Research for Inclusive Education in International Cooperation

Final Report

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All participants of the study: Parents, Learners in schools, Teachers, School principals, Community members, District officers, Officials in various Ministries and other stakeholders in the countries.

Center for Education Research and Training (CERT), University of Malawi

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Scientific Advisory Board in Germany

Thank you for your support, we have learned a great deal from each of you.

refie team
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<th>Full Form</th>
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<td>ANAM</td>
<td>Asociación Nacional de Municipalidades / National Association of Municipalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AU</td>
<td>African Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>BMZ</td>
<td>German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAF</td>
<td>Central African Federation</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBCC</td>
<td>Community-based Child-care Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEMUCAF</td>
<td>Centros Municipales de Capacitación y Formación / Municipal Training Centers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERT</td>
<td>Centre for Education Research and Training, Malawi</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIEM</td>
<td>Consortium for Inclusive Education Malawi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNB</td>
<td>Curriculum Nacional Base / National Basis Curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNEM</td>
<td>Consejo Nacional de Educación Maya / National Council of Mayan Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CODEDE</td>
<td>Consejos Departamentales de Desarrollo / Departamental Council of Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CODESAN</td>
<td>Comisión Departamental de Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional / Departamental Commission for Food Security and Nutrition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CODISRA</td>
<td>Comisión Nacional contra la Discriminación y el Racismo / National Commission against Discrimination and Racism</td>
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<tr>
<td>COMESA</td>
<td>Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>CONADI</td>
<td>Consejo Nacional para la Atención de las personas con Discapacidad / National Council for attending people with disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONALFA</td>
<td>Comisión Nacional de Alfabetización / National Commission of Literacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>CONASAN</td>
<td>Consejo Nacional de Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional / National Council for Food Security and Nutrition</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRC</td>
<td>Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
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<tr>
<td>CRPD</td>
<td>UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>CTA</td>
<td>Coordinador Técnico Administrativo / Administrative Technical Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>DAPP</td>
<td>Development Aid from People to People</td>
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<td>DC</td>
<td>Development Cooperation</td>
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<tr>
<td>DICONIME</td>
<td>Dirección de Cooperación Nacional e Internacional MINEDUC / Directorate of National and International Cooperation</td>
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<tr>
<td>DIDEDUC</td>
<td>Dirección Departamental de Educación / Departamental Directorates of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>DIGEACE</td>
<td>Dirección General de Acreditación y Certificación / Directorate General of Accreditation and Certification</td>
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<tr>
<td>DIGEBI</td>
<td>Dirección General de Educación Bilingüe Intercultural / Directorate General of Bilingual Education and Interculturality</td>
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<td>DIGECADE</td>
<td>Dirección General de Gestión de la Calidad Educativa / Directorate General of Management of Quality of Education</td>
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<td>DIGECUR</td>
<td>Dirección General de Currículo / Directorate General of Curriculum</td>
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<td>DIGEDUCA</td>
<td>Dirección General de Evaluación e Investigación Educativa / Directorate General of Educative Evaluation and Research</td>
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<td>DIGEEESP</td>
<td>Dirección General de Educación Especial / Directorate General of Special Education</td>
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<td>DIGEEEX</td>
<td>Dirección General de Educación Extra-escolar / Directorate General of Extra-School Education</td>
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<td>DIGEFOCE</td>
<td>Dirección General de Fortalecimiento de la Comunidad Educativa / Directorate General for Strengthening Education Community</td>
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<td>DIGEMOCA</td>
<td>Dirección General de Monitoreo y Verificación de la Calidad / Directorate General of Monitoring and Quality Assurance</td>
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<td>DIPLAN</td>
<td>Dirección General de Planificación / General Directorate of Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>DPO</td>
<td>Disabled People’s Organisation</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>DS</td>
<td>Direcciones Sustantivas</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECD</td>
<td>Early Childhood Development</td>
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<td>EFA</td>
<td>Education for All</td>
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<td>EMIS</td>
<td>Education Management Information Systems</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENEI</td>
<td>Encuesta Nacional de Empleo e Ingresos / National Survey of Employment and Income</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENSMI</td>
<td>Encuesta Nacional de Salud Materno Infantil / National Survey on Mother – Child Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAWEMA</td>
<td>Forum for African Women Educationalists Malawi</td>
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<tr>
<td>FEDOMA</td>
<td>Federation for Disability Organizations in Malawi</td>
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<tr>
<td>FLACSO</td>
<td>Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales / Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>FONAPAZ</td>
<td>Fondo Nacional para la Paz / National Peace Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>FTI</td>
<td>Fast Track Initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>FUNDABIEM</td>
<td>Fundación Teletón / Teletón Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>FUNDAL</td>
<td>Fundación Guatemalteca para niños con Sordo-ceguera</td>
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<td>GCSE</td>
<td>General Certificate of Secondary Education</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>GIZ</td>
<td>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit</td>
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<td>GPE</td>
<td>Global Partnership for Education</td>
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<td>HDI</td>
<td>Human Development Index</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICEFI</td>
<td>Instituto Centroamericano de Estudios Fiscales / Central American Institute of Fiscal Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDH</td>
<td>Índice de Desarrollo Humano</td>
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<td>INE</td>
<td>Instituto Nacional de Estadística / National Institute of Statistics</td>
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<td>IOM</td>
<td>International Organization for Migration</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPTE</td>
<td>Initial Primary Teacher Education</td>
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<td>LCE</td>
<td>Learner Centred Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>LPINA</td>
<td>Ley Pina / Pina Law - Integral Law for the Protection of Children and Teenagers</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAGA</td>
<td>Ministerio de Agricultura, Ganadería y Alimentación / Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food</td>
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<td>MANEB</td>
<td>Malawi National Examination Board</td>
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<td>MASPA</td>
<td>Malawi Schools Parents Association</td>
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<td>MCDE</td>
<td>Malawi Colleges of Distant Education</td>
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<td>MDG</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goal</td>
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<td>MDG</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals / Objetivos de Desarrollo del Milenio</td>
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<td>MESA</td>
<td>Malawi Education Support Activity</td>
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<td>MGDS</td>
<td>Malawi Growth Development Strategy</td>
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<td>MIDES</td>
<td>Ministerio de Desarrollo / Ministry of Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>MIE</td>
<td>Malawi Institute of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MINEDUC</td>
<td>Ministerio de Educación / Ministry of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>MoEST</td>
<td>Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Malawi</td>
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<tr>
<td>MSCE</td>
<td>Malawi School Certificate of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSPAS</td>
<td>Ministerio de Salud Pública y Asistencia Social / Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NACCODI</td>
<td>National Coordinating Committee on Disability Issues, Malawi</td>
</tr>
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<td>NEE</td>
<td>Necesidades Educativas Especiales / Special Education Needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>NESP</td>
<td>National Education Sector Plan, Malawi</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
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<td>NSTED</td>
<td>National Strategy for Teacher Education and Development</td>
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<td>ODL</td>
<td>Open Distance Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>OHCHR</td>
<td>Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>OIM</td>
<td>Organización Internacional para los Migrantes / International Organization for Migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PADEP</td>
<td>Programa Académico de Desarrollo Profesional Docente / Academic Program for Teacher’s Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDH</td>
<td>Procuraduría de los Derechos Humanos / Office of Human Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEA</td>
<td>Población Económicamente Activa / Economically Active Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PET</td>
<td>Población en Edad de Trabajar / Working age population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNUD</td>
<td>Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Desarrollo / United Nations Program for Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRONADE</td>
<td>Programa Nacional de Auto-gestión para el desarrollo educativo / National Program for Self-Management of educational development</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSLE</td>
<td>Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination</td>
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<td>PTA</td>
<td>Parents Teachers Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>QDA</td>
<td>Qualitative Data Analysis (Software)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SADC</td>
<td>Southern African Development Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SADPD</td>
<td>Secretariat of the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEGEPLAN</td>
<td>Secretaría General de Planificación / General Secretariat of Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEN</td>
<td>Sistema Educativo Nacional / National Education System</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEN</td>
<td>Special Educational Needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>SESAN</td>
<td>Secretaría de Seguridad Alimentaria y Nutricional / Food Security and Nutrition Secretariat</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMC</td>
<td>School Management Committee</td>
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<td>SNE</td>
<td>Special Needs Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>SVET</td>
<td>Secretaría contra la violencia sexual, explotación y trata de personas / Secretariat against sexual violence, exploitation and trafficking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TTC</td>
<td>Teacher Training College</td>
</tr>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>URL</td>
<td>Universidad Rafael Landívar / Landivar University</td>
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<td>URNG</td>
<td>Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca / Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unit</td>
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<td>USAC</td>
<td>Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala / San Carlos University</td>
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<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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<td>UVG</td>
<td>Universidad del Valle de Guatemala / Del Valle University</td>
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1 Background

The Education for All (EFA) – Fast Track Initiative (FTI) (now: Global Partnership for Education GPE) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) 2 and 3 call for free, compulsory, and quality elementary education for all children and young people. However, according to the last UNESCO World Education Report (2013/14), 57 million children and young people worldwide still do not go to school, and some 774 million adults cannot read or write. The international community unanimously stated that inclusive education is a key strategy for bringing education to everyone (UNESCO, 1994, 2009). In a global context, inclusion in education is seen as a process that looks at the different educational needs of children, young people and adults. Successful inclusive education ensures joint and participatory learning by all population groups within an integrated educational system, and at the same time takes into account disadvantaged groups which are either still excluded from education or are not supported to the necessary extent in the existing system. Seen from the perspective of inclusion, this means that it is not the child that poses the problem, but the educational system that must adapt to all individuals.

