the present review will be based on the policy document: **Define social exclusion in education with reference to the UNESCO guideline 2012** (UNESCO 2012). In order to determine the scope of the search on social exclusion we will refer to the document on exclusion within education, which goes beyond exclusion from learning systems to examine how processes of prejudice and discrimination operate within education. Most analyses of inclusion have focussed on the first 2 aspects of exclusion as specified in the document, namely:

1. Exclusion from having life prospects needed for learning
2. Exclusion from entry to schools or education programmes

In order to identify information pertaining specifically to the process of social exclusion as defined in the previous sections our review will focus more specifically on the following 4 aspects:

3. Exclusion from regular and continuing participation within a school programme;
4. Exclusion from meaningful learning experiences;
5. Exclusion from recognition of learning;
6. Exclusion from contributing the learning acquired to the development of community and society.

The review will include various types of analyses and interventions at various levels. These may range from international frameworks, national or regional policies, large-scale programmes or specific projects, large or small. In order to map the evidence with the aim of understanding the process of social exclusion we will determine the key wording tool as well as the quality criteria with reference to dynamic process of SE. Education systems will include formal and non-formal, primary and secondary.

### 1.7.2. Specific Search strategy

#### ***Primary Research Question***

The search will be carried out in successive stages in order to answer the review questions in a coherent and systematic manner, and in line with the concepts stated in previous sections we will proceed in the following manner:

1. Identify the studies that address the process of social exclusion in education;
2. Screen the body of evidence identified to identify:
  - a) The tools and methodologies that are used to assess and evaluate social exclusion within the classroom or the wider learning environment;
  - b) Identify initiatives that focus on complex and contextual analyses;

- c) The prevalent definitions used to understand social exclusion mechanisms within education.

We will however, exclude studies that refer **solely** to questions of access into learning systems such as accessibility of the learning environment (physical accessibility, water, toilets, teaching materials, etc.).

#### ***Looking at complex analyses***

In line with the aims of the overarching research question, we will identify studies that present complex and dynamic analyses of the process of social exclusion within the classroom and decipher the mechanisms that lead to marginalisation of vulnerable groups. These could include:

- Direct educational indicators (enrolment rates, retention and transition rates, completion rates, interruption and dropout rates, literacy rates) **when these rates are discussed and completed by analyses of the context within which they occur.**
- Qualitative outputs that help understand the **process of social exclusion** (views and opinions of the children, parents, teachers and community members regarding).
- Studies that focus on various elements of the teaching process such as teacher training and the curriculum **with the aim of understanding social exclusion linked with beliefs and attitudes with the learning system;**
- Studies/interventions that address social exclusion through awareness raising and sensitisation with relation to education of vulnerable groups;

#### ***Levels and types of Intervention***

Various types of interventions will be included within the review: projects and programmes, regional, national and international policies and initiatives. The systematic review will include interventions at all the following levels:

- Child level;
- School level;
- State level;
- Country level;
- International level



## 2. Methods used in the review

### 2.1 Type of review

A systematic review of social exclusion in education is tasked with identifying, screening and critically appraising a considerable and diverse body of evidence to answer the crucial question of how the process of social exclusion is being understood and assessed within learning systems. In order to achieve this, it is imperative to determine the framework for the review not only in terms of inclusion criteria but also in view of what the main theoretical concepts signify.

**We have designed a multi-stage review where the findings from each stage will be discussed with the advisory group in order to identify the priorities of the successive stages.**

- The first stage will map the existing literature on assessment of social exclusion and education in LMICs;
- The body of evidence will then be screened with a dual-focus;
  - Identify methodologies/tools that are being used to assess social exclusion;
  - Identify definitions of social exclusion in education that are prominent in low and middle income countries;
- After discussion with the donors and the review group and in view of the size of the body of evidence identified, we will re-focus our analysis in order to address the specific questions likely to be most useful and define future avenues that require further investigation (i.e. focus the review on one or a selected number of low and middle income countries).