Preliminary work on inclusive education has already been done in development cooperation, amongst others, by UNESCO. Even so, various parts of the global population are either still without access to education, or students drop out prematurely from the formal educational system. Despite the known facts about the causes of disadvantage, applied research is still missing to pinpoint the mechanisms that determine the success or failure of inclusion in educational systems in developing countries. This makes it difficult to identify definite countermeasures at the level of educational planning.

This project aims to advance our understanding of developing inclusive educational systems in developing countries in order to improve inclusive policy and practice in technical cooperation. The combination of academic research and development cooperation practice in applied research has the potential to generate evidence-based knowledge on the successes and failures of inclusive-education implementation. Consequently, the scientific findings can be used to recommend direct action and measures. Evidence-based results and recommendations for actions can also be suitable to strengthen the international prioritisation of inclusion in development policy, and help achieve the goals of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in a growing number of countries.

This project is designed as an applied research study. The research approach implies that new knowledge is generated to improve inclusive-education practice and the current challenges it faces. The aim is to show whether, where and how things can be changed to increase the probability of successful implementation of inclusive education in Malawi and Guatemala. “What qualitative research can offer the policy maker is a theory of social action grounded on the experiences – the world view – of those likely to be affected by a policy decision or thought to be part of the problem” (Walker, 1985). The initial aim of the research is a detailed, in-depth and multi-perspective description of the views of the persons involved, including their subjective and social constructions.
According to Ritchie and Spencer (2002, p. 307), four perspectives form the focus of applied research:

- contextual: identifying the form and nature of what exists;
- diagnostic: examining the reasons for, or causes of, what exists;
- evaluative: appraising the effectiveness of what exists; and
- strategic: identifying new theories, policies, plans or actions.

This particular research project revolves around the first two perspectives. Firstly, specific forms of inclusion and exclusion are identified in the unique educational systems of both countries. This implies, on the one hand, investigating views and attitudes of persons/stakeholders involved; and on the other hand, ideas, wishes and perceived options for and/or barriers to actions. Furthermore, differences and consistencies of actors involved within, across and between different system levels are identified.

Secondly, the underlying patterns of arguments are investigated for specific attitudes, views and options or barriers to actions. This includes an analysis of why specific measures or decisions are taken or not taken, and which reasons for certain views and attitudes are mentioned.

Both perspectives therefore aim for a deep understanding of views, attitudes, and perspectives of actions, of groups of persons involved (experts/politicians, head teachers/principals, teachers, parents and children). On the basis of this understanding, recommendations for the development of inclusive education can be drawn.

The fundamental distinction between scientific research and actual application still exists. The expectation that the results of applied research can directly lead to changes in practice would be naive. The use of the results through politics and practice is autonomous and happens – according to system theory – as a result of the internal logic of the political or educational system.
Chapter 2 – Research Design

2 Research Design

2.1 Research Questions

The overall guiding research questions are: How is the concept of inclusive education constructed at the different levels (macro, meso, micro) from various perspectives in Guatemala and Malawi? Which success factors of and barriers to inclusive educational systems can be identified in order to draw conclusions for further developing cooperation measures?

The specific research questions are structured and based on the four dimensions of inclusive education as identified by various researchers (e.g. Booth, Ainscow, Black-Hawkins, Vaughan, & Shaw, 2000; Kalambouka, Farrell, Dyson, & Kaplan, 2005 as cited in Artiles, Kozleski, Dorn, & Christensen 2006, p. 67), namely Access, Acceptance, Participation and Learning Achievement. This research project focuses on the first three of the four dimensions. The scientific investigation of learning achievement requires different methods and is therefore not possible to implement due to the short duration of the project.

In the following, the research questions concerning access, acceptance and participation are described more precisely:

Access:

- Who has access to the educational system?
- Who is targeted in inclusive education initiatives?
- Who has limited / restrained / no access?
- Who leaves the educational system early?
- Which reasons are given by persons involved?
- Which reasons for exclusion are mentioned?
- Which measures are implemented by whom (agencies, informal groups, donors)?

Acceptance (at both interpersonal and institutional level):

- Are there disadvantaged or discriminated groups in school? / Do groups exist who have privileges?
- Which practices affect students’ opportunity to learn?
- Which policies affect students’ opportunity to learn?

Participation:

- Are there groups of students being separated in school / in class?
- Do groups exist that do not or are unwilling to interact with each other?
- How are supportive learning opportunities created for all students?
- How are the learning and teaching processes organised in diverse classrooms?
2.2 Research Methodology

2.2.1 Data Collection

The research is designed in a qualitative and multi-perspective manner. It combines macro-(national), meso- (district) and micro- (school/community) levels. On the basis of assumptions of a constructivist methodology, it is not only the theoretical definition of the object that can be observed and how the research design is developed (Graue & Hawkins, 2005, p. 45), but at the same time the object is constituted in a reciprocal process (Flick, 1999). In the context of the research project this results in the decision to put the focus within this complex interweaved structure of subjective theories and reflective knowledge of processes of action, interaction and communication as well as directly relevant political and organisational conditions on the constructions and interpretations of inclusive and exclusive processes of involved groups of persons on the respective system levels.

In the context of this research project, this leads to the decision to place the focus on multiple, socially constructed realities (Mertens, 2005). This implies the following: within this complex, interweaved structure of subjective theories and reflective knowledge of processes of action, interaction and communication, as well as directly relevant political and organisational conditions, the emphasis falls on the constructions and interpretations of inclusive and exclusive processes of involved person groups at the relevant system levels.

This kind of multi-perspective approach means that this research project needs to take into account different system levels (macro, meso and micro) and various perspectives of the actors involved in the educational system (political decision makers, principals, teachers, students, parents and community members).

The research process was structured in several phases. In a first step (macro-level) experts were questioned by means of focus-group discussions (Lamnek, 1998) and problem-centred interviews (Witzel & Reiter, 2012). According to Kozleski (in preparation) “focus groups act not only as a source of information to be interpreted elsewhere but also as a space for transformative understanding to emerge. Data from focus groups are socially constructed in the enactment of the focus group. Pooled understandings of concepts, events, and ideas give rise to meanings and interpretations within the process of the focus group that might not have occurred in individual, separate interviews”. The form of problem-centred interviewing of experts (Witzel & Reiter, 2012) combines orientation towards a guideline with open forms of questioning. Through this approach, in-depth knowledge of a specific problem area of inclusive education was collected through various perspectives, in order to gain a deep understanding of the problem area from the perspective of the experts.

Access to the experts was provided by three stakeholder workshops/meetings of experts in each country. Relevant persons participated from different areas; namely, ministries, parent organisations, disability organisations, universities and teacher-training institutes, as well as bi- and multi-lateral donors.

In a second step, ‘deepening’ interviews were conducted with experts in each country. Experts are persons who participate in decision-making processes, and/or persons with specific knowledge, skills or experiences in (inclusive) education. In these interviews, a problem-centred interview approach was followed (Witzel & Reiter, 2012).
Parallel to this, an analysis of central documents was taking place concerning inclusive education in both countries. Wolff describes official documents as institutionalised traces through which conclusions on activities, intentions and considerations of the institution can be drawn (Wolff, 2008, p. 503). Documents were analysed according to thematic and open coding.

The document analysis includes three different kinds of documents:

1) Existing research results (country-specific);
2) Policy papers (laws, white papers, sector strategies, etc.); and
3) Practice papers (situation analysis by NGOs, donors, etc.).

At department level, problem-centred interviews were conducted with district education managers and representatives of relevant organisations.

The approach followed for collecting information at micro- (school/community) level was to use instrumental case studies at selected schools in each country (Stake, 2005, p. 445). Instrumental case studies provide insight into an issue (in this instance, inclusion and exclusion of students) and improve our understanding of challenges in this regard (e.g. Merriam, 2009). Schools were selected where specific questions regarding inclusion and exclusion of students appeared relevant. It was anticipated to select four case study schools in each country with the following characteristics:

- two schools from a rural area, and two schools from an urban area;
- schools with specific resources concerning support to children with SEN (e.g. resource centre); and
- schools with other aspects than disability regarding inclusion (e.g. poverty, gender, ethnicity and language).

How these categories terminated in the final selection of the schools is described in Chapters 3.1.2 (Malawi) and 3.2.2 (Guatemala).

At all schools, perspectives on inclusive education were collected – with consideration to the triangulation-of-perspectives approach (Flick, 2004a) – focus groups and problem-centred interviews were conducted with teachers, parents, students and the principal. Furthermore, problem-centred interviews were conducted with persons from the community (e.g. chief, mayor). Participatory observation of lessons and the schools’ surroundings were conducted with the help of an observation guideline.

In participatory observations, the researcher takes part in the social situation and is in an interacting relationship with the observed persons. By participating in the live situation, it is expected to be closer to the subject of investigation (Lamnek, 2005; Beck & Scholz, 2000). Equipped with an observation guideline, the national researchers lived in each community for a period of about a week, conducting interviews, focus group discussions and observations. Participatory observation in this research project is relevant for identifying structures that support or display inclusion/exclusion processes which might not be conscious to interview partners and focus group participants.

### 2.2.2 Data Analysis

The data-collection phase was followed directly by data analysis. In implementing this research project, a large amount of different kinds of data were collected (input material: documents, interview and focus-group discussion transcripts, and observation notes). In order to consolidate all
the data and to keep the process of analysis transparent, comprehensible and controllable, consolidated analysis papers were be developed (on the basis of scientific source texts, see Apel, Engler, Friebertshäuser, Fuhs & Zinnecker, 1995; Friebertshäuser, 1992, p. 101-106; Laging, 2008).

Consolidated analysis papers were developed at macro-level for document analysis, focus group discussions and interviews with experts. One concentrated report was developed for each multi-perspective case study, including the interviews at meso-level. In a multi-level analysis, such a paper merges different sources and is, in itself, a scientific source for further analysis. Both country analyses were further consolidated, and a cross-case analysis of all eight case studies is foreseen.

The analysis of group discussions, interviews and observation notes contributed to these reports. Transcribed interviews and focus group discussions, as well as observations and field notes, were analysed with QDA Software in accordance with thematic coding based on Flick (1996; 2004b) and open coding based on Strauss (1994, p. 95; Strauss & Corbin, 1996). The thematic coding was pre-structured by means of a code tree. Nevertheless, relevant moments of construction and thematic dimensions that had not been known previously were added through open coding by the national research teams. This process of coding revealed central constructions of processes of inclusion and exclusion. At this level of integration, differences in the perspectives of different persons were described.

In this multi-site case study approach (four schools in Malawi, and six schools in Guatemala), two stages of analysis took place. First of all, specific conditions were analysed concerning inclusive education through the multiple perspectives of involved persons in each case (case-by-case analysis). Subsequently, once the analysis of each case was completed, a cross-case analysis followed in which comparisons were made of the case studies at country level in patterns and phenomena concerning including or excluding processes (Merriam, 2009). A central objective was to develop an in-depth understanding of overarching aspects for inclusive education in each country.

In a final step, the analysis aimed at possible transnational patterns of social construction of inclusive or exclusive educational processes in developing countries.

### 2.2.3 Validity, Reliability, Ethics and Limitations

As in any research, validity, reliability and ethics were major concerns. Therefore, the following strategies were used for increasing internal validity/credibility (Do research findings match reality?), external validity/transferability, and reliability of the evaluation findings (Merriam, 2009, p. 229):

- triangulation: use of multiple investigators, sources of data and multiple data collection to confirm findings that emerge;
- member checks: data and tentative interpretations were taken back to the people from whom they derived, to ask whether they were plausible (e.g. stakeholder workshops in each country);
- peer review: regular discussions with colleagues concerning the study process, the congruency of emerging findings with raw data, and tentative interpretations;
- audit trail: a detailed account is available of the methods, procedures and decision points in carrying out the study; and
• researchers’ position or reflexivity: continuous, critical self-reflection by the researchers concerning assumptions, world views, biases and relationship to the study, that may affect the investigation.

Ethics in the research was an integral part of the research planning and implementation process, and at no stage viewed as an afterthought or a burden. The following norms of scientific research as formulated in Mertens (2005, p. 34) were followed in both countries to deal with possible ethical concerns:

• use of a valid research design that can contribute to the well-being of the participants;
• use of competent researchers to conduct the research;
• appropriate sample selection for the purposes of the project, and representative - as far as possible - of the wider population to benefit from the project; and
• voluntary informed consent of every participant: that is, without threat or undue inducement, knowing what any reasonable person in the same situation would want to know before giving consent (‘informed’) and explicitly agreeing to participate (‘consent’).

A further aspect of ethics in research is research clearance through local authorities. In both countries, the respective Ministry of Education has been the official research partner. GIZ signed a formal Implementation Agreement with both ministries. On the basis of the Implementation Agreements, approval was given by the District Education Managers (Malawi), and the Supervisors and Directorates from each ‘Departamento’ (Guatemala), of the respective districts in which the case studies are located. Informing the school principals of the case-study schools was done in both countries through the district authorities for the sake of a common procedure. In Guatemala, the mayors of the areas in which the case-study schools are located were also contacted and visited beforehand by the national researchers, to seek for approval for the research at micro-level in respect of their role as local authorities.

Anticipated limitations on the research were identified, and strategies to minimise their impact included the following:

Language as a critical issue (Mertens, 2009): A major challenge in this project was its multi-lingual characteristic; e.g. the project was led by a group with German as home language, the two senior research advisors to the project had Spanish and Afrikaans as home languages, and the country-based teams also had different home languages (i.e. Chichewa and Spanish). It was therefore necessary to rely heavily on using English as the communication language amongst the research group members, for whom this was either the second or third language. Furthermore, many of the project participants did not speak English, and the country-specific research was conducted in the languages most acceptable to participants. In Malawi, for example, data was then translated back into English. In Guatemala, data was translated from indigenous languages into Spanish. As a result, every researcher needed to be careful in their interpretation of data and specific concepts, and acknowledge that it should be based on a thorough understanding of the wider cultural implications of the use of language.

Closely aligned with language as a critical issue and challenge is: cultural competence and sensitivity. In their understanding of the multiple cultures involved (including diverse home languages), every researcher needed to demonstrate cultural sophistication in all aspects of their work in the project. In order to illustrate multi-cultural validity, not only in data collection, but also in the analysis of data...
and discussion of findings, members of the research team focused on the development of positive interpersonal connections, and tried to make appropriate cultural assumptions in the implementation of the project (Mertens, 2005).

The complex, geo-political context (Malawi and Guatemala) – and coordinating the project across three countries (Germany, Guatemala and Malawi) and the three continents on which this project has taken place – complicated project implementation frequently. For example, one of the most challenging contextual issues the members of the research teams in Malawi and Germany have had to contend with, was unreliable access to the internet in Malawi and the resulting effect on continuous communication, including scheduled Skype meetings between the two teams in Malawi and Germany. It is also important to note that the vast travelling distances between project schools in both countries, and also the local security issues, needed to be taken into account at all times.

2.2.4 Implementation of the Research in Two Countries

The research project, which had a total duration of 14 months, was implemented in the two study countries Guatemala and Malawi at the same time. In both countries the process of data collection and data analysis was based on the same research design. However, it soon became obvious that local adaptation to the methodology and the implementation of the research process needed to be undertaken and the two national research teams were encouraged to do so (a description of the country-specific adaptations can be found in 3.1.2 and 3.2.2). The Guatemala team, as an example, decided to conduct six case studies instead of the suggested four. On the one hand the research team tried to align the two country studies and on the other hand needed to be able to react to local conditions, which made country-specific adaptations necessary, sometimes at short notice. This balancing act was all the more acute given the short period of time available for the research process in the two countries.

Based on the intention to maintain the heterogeneity engendered, for instance, by country-specific conditions or the specific composition of the national research teams, the results differ in structure and style. Given the challenges connected to language, terminology also differs between the two countries. This becomes especially obvious when working with the terms ‘disability’ and ‘students with and without special needs’. The terminology is not used consistently in this report, as the researchers decided to keep to the local commonly used terms which vary between Malawi and Guatemala.
3 Country Studies

3.1 Country Study Malawi

3.1.1 Contextualisation

3.1.1.1 Regional Context of Inclusive Education: Southern Africa

Paramount to addressing the human right to education internationally is the increasing assertion that education systems need to be designed so that they respond accurately and comprehensively to diverse educational needs; especially those most often marginalised and disregarded, including children with disabilities (United Nations Enable: Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006; United Nations: Millennium Declaration, 2000; UNESCO: Salamanca Declaration, 1994; UNICEF, 2013b). All countries should make it their responsibility to ensure good quality education in an all-inclusive environment to promote respect for persons with disabilities’ inherent dignity. Sub-Saharan countries have responded positively to this international call for the development of quality education for all children.

Sub-Saharan countries, including members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), of which Malawi is a member, have ratified most of the international conventions that focus on the development of Education for All, e.g. Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (United Nations Human Rights: OHCHR, 1996-2014); and as a result, quality education for all is seen as a priority in SADC member states.

In SADC countries, the recent Draft Southern Africa Regional Inclusive Education Strategy (The Secretariat of the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2012) has as its vision the development of responsive inclusive education systems. The strategy draws on a recent study by the Secretariat of the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities aiming to enhance insight and build up knowledge to ensure implementation of inclusive education, and addressing the historical inequalities experienced especially by children with disabilities in accessing quality education. The Draft Strategy document states that, despite commitment to the ideals of inclusive education, there are serious challenges for the region in the development of quality education for all within an inclusive education approach (e.g. inadequate systemic structures that hinder and undermine the implementation process of inclusive education).