#### 2.1.1 Screening limitations

##### *Finding and appraising relevant evidence*

As stated, the aim of the present review is to seek out evidence that would allow for the much needed paradigm shift in the field of education quality and equity. The systematic review will lead to the identification and screening of relevant evidence; however the relevance of the evidence in order to contribute to the overall research will entail defining innovative criteria, going beyond considerations of methodological clarity and robustness. The designing of the quality criteria itself will be a major achievement of this review.

##### *Screening with a dual objective*

The body of evidence will be scrutinized to not just identify methodologies that assess social exclusion in education but also to constitute a theoretical framework within which social exclusion within education can be analysed and assessed. This dual objective (methodological and theoretical) is ambitious and will require fine-tuning of the review steps as the review advances. We will draw on expertise from the advisory group in order to help redirect the review as and when required.

##### *Scrutinizing the grey literature*

The main challenge of this review will be to define a search strategy that allows the screening of a very wide and versatile body of work in the grey literature. This includes a number of working documents, policy documents, white papers, technical documents, project and programme reports as well as website information of various organisations, which we hope to identify through searching relevant websites, and contacting authors and on-going projects. As these documents do not go through a peer-review process they also differ greatly in terms of quality.

Moreover, within this literature, the terms ‘impact’ and ‘cost-effectiveness’ are often over-used without referring to a precise study or assessment.

### 2.1.2 Applying Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

An exhaustive and comprehensive search strategy will be developed using a two-stage approach. The first and principal stage of the search strategy will be a scoping study, enabling us to produce a map of the evidence base, describing the body of work in this area. The mapping will identify theoretical evidence on social exclusion in education on one hand and the methodologies used to assess the process on the other.

**For the initial search** the inclusion criteria will be applied broadly to enable identification of the evidence base:

- ***Country where policy/programme is implemented:*** We will include if the document addressed at least one country from the list of LMICs.
- ***Type of education:*** We will include documents that refer to specific formal or non-formal educational structures. Exclude home-based education as well as adult education. Informal learning systems will be excluded.
- ***Education level:*** We will include documents referring to children aged between 2 and 18 (early childhood, primary and secondary education levels). We will exclude documents pertaining to university and post secondary education.
- ***Type of document:*** We will exclude dissertations and chapter of books and books.
- ***Subject:*** We will exclude documents that do not address questions of education and learning

**Following the initial search the body of evidence will be divided into 2 sections:**

- ***Studies that present an analyses/assessment of Social Exclusion:*** analyses may include mixed methods or qualitative methods. Studies that only present quantitative data linked to enrolment, access and completion without any contextual or process discussion will be excluded. Specific attention will be paid to identify studies that contribute strongly to the ToC and present analyses that decipher the causal factors or correlations between social, cultural, historic and religious contexts and teaching content.
- ***Documents that define the process of social exclusion beyond questions of access:*** We will include documents that view social exclusion as a multifaceted and on-going process beyond merely defining specific vulnerable groups that do not have access to learning systems.

### 2.1.3 Characterising Included Studies: Key wording

For studies that have been included following the first screening, we will upload the full documents into EPPI-Reviewer 4.0 for the electronic database search. A team of reviewers will then code the documents according to various criteria defined in the key wording tool. The key wording tool will be defined keeping in mind the dual objective of this review:

1. Identify methodologies and tools used for assessing processes of social exclusion within education;
2. Identify the various definitions that are currently used to understand social exclusion within education, specifically in low and middle-income countries.
3. Identify the various issues related to social exclusion processes (gender, ethnic groups, disability, etc.).

### 2.1.4 Identifying/Describing Studies: quality assurance process

Reports will be identified from three different types of sources that will require adaptation of the overall search strategy: electronic search engines to identify research papers, electronic search of databases of organisations and networks working in the field of disability and education, gaining access to NGO field documents through partners and experts/other key informants. Description and mapping of studies will be done using the key wording tool. The quality assurance process will be determined based on the Theory of Change defined above (see Appendix).

The aim of the present review is to provide information for analysis of social exclusion within education. The evidence base that will be scrutinized for answering the review question will be extremely large and divers, ranging from peer-reviewed papers to documents obtained from NGO networks. Based on principles and theory of change and taking a realistic perspective that aim to decipher the mechanisms of how initiatives impact behavioural change, we will focus our analyses on: (1) Questions of external validity of information provided by the evidence; (2) Identifying the situational triggers by deciphering the Context-Mechanism-Outcome (CMO) processes in the evidence base. In doing this we will attempt to seek out the “patterns between interventions and their outcomes, on the generative mechanisms by which the relationship is established” p 450 (Blamey and Mackenzie 2007).

The defined aims of the review also call for a determining of what will constitute QUALITY criteria in our screening and analysis. The scales that are currently uses in systematic reviews place high emphasis on internal validity and scientific robustness. Our screening process will take a realistic approach of “Digging for Nuggets” (Pawson 2006). We agree with the author that the *“study is not the appropriate unit of analysis for quality appraisal and (...) indicators are not decision points but invite the appraiser to examine rather more complex propositions as “possible features for consideration””* (p131). Our quality appraisal will need to bring into light the *“assumptions that underlie programme interventions (p134)”*.

We designed a quality grid using the UNESCO 2012 document that details the various types of evidence that are needed to understand social exclusion related to education within a given context. We added a process analysis that focuses on uncovering the patterns of exclusion through a Context-Mechanism-Outcome approach. Through this perspective a study will be considered of “good” quality if the links between context-mechanisms and outcomes have been articulated, or suggested. We will define a scoring methodology to be able to assess the weight of various documents according to the various elements. Questions thrown up by this analysis will be discussed with the advisory group or put out to the networks associated with this study (see Appendix for Analysis Grid).

## **2.2 User involvement**

### **2.2.1 Approach and rationale**

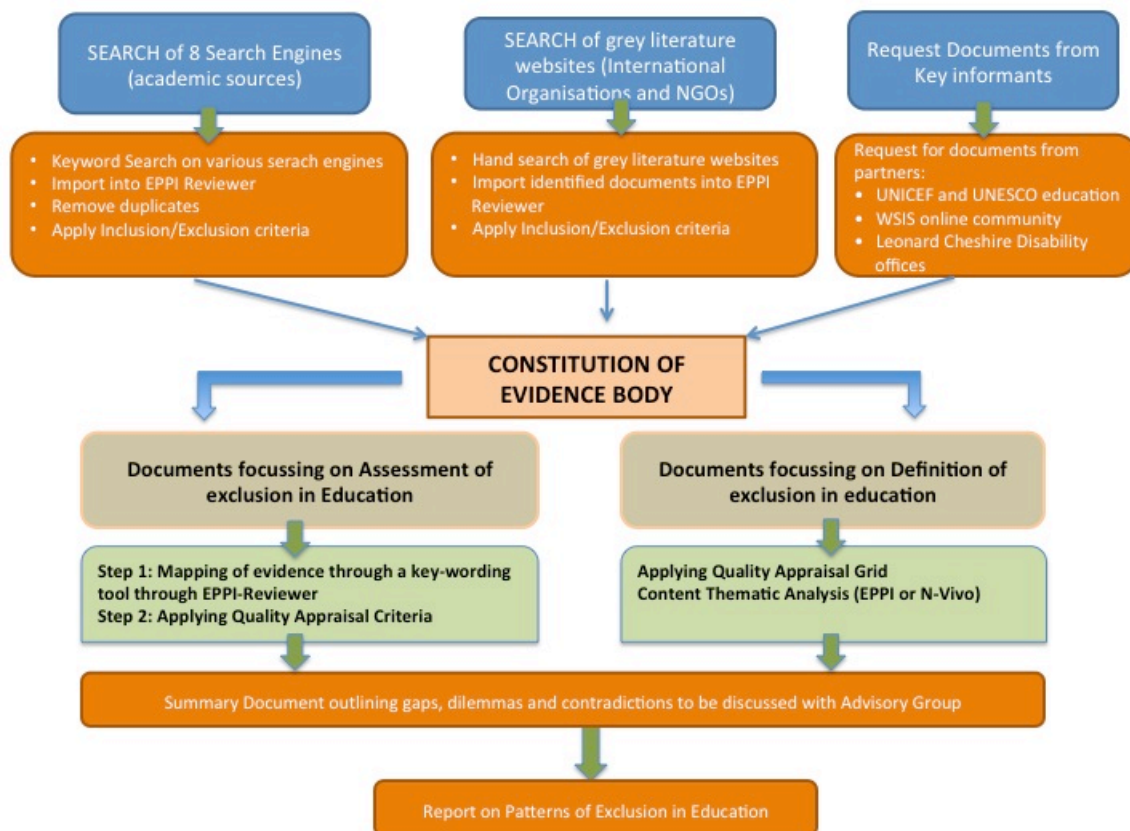
The proposed research project will strongly contribute to on-going debates on quality of education in academia but also in the field of policy making as well as implementation and evaluation of education programmes. Liaising with partners from various backgrounds will be strategic to our aim of strongly building in user-involvement from the very onset of the research. The framework for analysis of Social Exclusion within Education that will result from the research will be presented to inclusive education units at UNICEF and UNESCO. They will also be shared through policy briefs with NGO partners. Academic audiences will be reached via per review publication, as well as conference presentations (including the Human Development and Capability Association Conference in September 2015 and 2016, and the CEIS conference 2016 in Vancouver).