Despite these challenges, the draft document states that the goal of quality education for all lies in the implementation and sustainability of inclusive education. The intention of the Draft Strategy is therefore to support existing initiatives and policies, and the further development of legislative frameworks (SADC, 2012, p. 3). The Draft Strategy has the following goals:

- **Eliminating existing barriers** to equitable access to education opportunities for children with disabilities and to the creation of inclusive education and training systems;
- **Building the capacity of education systems** to respond through quality provision to the educational needs of all children;
Consolidating and enhancing community resources in support of government efforts, especially through partnerships with organisations in Civil Society, especially Disabled People’s Organisations (DPOs) and organisations of parents of children with disabilities.

The following strategies aim at focusing on important weaknesses and challenges that require attention across the region, and are guided by the following definition of inclusive education as developed and agreed upon during the 2012 Inclusive Education Conference in Swaziland:

“As a process of removing barriers of organisation, environment, attitude, teaching and learning in mainstream schools and colleges, so that they can achieve their academic and social potential. For inclusive education to be fully established for all children and people with disabilities it requires the full involvement of all stakeholders: teachers, parents, disabled people’s organisations, other stakeholders children and students with disabilities and those without, NGOs, Government in task teams at school, district, country and regional level; the curriculum and assessment need to be flexible, child-centred and differentiated and all teachers need training in this and education to prepare them for implementing inclusive education with competence in Braille, Sign Language and alternative and augmented communication” (SADC, 2012, p. 4).

The goals and the implementation strategies and indicators in the Draft Strategy document to ensure equitable quality inclusive education therefore focus on the following:

- ensuring availability of disaggregated, reliable and accurate data on disadvantaged learners, including those with disabilities within and outside education (e.g. EMIS);
- developing a common understanding of inclusive education and its usefulness in achieving quality education for all in all SADC member states;
- ensuring capacity development of all human resources in inclusive education in all member states;
- mainstream access to education for learners with disabilities and other vulnerable learners e.g. children with HIV/AIDS;
- strengthening regional and national inter-sectorial collaboration, partnerships, networking and community involvement in ensuring access; and
- ensuring provision of learning support programmes for the retention and completion of diversified basic mainstream education, and progress to secondary and tertiary education.

3.1.1.2 Country Profile Malawi

Geographical Position

Malawi is a landlocked country in south-eastern Africa that was formerly known as Nyasaland. It is bordered by Zambia to the north-west, Tanzania to the north-east, and Mozambique on the east, south and west. The country is separated from Tanzania and Mozambique by Lake Malawi, the third-largest lake in Africa. The country is 901 kilometres long and 80 to 161 kilometres wide. The total area is over 118,484 square kilometres, of which 94,276 square kilometres is land. The remaining area is composed mainly of Lake Malawi, which is about 475 kilometres long. The country is divided politically into northern, central, eastern and southern regions. The capital city is Lilongwe in the centre, which is also Malawi’s largest city. The name Malawi comes from the Maravi, an old name of the Nyanja people who inhabited the land. The country is also nicknamed, ‘the warm heart of Africa’, due to the friendly nature of its people.
History

The area of Africa now known as Malawi was settled by migrating Bantu groups around the 10th century. Centuries later, in 1891, the area was colonised by the British. In 1953, Malawi, then known as Nyasaland, became part of the semi-independent Central African Federation (CAF). The Federation was dissolved in 1963. In 1964, Nyasaland gained full independence of Britain and was renamed Malawi. Upon becoming independent, it became a single-party state under Hastings Banda, who remained president until 1994, when he lost the elections after a multi-party democracy was established. Professor Peter Mutharika is the current president. Malawi's foreign policy is pro-Western and includes positive diplomatic relations with most countries and participation in several international organisations, such as the United Nations, the African Union (AU), the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA).

Economy

Malawi is among the world's least developed countries with a GDP of 224.41 Dollars in 2013 ("Trading Economics," n.d.). In the 2014 Human Development Index, Malawi is ranked 174 of 187 countries ("United Nations Development Programme," n.d.). The economy is based mainly on agriculture, with a largely rural population. The Malawian government depends heavily on outside aid to meet development needs, although the flow has decreased. Recently, the donor community had to suspend budgetary support due to the massive theft of government money at Capital Hill in what is known as the Cashgate Scandal.

Malawi has a low life expectancy (54.7 years in 2012) and high infant mortality of 48.01 per 100,000 live births ("indexmundi," n.d.). Around 47 percent of children under the age of 5 were suffering from moderately or severely stunted growth between 2005 and 2012 (UNESCO, 2014, p. 330).

As in the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, there is a prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Malawi; namely, approximately 10.8 percent among adults aged between 15 and 49 years ("Central Intelligence Agency," n.d.). The HIV/AIDS pandemic is a drain on the labour force and government expenditures.

Population

The population of Malawi is characterised by diversity, e.g. members of different local tribal groups, Asians and Europeans, with several languages spoken and an array of religious beliefs in rural areas and within small communities. Malawi has a rich and colourful culture, with many tribes, languages and customs that are unique to this small land-locked country. Malawi has a population of 13.1 million people (Malawi National Statistics Office, 2008, p. 3), which is growing rapidly. In the past 40 years, the population has increased from 4 million (in 1966) to 13.1 million (in 2008). On average, a woman in Malawi currently gives birth to 5.7 children. Therefore, a further significant population growth is expected in future, with around 26 million inhabitants in 2030 (Population Reference Bureau, 2012, p. 1). Malawi’s population is very young: 22 percent are under five years of age, and the average age of the population is 17 years (National Statistics Office, 2008, p. 12). In Malawi, 59 percent of women and 69 percent of men are functionally literate (ibid., p. 14).

Due to the lower life expectancy of Malawians, as mentioned earlier, 12.4 percent of persons under 18 years are orphans (ibid.). On the basis of the applied definition of disability (having difficulties in one or more of the following areas: seeing, hearing, speaking and walking/climbing) there are around
498,000 persons with disabilities living in Malawi, which is equivalent to around 4 percent of the total population. The majority of persons with disabilities are living in rural areas (453,000 persons) (ibid., p. 16).

3.1.1.3 Malawi’s Educational System

The Structure

The Malawian education system is divided into the following main sub-sectors: early childhood development (ECD) and adult literacy; primary school education; secondary school education; and tertiary education. In Malawi, ECD, adult literacy classes and primary school education form the basic education sector. ECD and adult literacy are considered as non-formal education and are under the administration of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Disability Affairs. Primary, secondary and tertiary education forms the formal education sector which is under the administration of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) and is managed by its headquarters, six education divisions, and 34 district education offices. Some education institutions in the formal sector are privately owned and managed, but are supervised by MoEST. The formal education system in Malawi follows an 8–4–4 structure. This means that a student is expected to spend 8 years at primary, 4 years at secondary, and 4 years at tertiary level. As of 2013, there were 4,497,541 primary school students in 5,561 primary schools (MoEST, 2013, p. 35).

ECD and Adult Literacy

In Malawi, ECD programmes go back to the 1950s and were first developed as pre-school institutions in urban areas. As a reaction to severe child malnutrition, community-based child-care centres (CBCCs) were established by the beginning of the 1990s and today form the major part of ECD institutions in Malawi (Ministry of Gender, Children and Community Development / UNICEF, 2009, p. 5 and p. 11). It is claimed that in 2008 only 30 percent of children in Malawi were attending any kind of centre-based ECD service (ibid., 7). “The situation is worse for girls, children with special needs, orphans, children on the streets, and other vulnerable children” (ibid.).

Adult literacy classes are mainly for people of 15 years and older who have either dropped out at primary school, or are not functionally literate, or have never attended primary school at all. These people are being given a chance to become functionally literate through adult literacy classes. The literacy classes are provided either by government organisations through the Ministry of Gender, Children and Disability Affairs, or by non-governmental organisations. The adult functional literacy rate in Malawi is currently estimated at 65 percent; in 1987 it was 48.54 percent; and in 2010 it reached a record high at 64.13 percent (“The Global Economy,” n.d.).

Primary Education

At the age of six, children in Malawi are supposed to enter primary school. The language of instruction in the first four years of teaching is the respective local language. Thereafter, the medium of instruction changes to English for the rest of the Malawi education programme. Primary schools are distributed throughout the country in both urban and rural areas. Some are state controlled, while others are privately operated. In state-controlled schools, students have not been required to pay school fees since 1994. At the end of eight years of primary education, students take the Primary School Leaving Certificate Examination (PSLE), which determines their eligibility for secondary education.
There is high age heterogeneity in primary school classes. According to the MoEST, children between 4 and 17 years old were enrolled in Standard 1 in the school year 2012/2013 (MoEST, 2013, p. 36). Primary schools have large enrolment numbers which in most cases do not match the available resources and teachers. The recommended teacher-student ratio is 1:60, but this is rarely achieved; for instance, in 2013 a ratio of 1:69 was documented (MoEST, 2013, p. 35). In some schools, a teacher is responsible for teaching over 100 students.