### 2.2.2 User involvement in designing the review

The PI and Co-I will leverage extensive past experience in order to ensure that all stages of the research are defined successively in a participatory manner. Our user involvement strategy will comprise of setting up an Advisory Group that brings together partners of different profiles to provide advise and feedback on the research. The group will consist of academics (UCL, University of San Diego) as well as international policy makers (UNESCO and UNICEF).

## 2.3 Identifying and describing studies

### 2.3.1 Identification of potential studies: Search strategy



### ***Electronic searches of academic databases***

Academic databases in the fields of medicine, education, psychology, anthropology, and the social sciences will be searched. Subject librarians of education and anthropology were consulted in order to determine the most appropriate databases to search for those disciplines. A preliminary search of fifteen databases was conducted with a wide range of keyword (free text) and subject (thesaurus) terms. The first 40 results of each search were reviewed and based on the number of relevant results and database features which refined the search and limited results (e.g. ability to search by title/abstract rather than full-text, ability to use truncation symbol), 9 databases will be selected for use in this review. Databases to be searched include:

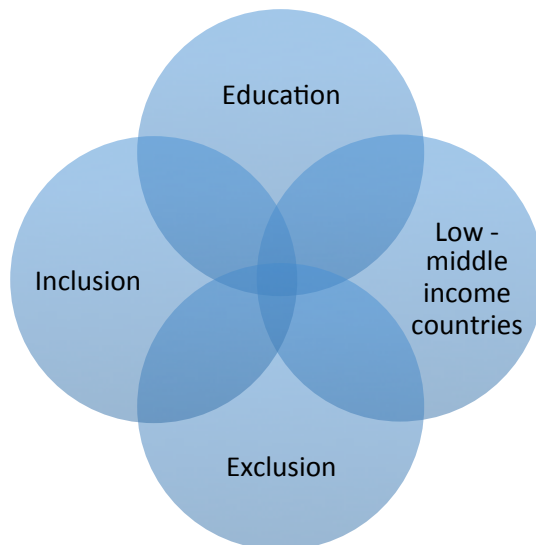
- ERIC

- Eldis
- British Library of Developing Studies (BLDS)
- PsychINFO
- Social Science Research Network
- Web of Science
- PsychLit

### **Search Terms**

We have designed the search to identify the papers that refer to the following concepts:

- Education,
- Exclusion
- Inclusion,
- Low –middle income countries,



*Example of search terms defined in ERIC using the Thesaurus (this strategy will be followed and adapted to the other academic search engines)*

#### **a. Education**

Primary Education OR "Elementary School\*" OR "Kindergarten\*" OR "Elementary Secondary Education" OR "Elementary Education" OR "Primary Education" OR "Secondary Education" OR "Compulsory Education" OR "Elementary Secondary Education" OR "Secondary Education" OR "Grade School\*" OR "elementary student\*" OR "Primary grade\*" OR "High School\*" OR "Middle School\*"

#### **b. Exclusion**

"Exclusi\*" OR "Exclusion" OR "Social Exclusi\*" OR "Social isolation" OR "Isolati\*" OR "Isolation" OR "climate of exclusi\*" OR "climate of inclusi\*" OR "exclus\* and integrat\*" OR "exclus\* approach\*" OR "exclus\* attitude\*" OR "exclus\* classes" OR "exclus\* classroom\*" OR "exclus\*

curricul\*" OR "exclus\* educat\*" OR "exclus\* in education\*" OR "exclus\* environment\*" OR "exclus\* in school\*" OR "exclus\* instruction\*" OR "exclus\* learning" OR "exclusi\* pedagog\*" OR "exclusi\* placement\*" OR "exclusi\* polic\*" OR "exclusi\* practice\*" OR "exclusi\* program\*" OR "exclusi\* reform\*" OR "exclusi\* school\*" OR "exclusi\* setting\*" OR "exclusi\* strateg\*" OR "exclusi\* student\*" OR "exclusi\* style of teaching" OR "exclusi\* teach\*" OR "exclusi\* elementary" OR "exclusion general" OR "exclusion high school\*" OR "exclusion kindergarten\*" OR "process\* of exclusi\*" OR "school\* exclusion" OR "social cohesion"

c. Inclusion/Exclusion

"climate of inclusi\*" OR "inclusi\* and integrat\*" OR "inclusi\* approach\*" OR "inclusi\* attitude\*" OR "inclusi\* classes" OR "inclusi\* classroom\*" OR "inclusi\* curricul\*" OR "inclusi\* educat\*" OR "inclusi\* in education\*" OR "inclusi\* environment\*" OR "inclusi\* in school\*" OR "inclus\* instruction\*" OR "inclusi\* learning" OR "inclusi\* pedagog\*" OR "inclusi\* placement\*" OR "inclusi\* polic\*" OR "inclusi\* practice\*" OR "inclusi\* program\*" OR "inclusi\* reform\*" OR "inclusi\* school\*" OR "inclusi\* setting\*" OR "inclusi\* strateg\*" OR "inclusi\* student\*" OR "inclusi\* style of teaching" OR "inclusi\* teach\*" OR "inclusive elementary" OR "inclusive general" OR "inclusive high school\*" OR "inclusive kindergarten\*" OR "mainstream\* inclusion" OR "practice\* of inclusi\*" OR "process\* of inclusion" OR "provid\* inclusi\*" OR "school\* inclusion" OR "social\* inclu\*" OR "inclus\* teen\*"

d. Low-middle income countries: World Bank list of Economies (2015 listing of lower income and lower middle).