As in the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa, the dropping-out from school by many students is a major issue, with only 31 percent of students enrolled in Standard 1 staying at school until Standard 8 (ibid., p. 21). Rates of students continuing primary school until standard 5 or 8 have continually declined since 2008.

**Table 1: Survival Rates (percentage of pupils enrolled in the first standard) for Standard 5 and Standard 8 in Malawi, 2008 – 2013**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Standard 5</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Standard 8</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>78.0</td>
<td>73.6</td>
<td>76.2</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>49.9</td>
<td>52.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>62.7</td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>62.7</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>37.9</td>
<td>38.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>74.7</td>
<td>72.0</td>
<td>73.5</td>
<td>53.1</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>48.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>75.4</td>
<td>74.8</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>49.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>58.0</td>
<td>59.0</td>
<td>59.0</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>38.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td>62.0</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(MoEST, 2013, p. 21)

Both direct and indirect economic causes are regarded as the main reasons for primary school dropout. For example, the Ministry mentions family responsibilities where children need to take on economic and other responsibilities; and these affect boys and girls equally. Other reasons are the long distances between home and school; and marriage, the latter being a dropout reason almost exclusively for girls (ibid., p. 38).

**Table 2: Primary School Dropouts by Reason and Sex in Malawi 2012/13**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for Drop</th>
<th>Family Responsibility</th>
<th>Pregnancy</th>
<th>Marriage</th>
<th>Fees</th>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Sickness</th>
<th>Poor Facilities</th>
<th>Availability of Teachers</th>
<th>Long Distances</th>
<th>Violence</th>
<th>Other Reasons</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>32,218</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>1,619</td>
<td>670</td>
<td>4,545</td>
<td>2,828</td>
<td>3,151</td>
<td>692</td>
<td>8,937</td>
<td>1,428</td>
<td>37,376</td>
<td>93,704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>31,692</td>
<td>5,630</td>
<td>10,025</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>2,669</td>
<td>2,560</td>
<td>3,584</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>9,882</td>
<td>1,091</td>
<td>35,154</td>
<td>103,702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>63,910</td>
<td>5,870</td>
<td>11,644</td>
<td>1,395</td>
<td>7,214</td>
<td>5,388</td>
<td>6,735</td>
<td>1,382</td>
<td>18,819</td>
<td>2,519</td>
<td>72,530</td>
<td>197,406</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(MoEST, 2013, p. 38)

Some schools do not have sufficient classrooms, resulting in either classrooms being congested or lessons being conducted outside (‘teaching under trees’). Of the total number of classrooms in 2013, 85 percent were permanent, and 15 percent were of a temporary structure (MoEST, 2013, p. 28). Some schools have resource rooms for learners with special needs. In 2013, there were 131 resource rooms in primary schools; 100 were permanent structures, while 31 were temporary; and there was a requirement of 2,849 resource centres to be constructed (MoEST, 2013, p. 51). The Ministry documented around 90,000 students with special learning needs, divided into the categories, low vision, blind, hard of hearing, deaf, physical impairment, and learning difficulties (ibid., p. 48).
Table 3: Number of Pupils with Special Learning Needs 2012/13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Learning Needs</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Vision</td>
<td>18,773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blind</td>
<td>466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard of Hearing</td>
<td>19,007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deaf</td>
<td>2,932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Impairment</td>
<td>8,230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Difficulties</td>
<td>40,681</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>90,089</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(MoEST, 2013, p. 48)

Special Schools

Malawi has eight special schools for learners with disabilities: three schools for the blind and five schools for the deaf. All these schools have boarding facilities and all are privately run. In addition to the schools, there are several resource centres for children with blindness and visual impairment; all these centres have boarding facilities too. The EMIS report does not include data on special schools.

Secondary School

Secondary schools are either governmental or private. There are three different types of government secondary schools:

- Community day secondary schools: Some of these were previously Malawi Colleges of Distant Education (MCDE), without boarding facilities for students, enrolling students from specified catchment areas;
- conventional secondary schools, which are either:
  a) district secondary schools, with boarding facilities, enrolling students from the districts; or
  b) national secondary schools, with boarding facilities, where gifted students from any district are selected to study.

There are three categories of private secondary schools located in rural or urban areas:

- day release;
- day release with boarding facilities; and
- secondary schools with full boarding facilities, without day scholars.

Only around one-third of students enrolled in Standard 8 in primary school become enrolled in Form 1 in secondary school (MoEST, 2013, p. 24). The period of secondary education is four years (Form 1 to 4). After the first two years, students take the Malawi junior national certificate examinations. At the end of four years, students sit the Malawi School Certificate of Education (MSCE) examination which is determinant for continuing studies at tertiary level. There are also high secondary schools that follow a foreign syllabus, such as the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), whose students write final examinations either after four or five years. Age heterogeneity is also an important aspect in secondary education; e.g. in 2012/2013, learners aged between 11 and 26 were enrolled into Form 1 (MoEST, 2013, p. 72). As secondary schools are not free, school fees are given as the main reason for high dropout numbers. Other major reasons are marriage and pregnancy (ibid., pp. 75).
Table 4: Secondary School Dropouts by Reason and Sex in Malawi 2012/13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons for Dropout</th>
<th>Family Responsibility</th>
<th>Pregnancy</th>
<th>Marriage</th>
<th>Fees</th>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Sickness</th>
<th>Poor Facilities</th>
<th>Availability of Teachers</th>
<th>Long Distances</th>
<th>Violence</th>
<th>Other Reasons</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>1,156</td>
<td>987</td>
<td>2,649</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>910</td>
<td>7,436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>1,107</td>
<td>802</td>
<td>2,304</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>851</td>
<td>6,737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,004</td>
<td>2,263</td>
<td>1,789</td>
<td>4,953</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>824</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>1761</td>
<td>14,173</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(MoEST, 2013, p. 75/76)

It is documented that in secondary schools there are a total of around 3,400 students with special learning needs (ibid., p. 78). Approximately 70 secondary schools have a resource room (permanent, temporary, complete or incomplete), and 250 are in need of one (ibid., p. 81).

Tertiary Education

Tertiary education is provided by several educational institutions. Access to tertiary education in government institutions is competitive, because there is limited classroom space. Few candidates are chosen for colleges of the University of Malawi; others apply at other private universities, teacher training colleges, and other technical training institutions mandated by law to facilitate professional training in Malawi.

There are seven universities in the country. For university-college entrance and for the teacher training colleges and technical training institutions, an MSCE certificate is required. Secondary school teachers are trained at some of these universities, while others upgrade from primary school teaching at Domasi College of Education in Zomba.

Teacher Training Colleges

Primary school teachers are trained at teacher training colleges. Malawi has 11 teacher training colleges, of which six belong to the government, and five are run by religious or non-governmental institutions.

The teacher training programme currently implemented at all government teacher training colleges and one church college, is called Initial Primary Teacher Education (IPTE). This is offered in two formats: IPTE Open Distance Learning (ODL); and IPTE Conventional. ODL students start with teaching orientation for a few weeks and go to schools to teach; then, they go back to college for training during academic holidays. The whole ODL cycle covers three years. IPTE Conventional students spend one year at the college. During this year, each student is given an opportunity to conduct one lesson at a nearby demonstration school. The second year of IPTE Conventional is spent at a school for teaching practice, under a mentor teacher. At the end of the teaching practice, the students graduate.

The other colleges offer different programmes. For instance, DAPP (Development Aid from People to People) Teacher Training College focuses on training primary school teachers dedicated to teaching in rural areas. It is a 30-month training course designed for young teachers to become highly qualified and trained professionals.
Specialised Teacher Training

Apart from ODL and Conventional teacher training programmes, some teachers undergo specialist training in special needs education at Montfort Special Needs Education College. The college is currently offering a diploma course in special needs education in the three specialisation areas, learning difficulties, hearing impairment and visual impairment. Another area, deaf-blind, has recently been added. The core functions of the college are: training specialist teachers; conduct research in emerging issues (inclusive education, curriculum reforms, sign language, and others); production of braille books for visually impaired students, and provision of audiological services (carrying out hearing tests and fitting of hearing aids). Furthermore, it acts as a resource centre for information on special needs and inclusive education (“Montfort SNE College,” n.d.).

To be eligible to study at Montfort College, one must have worked as a teacher for three years. The student teachers spend three years studying on the diploma course. A course starts every three years with a capacity of 100 teacher students.

Curriculum Development

The task of curriculum development is in the hands of the Malawi Institute of Education (MIE) in Domasi. The MIE is a curriculum development and research centre developing materials for use in education. It is a statutory corporation under the administration of The Office of President and Cabinet. Established in 1979 by the Malawian Government, it became operational in 1982. It is mandated to design, develop, monitor and evaluate the national education curriculum, ensuring continued response to the present and future needs of Malawian society. The MIE has expertise in educational research and evaluation, educational assessment, teacher education, textbook development and documentation, and information technology (“MIE Library News,” n.d.).

There are two levels through which research is done at the Institute. The first one involves studies undertaken by individual staff members; the other refers to research projects, usually large in scope, which are conducted by the Institute as a whole (“MIE Library News,” n.d.).

Examination Institution

The Malawi National Examination Board is given the responsibility to develop and administer all public examinations in Malawi in primary and secondary schools, and teacher training colleges. The Malawi National Examinations Board (MANEB) was founded in April 1987 as a result of a merger between the Malawi Certificate Examinations and Testing Board and the Examinations Section of the Ministry of Education (“Malawi National Examinations Board,” n.d.).

3.1.1.4 Overarching Legal and Policy Framework

UN Conventions

The Republic of Malawi has signed and ratified the major international conventions, such as UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1991 (“United Nations Treaty Collections,” n.d.) in which the right to education for all children is expressed (Art. 28). Furthermore, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was signed in 2007 and ratified in 2009 by Malawi (“United Nations Enable. Convention and Optional Protocol Signatures and Ratifications,” n.d.). In Article 24, all state parties recognise the right of persons with disabilities to education. State parties oblige themselves to an inclusive education system.
**Constitution of Malawi (1995)**

The Constitution of Malawi formulates several principles of National Policy. Some of the main principles in the Malawian constitution focus on non-discrimination and gender equality (Section 13). The Constitution declares that all persons are entitled to education, that primary education shall cover at least five years (Section 25), and that primary education is compulsory and free (Section 13). The Constitution guarantees furthermore “the disabled . . . the fullest possible participation in all spheres of Malawian society” (Section 13 (g)).

**Disability Act (2012)**

The Disability Act (2012), which replaced the Handicapped Persons Act of 1971, incorporates many of the principles and obligations stated in the UN CRPD. The Disability Act is based on a human rights perspective on disability, and places specific focus on environmental barriers. The Act provides the foundation for establishing a National Coordinating Committee on Disability Issues (NACCODI) and a Disability Trust Fund.

The Act provides a definition of inclusive education 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 from and within education” (Malawi Government, 2012, p. 3).

In Article 10, the Government recognises “the rights of persons with disabilities to education on the basis of equal opportunity, and ensure an inclusive education system and lifelong learning by (a) ensuring that persons with disabilities are not excluded from the general education system at all levels and have access to quality primary education” (ibid., p. 7).

**National Policy on Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children (2003)**

The National Policy describes a vulnerable child as a “child who has no able parents or guardians, staying alone or with elderly grandparents or lives in a sibling headed household or has no fixed place of abode and lacks access to health care, material and psychological care, education and has no shelter” (Republic of Malawi, 2003, p. 8). The Malawian Government draws a close connection between the situation of orphans and vulnerable children, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Malawi.

The National Policy emphasises the role of community-based childcare (CBCC) centres in providing care and support to orphans and other vulnerable children (ibid., p. 9). Poverty is named as a major reason for orphans and other vulnerable children to drop out of school: “Their priorities ship [sic!] from education to survival, forcing most children to seek employment and engage in other activities of livelihood” (ibid., p. 10).

**Gender Policy (2008)**

The overall policy goal of the Gender Policy is to “mainstream gender in the national development process to enhance participation of women and men, girls and boys for sustainable and equitable development for poverty eradication” (Republic of Malawi 2008, p. iii). Under the policy theme that is linked to education, the objectives to “increase access to quality education to all school age children at (early childhood) primary, secondary and tertiary levels” (ibid., p. 6) and to “reduce dropout rates of girls and boys at all levels of education” (ibid., p. 7) are formulated and supported by several strategies.
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National Education Sector Plan (2008)

The key document for policy development in the education sector in Malawi is currently the National Education Sector Plan (NESP) 2008-2017, which is anchored in the overarching policy context of the Malawi Growth Development Strategy (MGDS). NESP is committed to Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and identifies three thematic areas of intervention, namely:

a) access and equity;

b) quality and relevance;

c) governance and management.

The preamble of the NESP states that “Overall Special Needs Education programmes will feature prominently” (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology Malawi, 2008, p. 1). The term ‘special needs’ is used several times in the NESP, e.g. “poor access for children with special needs” (ibid., p. 9). The term ‘inclusive education’ is not mentioned in the NESP. The only reference to inclusion occurs in the Early Childhood Development sub-sector: “Promote early detection, intervention and inclusion for children with special health and education needs” (ibid., p. 6).


This policy, developed in 2007, covers eight broad areas of special needs education and defines strategies for the implementation of each one of them.

“The objectives of National Policy on Special Needs Education are to:

• Provide appropriate quality education and/or vocational training to all learners with SEN;
• Ensure equitable access to all learners with SEN at all educational levels;
• Provide education facilities with necessary provisions to support the education of learners with SEN;
• Ensure that all education institutions create and provide supportive learning environments;
• Increase provision of SNE services by all education stakeholders;
• Improve co-ordination and networking among SNE stakeholders;
• Provide standards and ethical practices to be adhered to in the provision of SNE services”;


The National Policy names financial and personnel constraints, and environmental and attitudinal barriers, as well as insufficient coordination among stakeholders, and inadequate curriculum and institutional structures, as being the main challenges in implementing the policy (ibid., p. 14-15).

The preface of the National Policy on Special Needs Education mentions that the document “includes a detailed overarching statement on inclusion” (Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, 2007, p.4). However, nowhere else – except in the above-mentioned definition – is ‘inclusive education’ mentioned any further in the documents. The National Policy is complemented by Implementation Guidelines for the National Policy on Special Needs Education, which were published in 2009.

National Strategy for Teacher Education and Development (2007)

The policy framework in which the National Strategy for Teacher Education and Development (NSTED) is embedded, is the current overarching policy of the National Education Sector Plan (NESP) by the Ministry. Therefore, the NSTED follows the same structure with the priority areas, ‘access and equity’, ‘quality and relevance’, and ‘governance and management’.
In general terms, the NSTED Implementation Strategy formulates the major challenge in teacher education and development: “There is one major challenge to efforts aimed at improving teacher education and management systems in the country. The acute shortage of teachers at both the primary and secondary levels of education has resulted in the existence of a large number of untrained and under-qualified teachers in the system. This has necessitated more attention to be given to pre-service or initial teacher education at the expense of life-long professional development programmes” (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2011c, p. 6). Therefore, the MoEST has been focusing on increasing the supply of teachers, rather than on the improving the quality of teachers who are already at schools (idib.). Inclusive education is not mentioned in the document or in the following NSTED Implementation Plan or NSTED Implementation Strategy.

**National Policy on Early Childhood Development (2003)**

The first coherent national Early Childhood Development policy in Malawi was developed in 2003 with the aim to provide guidelines for and coordinate ECD activities (Ministry of Gender, Youth and Community Services, 2003, p. 6). The ECD policy is closely orientated towards the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). ECD programmes in Malawi target children from 0 to 8 years of age (Ministry of Gender, Youth and Community Services, 2003, p. 12). The understanding of ECD in Malawi is based on a multi-sectorial, multi-dimensional concept of ECD (Ministry of Gender, Children and Community Development / UNICEF, 2009, p. 6). As mentioned earlier in this report, it is stated that in 2008 only 30 percent of all children in Malawi attended any kind of centre-based ECD service (ibid., p. 7).

The policy formulates several policy objectives with defined strategies. One of the objectives is “to protect and safeguard children who are in difficult circumstances, i.e. orphans, street children, children with disabilities, abused and exploited children, children with disabilities, abused and exploited children [sic!], children in conflict with the law, neglected and abandoned children and refugee children” (ibid., p. 15).

### 3.1.2 Country-specific Adaptations to the Research Design

The main part of the research project was undertaken by national research teams in both countries. Implementing the project therefore required country-specific planning, e.g. in formulating the interview questions, or in selection of interview partners. Furthermore, different external conditions influenced the work of the national research teams.

The first stakeholder workshop was conducted in Malawi on 19 February 2014. Relevant persons from different areas were invited; namely, ministry officials, parent organisations, disability organisations, universities and institutes of teacher training, as well as bi- and multi-lateral donors. The aim of the workshop was make an introduction to the research project and to receive feedback from the national stakeholders on the research plan. It was also foreseen to receive information from the participants as a means of data collection, and to initiate networking between different stakeholders. Group phases were conducted during the workshop as focus group discussions. The six focus group discussions form part of the database at national level.

As part of the document analysis, more than 20 documents (policy papers, practice papers and research reports) were analysed.
A specific focus point of this study was to conduct instrumental case studies (Stake, 2005, p. 445) at four selected schools per country. These case studies provide insight into an issue (in this instance, inclusion and exclusion of students in schools in Malawi) and improve the understanding of challenges in this regard (e.g. Merriam, 2009).

At micro-level, the four case study schools in Malawi were selected according to the following criteria:

- two schools from a rural area, and two schools from an urban area;
- schools with specific resources regarding the support of children with SEN; and
- schools with aspects other than disability regarding inclusion (e.g. poverty, gender).

This resulted in the selection of the following four schools:

- one rural school with the support of a SEN teacher (visiting once or twice per month);
- one rural school in a remote area in the north of the country;
- one urban school in a socially disadvantaged area; and
- one urban school with a ‘resource centre’.