"economic condition" OR "poor countries" OR "low income countries" OR "LMIC" OR "Middle income countries" OR "underserved countries" OR "poor nation" OR "underdeveloped economy" OR "developing economy" OR "Low income Countr\*" OR "Middle income Countr\*" OR "lower middle income" OR "Afghanistan" OR "Albania" OR "Algeria" OR "American Samoa" OR "Angola" OR "Armenia" OR "Azerbaijan" OR "Bangladesh" OR "Belarus" OR "Belize" OR "Benin" OR "Bhutan" OR "Bolivia" OR "Bosnia" OR "Botswana" OR "Brazil" OR "Bulgaria" OR "Burkina Faso" OR "Burundi" OR "Cabo Verde" OR "Cambodia" OR "Cameroon" OR "Central African Republic" OR "Chad" OR "China" OR "Columbia" OR "Comoros" OR "Congo" OR "Dominican Republic" OR "Congo Republic" OR "Costa Rica" OR "Cuba" OR "Djibouti" OR "Dominica" OR "Cuba" OR "Ecuador" OR "Egypt" OR "Arab Republic" OR "El Salvador" OR "Eritrea" OR "Ethiopia" OR "Fiji" OR "Gabon" OR "Gambia" OR "Georgia" OR "Ghana" OR "Grenada" OR "Guatemala" OR "Guinea\*" OR "Guyana" OR "Haiti" OR "Honduras" OR "India" OR "Indonesia" OR "Iran" OR "Islamic Republic" OR "Iraq" OR "Jamaica" OR "Jordan" OR "Kazakhstan" OR "Kenya" OR "Kiribati" OR "Korea" OR "Kosovo" OR "Kyrgyz Republic" OR "Lebanon" OR "Lesotho" OR "Liberia" OR "Libya" OR "Macedonia" OR "Madagascar" OR "Malawi" OR "Malaysia" OR "Maldives" OR "Mali" OR "Marshal Islands" OR "Mauritania" OR "Mauritius" OR "Mexico" OR "Micronesia" OR "Moldova" OR "Mongolia" OR "Sub-Saharan Africa" OR "Sub Saharan Africa" OR "Subsaharan Africa" OR "South Asia" OR "Southern Asia" OR "East Asia" OR "Eastern Asia" OR "Middle East" OR "North Africa" OR "Central Asia"

***Scrutinizing the grey literature***

As noted above, one of the key challenges of this review will be to define a search strategy that allows the screening of a very wide and versatile body of work in the grey literature. After a preliminary search of international organisations' as well as NGOs' websites we determined a number of portals to be hand searched using various combinations of search terms adapted to

each website's search possibilities. Websites of relevant international portals of institutions and research bodies:

- Websites of international agencies and consortium working in the field of education (UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank);
- Websites of networks and consortiums working on education and disability (Education International, EENET);
- Websites of development think tanks and institutes working in education (IIEP, IDS, ODI).
- British Education Index
- Australian Education Index

### ***Contacting experts and key-informants***

The PI and Co-I will leverage past experience in the field of inclusive development in order to identify documents that focus on social exclusion within education.

- We have sent an initial query to organisations working in the field of education to request documents on assessment of IE.
- We have launched a discussion group open to experts on inclusive education on the WSIS-Community-UNESCO portal;
- We are also contacting the field offices of Leonard Cheshire Disability as well as Handicap International to obtain documents on IE.

### **2.3.2 Mapping the Evidence**

All results of the electronic search of journals will be entered into the EPPI-Reviewer 4 database. For the portals of institutions and organisations a database will record the details of each search (date of access, process for keyword searching, number of documents identified, number of documents included in the search). The documents included in the search will then be manually screened using the same inclusion criteria as those used for the electronic database search. Finally, we are aware of the fact that we may receive the information from the key informants over a long period of time and in an unpredictable format. We will keep a record of the documents received and provide copies of the ones that pass the inclusion criteria manually.

### ***The electronic academic databases***

- Firstly, we will apply the keyword search to the various electronic databases in order to identify the first series of documents relevant to our search;
- Secondly, following the keyword search, we will apply the inclusion criteria to the title and abstract identified through the electronic search. The PI will screen all the documents, removing the duplicates and broadly applying the inclusion criteria. The retained documents will form the body of evidence to be screened. Documents whose relevance is questionable will be marked as 'to be discussed.'
- At a third stage, the PI and Co-I will apply the inclusion criteria to the remaining documents and the disagreements will be discussed.
- At the end of this screening, documents will be retained for further analysis and divided into 2 categories: documents that present methodologies to assess the process of social

exclusion and documents that present theoretical perspectives of social exclusion within education.