Observations, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were carried out in the four case study schools between May and June 2014. Focus group discussions and interviews were held with parents, school management committees, mothers groups, fathers groups, traditional leaders/chiefs, teachers, school head teachers¹, special needs teachers, and volunteers at early childhood centres, as well as learners in general and learners who are regarded as vulnerable, such as learners with disabilities, orphans, and girls.

The selecting of participants was carried out by the researchers with the support of the head teacher and teachers. The guidelines developed for the researchers indicated that participants should represent all sections of the school, including representatives from the different grades. As representatives from the infants’ classes were mostly very young, making it difficult to talk freely in a focus group discussion, the groups were mixed with older students, allowing the students to get the discussion going in a less inhibited atmosphere.

Participatory observations using a semi-structured checklist were also made as a data collection strategy. Infant, junior and senior class rooms were observed. The physical set-up of the school and its surrounding areas were noted, and emphasis was placed on observing the school’s general climate/culture.

In total, the database at micro-level comprises around 35 interviews and focus group discussions, plus lessons and school observations, and also the general field notes made by the researchers.

As the four case study schools are located in four different districts, representatives from the meso-level were interviewed in all four districts, to connect the meso- and micro-levels. On meso-level, 17 interviews and focus group discussions were conducted.

¹ In Malawi heads of schools are called ‘head teacher’, in Guatemala ‘principal’.
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Initial findings were discussed during a second stakeholder workshop on 3 July in Zomba, where member checking was used as a strategy to ensure internal validity (respondent validation where feedback was solicited on the findings emerging from some of the people interviewed).

The final data was collected in September 2014 and focused on teacher training. One semi-structured focus group interview was carried out at special needs teacher training college with the college principal and lecturers; and another at a teacher training college with the Dean of Academic Affairs and the Head of Foundation Studies, special needs teachers and student teachers.

The analysis of group discussions, interviews and observation notes, and field notes, contributed to these reports. Transcribed interviews and focus group discussions, as well as observations and field notes, were analysed with MAXQDA Software.

There were several limitations to the study in Malawi. The most notable ones are as follows:

1) There was a delay of one month in recruiting members for the research team. This recruitment delay was due to administrative difficulties at the start of the project in Malawi. The delayed project commencement in Malawi resulted in the fact that increased time pressure was a challenge until the completion of the project.

2) Two research team members resigned during the course of the project and had to be replaced.

3) The Tripartite Elections in May 2014 delayed data collection, because schools were used as polling centres. Also, teachers were participating in the elections as monitors, as were officials at the District Education Office.

4) The National Examinations for primary school leaving students were conducted right after the Tripartite Elections, resulting in there not being a daily school routine for the researchers to observe.

5) Initially, it was planned that Standard 8 classes at senior level should be observed. This was then changed to observations of lessons in Standard 7, because by the time the fieldwork took place in the schools, Standard 8 students had already finished their examinations.

6) Poor Internet connections in Malawi made it difficult to communicate with the coordinating office in Germany and to use the project’s Sharepoint platform.

7) Administrative challenges in connection with Centre for Educational Research and Training (CERT), University of Malawi as national partner institution for the research complicated the Malawian refie team’s work.

The above-mentioned challenges resulted in serious delays in the implementation of the research activities. During the course of the project, it became clear that continuing the established project arrangements in Malawi would lead to the Malawian country study not being completed in the available time with the expected level of quality. To ensure successful completion of the data analysis, the research consortium and GIZ therefore jointly decided to complete the data analysis in Germany, with two Malawian refie team members working for two months with German colleagues at the University in Hanover.
3.1.3 Results from the Malawian Country Study

3.1.3.1 Perspectives of Inclusion

3.1.3.1.1 Macro-level

Transforming education for students with diverse educational needs in Malawi from a traditional, special needs approach to an inclusive education approach is facilitated at national level by the revision of laws and the formulation of new policies (see 3.1.1.4). It is also important to note when we analyse inclusive education in Malawi in terms of conceptualisation, key players and pace of implementation at macro-level, that its history is no more than a decade old (Srivatava, De Boer, & Pijl, 2013).

In only few Malawian education policy papers is inclusive education mentioned as a government commitment. The term ‘inclusive education’ is carefully and rarely used; more often, the term and the concept of special needs education are to be seen. The term ‘special (needs) education’ remains predominant. In the strategies analysed in the document analysis (see Annex), some approaches towards inclusive education can be discovered; for example, through the introduction of an SNE module in all teacher training courses (Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, 2007, p. 22). However, the suggested strategy of building more special schools (ibid.) is contradictory to an inclusive education approach. No clarification is provided on how resource centres are supposed to be used in an inclusive educational approach.

MoEST’s definition of learners with special needs provides a broad view on special needs. It includes children with socio-emotional and behavioural difficulties, and vulnerable children who experience multiple and/or serious risks to development, mainly due to poverty; these include abused, neglected and orphaned children (Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, 2007, p. 6). However, when it comes to strategies to be implemented, measures for supporting learners with special learning needs are mainly targeting children who have sensory and motoric disabilities, with the use of sign language, braille material and assistive devices (Ministry of Education, 2009, p. 8). This shows how closely the perception/notion of special needs education is still connected with disability.

As mentioned in 3.1.1.4, it is significant that inclusive education is not mentioned explicitly in any of the papers relating to the National Strategy for Teacher Education and Development (NESTED) (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c). Also, the topic of special needs education is infrequently mentioned in these documents. Most of these papers were drawn up in 2011, and it should be noted that the National Policy on Special Needs Education that was published in 2007 already mentioned the introduction of a mandatory SNE component in teacher training courses.

It can therefore be concluded that no resultant and clear orientation towards inclusive education and its implementation has been established yet in Malawian education policy documents. A blurred understanding of inclusive education versus special educational needs education, and the fact that most measures support an understanding of special needs education, is apparent throughout all the policy papers that were analysed. Furthermore, policy development at macro-level lacks descriptions of the roles and responsibilities of the various governmental departments in policy implementation.

National stakeholders are in agreement about the importance of inclusive education (e.g. “as a Ministry we have recognised the importance of inclusive education, we are responding to the SADC
protocol” National Stakeholder) and the need to contextualise its implementation in the country (“it should be defined according to Malawian context” National Stakeholder).

Against the background of previous policies that focused on special educational needs education in separate placement settings, and the ambiguity in more recent policy documents concerning inclusion and special needs, inclusive education, however, tends to be conceptualised at macro-levels; i.e. more in terms of special needs education and/or disabilities, rather than in the broader sense of ‘barriers to learning’ that include contextual disadvantages and social problems and their interaction with specific learning needs. As a result, stakeholders at national level tend to refer to a narrow range of students (e.g. students with physical, hearing and visual disabilities) who should be included in mainstream schools. Furthermore, the definition of ‘disability’ seems to vary amongst stakeholders, and there seems to be general confusion concerning the terms ‘mainstreaming and integration’. There are diverse views on the future roles of special schools and resource rooms versus ‘inclusive education’ in which the system should meet the needs of the student as inclusively as possible rather than the student being separated, excluded or in any other way discriminated against (Donald, Lazarus, & Lolwana, 2010) (e.g. “when we say that all children should learn together are we necessarily saying that we would do away with the special schools?” National Stakeholder; “So I look at inclusive education in the same sense (severity of disability) to say does it necessarily mean we will do away with the resource centres, no I do not think so because those centres will still be playing a role. The resource centres are there to prepare children with a disability to adapt to the environment where others are also accessing the same education” National Stakeholder; “No, resource centres is exclusion in separate rooms, they just need to be supported there.” Comment by participant during second workshop).

3.1.3.1.2 Meso-level
The analysis at meso-level reveals that respondents’ concepts of inclusive education vary widely. Nevertheless, the analysis shows that concepts still are strongly related to special education concepts. Moreover, ideas that are expressed are partly contradictory. Such confusion also becomes relevant at micro-level and reflects findings of the document analysis at macro-level (see 3.1.3.1.1, 3.1.3.1.3). Confusion found in political documents is mirrored in the variety of circulating concepts and ideas at meso-level (as well as micro-level). Moreover, concepts refer to goals as well as actions. These findings are related to findings at micro-level (see 3.1.3.1.3).

These differences regarding concepts of inclusive education arise in connection with perceptions about the children addressed, as well as the dimensions of inclusive education to be taken into consideration. On the one hand some respondents express a broad inclusive education concept, which means they refer to all children, or children who face disadvantage in particular. Additionally, broad conceptions are related to all dimensions of inclusive education. Against this background, barriers are discussed and/or strategies and recommendations expressed. The following statement by a district school health and nutrition coordinator addresses all children and relates the concept of inclusive education to all three dimensions. It is aligned with the views of other key actors at meso-level:
We cannot talk of productive school environment looking at only a particular group of people, but rather its education for each and every one, so that what so ever is taking place in productive school environment we have to involve each and every one in whatever status one is, whatever condition one is in we have to involve each and every one. (district health and nutrition coordinator in a rural area).

With regard to implementation strategies, the coordinator refers to all dimensions by speaking of a productive school environment that has to address the needs of all children.