### ***The grey literature***

In order to efficiently identify relevant documents from the grey literature we will:

- Hand-search the websites states above. We believe that this constitutes the most efficient strategy in order to include documents that are cited and used in the grey literature. Due to very different structures of the websites, we will have to tailor our search to each website. Once the documents identified through the keyword search, the inclusion/exclusion criteria will be applied manually to the documents in order to select the relevant studies. A record of these searches will be included as an Annex in the final report.
- Request technical experts from the field as well as those working within specific organisations to identify studies that may have been carried out within their programmes or referred to over the past decade. A short questionnaire will be sent out in order to identify any documents that are being used on the field, as well as impact assessments that have been carried out in recent years.

### **2.3.3 Characterizing included studies using EPPI-Centre tools**

The mapping of the studies remaining after application of the criteria will be key-worded using an adapted version of the EPPI-Centre Core Key-wording Strategy. Additional keywords, which are specific to the context of the review, will be added to the template. All the key-worded studies will be added to the larger EPPI-Centre database.

### **2.3.4 Identifying and describing studies: quality assurance process**

In view of the size of the body of evidence selected for analysis, the review team will scrutinize the literature in order to present a precise mapping of the existing studies. Two members of the review team will code each study by applying the key wording tool independently. Discrepancies will be discussed and resolved, with a third reviewer if necessary. The key wording tool, which comprises of closed questions that pertain to the characteristics of the study is sufficiently precise to carry out the mapping exercise. The studies will be divided between the members of the review team; whenever reviewers are 'unsure' of the appropriate coding, studies will be discussed and coding settled before analysis.

### **2.3.5 Mapping the literature**

The body of evidence will be mapped according to various criteria determined in the key-wording tool. These will include:

- The geographical context: the country setting, urban or rural;
- Research methods used: qualitative research, observational studies or experimental designs;
- Research participants: their age, gender, ethnicity, impairment, education or other characteristics, and their social and economic circumstances or health status;
- Type of study, level, outcome, impact.

### **2.3.6 In-depth review**



The second stage of the review will consist of synthesising studies relevant to the sub-questions developed above. Relevant studies will be identified through an analysis of the mapping study.

***Extraction of studies and reports screened according to inclusion/exclusion criteria***

After the first stage of mapping the studies, and after discussion with the stakeholders, some relevant sub-questions will be selected and relevant criteria developed in order to answer the questions pertaining to this systematic review. In view of the extent of the review, we may present a more detailed mapping of the evidence; focusing on studies relating to a specific region, etc.

***Quality appraisal and analysis of extracted studies***

The documents screened through the successive phases of the search strategy will be recorded using the EPPI-Centre Key wording Strategy for classifying education research version 0.9.7. Analysis will present an understanding of impact in terms of the type of educational approaches taken; the characteristics of the intervention; the type of impairments that are addressed, as well as in terms of the use of resources at hand. The extracted studies will be critically appraised by the research team in order to determine their relevance for inclusion in the review.

In view of the quality appraisal, the synthesis will follow discussions with partners of the research in order to determine what type of information would be relevant and useful.

***Deriving conclusions and implications***

As we have stated throughout the description of the process, the size, content and extent of the body of evidence that this review will need to examine is considerable. After the first screening process we will provide a precise map of the evidence that addresses the research question. This will reveal some immediate knowledge gaps pertaining to impact of approaches to increase accessibility to education for children with disabilities. Following this, and in view of the resources (time and financial), and after discussion with stakeholders, we will choose the appropriate critical appraisal and methods for synthesising the body of literature available to: Provide guidelines on further avenues for investigation in order to obtain more targeted information that can inform policy and programming for stakeholders.

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