On the other hand, other respondents tend to refer mainly to students with physical, hearing and visual disabilities and emphasise the dimension of access, as the following quote shows:

I think one of the duties involves sensitization of the general population and the need to send their wards to school despite having certain disabilities. Even the teachers that are there in the schools, we are also doing something for them so that they can be in a position to assist the special needs learners that are being co-opted into the school system. (district education manager in a rural area)

Nevertheless, as the analysis shows, in Malawi this focus is reasonable, as there still is an urgent need for equal educational access. Although most Malawian children attend primary school today due to the abolishment of school fees in primary schools, dropping out of schools is a major issue even during the first grade and, as discussed earlier, direct and indirect economic causes play a major role in this regard (MoEST, 2013). Furthermore, a strong emphasis on cultural traditions and alternative life aspirations influences public views and beliefs about formal education. This is clearly a barrier to inclusive education, especially in the rural areas.

Consequently, the confusion with respect to a clear conceptual framework for inclusive education that was identified at macro-level, and is also to be pointed out at micro-level (see 3.1.3.1.3), also becomes apparent at meso-level.

This lack of clarity concerning the overall definition of inclusive education, its objectives and implementation strategies, can also be identified with regard to the different ideas and concepts related to the use of resource centres (see 3.1.3.2.2). This becomes particularly apparent in the terms used and the concepts related to them during the interviews with key actors at meso-level.

Various and partly contradictory approaches to inclusive education are also revealed in specialised teacher training, and regular teacher training. This means that broad concepts are apparent in primary teacher education, and narrow concepts of inclusive education in specialist teacher training. In this regard, the following quote by a female student of primary teacher education reveals a very broad understanding of education:

I think it [referring to the interviewer’s question what ‘education for all’ means to her] is learning together with learners regardless of their appearance and family status . . . whether depending on they are coming from maybe their parents are poor or they are rich. (student of primary teacher training)

Nevertheless, this variety of concepts in primary and specialist teacher training points out the far-reaching consequences of a diffused concept of inclusive education at macro-level.

The impact of a special needs approach to disabilities, rather than an emphasis in an inclusive education approach where the focus is on meeting the needs of the students, is apparent. It shows that, whereas the concept of inclusive education is still vague, the concept of special education
seems to be much more defined and entrenched in support structures at meso-level. This is also confirmed by the document analysis at macro-level which shows that ideas and concepts related to inclusive education still compete strongly with special needs education and its related terms and concepts (see 3.1.3.1.1).

As pointed out in the following quote by an orphans and vulnerable children coordinator in a rural area, developing inclusive education is regarded as being related to goals as well as actions. An understanding of the concept of inclusion emerges when the goals and actions of education are discussed in connection with children affected by HIV/AIDS:

*In fact we can say education is all for every child, no matter how the status of every child is. So suppose, maybe there are other children in Secondary Schools maybe they are HIV positive. So when reported, you know those issues are most of the time are confidential, there are very few people that can come open to say that am positive or my child is positive. But suppose, there is that chance of getting to know the status of that child, we provide other support like maybe need for food, that is supplementary foods that is. So we organise as an office to provide that food. Whenever, there is need for maybe school fees, suppose they are secondary students. The first priority is for those children because they among the vulnerable groups.* (orphans and vulnerable children coordinator in a rural area)

The quote demonstrates that the coordinator legitimates her actions by stating that those children are vulnerable. Referring to vulnerable children in general, this indicates a broad understanding of inclusive education. Moreover she emphasises actions needed to secure access for this group of children.

This statement also indicates that concepts of inclusive education refer not only to goals, but also to strategies (see 3.1.3.2.2, 3.1.3.2.3). In the following example, a respondent emphasises the need for the overarching coordination and management of programmes and strategies concerning inclusive education. With regard to the analysis at macro-level, it shows that due to the confusion of political concepts and goals, this is a challenging aspect.

*I think the need for all the aspects you mentioned for us to have like for there to be like a comprehensive programme to ensure that the programme is working there is a need for programme management to have quality school management, working and learning environment, community involvement for me I think is one of the important elements because you may have a good school infrastructure, you may have good teaching and learning environment, a good school management and so on and so forth but when parents especially that we are so embedded in our culture, as a result when the culture is not supportive of this education for all policy, it can fail so I think, the community involvement is very crucial in my own opinion.* (city AIDS coordinator in an urban area)

The analysis concerning perspectives of inclusion at meso-level reveals that there is still a conceptual ambiguity of inclusive education and its related aspects. Moreover, it shows that ideas of special education are still predominant. As a consequence, related concepts are affected. Such confusion of concepts is mirrored in the confusion found in policy documents. Thus, there is a need for clarification of concepts related to inclusive education.

Ideas of inclusive education refer to goals as well as actions. Consequently, the implementation of inclusive education requires a clear designation of roles and responsibilities.
3.1.3.1.3 Micro-level
At a first glance, concepts of inclusive education revealed in the analysis at micro-level are very broad. Respondents refer mainly to all children who are disadvantaged. Nevertheless, as pointed out concerning the meso-level: at micro-level also, concepts related to inclusive education are still not well clarified and are still strongly related to presuppositions of special education. This becomes apparent, for example, with regard to concepts of disability. As shown in the following, such concepts refer predominantly to an approach to disability that entails a medical deficit.

Additionally and in contrast to findings at meso-level, where concepts vary more in this regard, participants mainly discuss the dimension of educational access. As pointed out in the discussion of results at meso-level, equal educational access opportunities are still urgent topics that need to be addressed. Although most children initially attend primary school, many of them drop out during their first school year or later in the course of primary education. One reason for this is that formal education is still challenged in multiple ways, albeit for different reasons, as we will discuss below. The results confirm the document analysis at macro-level regarding obstacles that prevent children from attending school (see 3.1.3.2.3).

With regard to concepts of inclusive education, the analysis shows that in speaking about learners who are experiencing barriers to learning, the terms, ‘disabled children’ or ‘special needs learners’, seem to be used interchangeably. This is illustrated by the following quote by one head teacher:

*I tell teachers and they know as well, that every child whether disabled or whatever should be taken as a normal person by his friends and sometimes those children are given responsibilities, they do what other able students do, we also encourage parents who have these children to bring them here at school. We also make children to interact with special need learners . . . we try to make it inclusive. (head teacher in a rural area)*

This finding is confirmed by similar results: other terms, such as ‘impairment’ and ‘disability’, are used interchangeably as well. The following quote also shows that disability is still regarded as being strongly linked to an individual impairment. Environmental barriers that hinder the person’s full participation are neglected here. Although findings also indicate that a change can be noticed, as shown in the following, such concepts are still vivid and seem to be based on a medical-deficit approach to disabilities.

Single participants refer to learning difficulties as well. However, the focus is placed on physically, visually, hearing or mentally disabled students, as the following quote also shows. Moreover, it emphasises a need for adequate screening and assessment measures.

*The special needs learners because they are of different disabilities and others do not have the opportunity to see and we have others who have got hearing problems, others have got difficulties in mobility, we need to co-opt them into the system. (district education manager in a rural area)*

With regard to perspectives of inclusion, it becomes important which dimensions of inclusive education are mentioned by respondents. Educational access is emphasised for all children, regardless of the kind of disadvantage they are faced with: “It means that giving equal opportunity to acquire education to every citizen of this country” (member of focus group discussion with SMC, PTA and mother or father group in a rural area). Nevertheless, this educational access is still challenged by the predominance of traditional cultural customs and values, and results in conflicts between stakeholders of the primary schools and parents of students or the community in general.
Such conflicting orientations have to be regarded in relation to a gradual change in society that is currently going on in the country. Malawi was among the first countries to adopt an Education for All policy. However, such political decisions interact and, in a sense, are challenged by attitudes and beliefs of the public (see Kendall & Silver, 2014). This means, the process of implementing inclusive education processes has to be regarded as socio-historically shaped. Respondents mention such a change that is reflected in changing beliefs and values of the participants, as well as the community in general. In the following quote, one head teacher in a rural area describes this phenomenon, focusing especially on the question of how this affects girls’ educational access:

> It is the girls; there was this culture when a girl child is impregnated and has a child she cannot continue with her education. Thanks to civic education, most of the parents now understand they have changed their old mentality. (head teacher in a rural area)

Additionally in the following quote, a mother from one of the mothers groups in a rural area discusses the ongoing societal change that is reflected in a change the content and structure of initiation ceremonies:

> I think what we have to say is that the world has just changed because all of us went through the same initiation ceremony despite that some of us did not go on with school but, here we are. (member of a father/mother group in a rural area)

Moreover, challenges regarding access vary across the different districts and education divisions in Malawi (see 3.1.3.2.3).

Acceptance is another dimension of inclusive education that is mentioned. Acceptance is important among students as well as by teachers and the community in general, as the statement by the head teacher quoted above illustrates. Challenges concerning acceptance are most often mentioned with regard to learners with disabilities, orphans and children affected by poverty, as parents who are members of the School Management Committee and the Parent Teacher Association in the following quote illustrate (see 3.1.3.2.3):

> Respondent 1: The most students who are being discriminated are the orphans due to their dressing and the way they look and also these who are discriminated. Even their appearance. They do not want to walk with her.
> Respondent 2: The disabled. For example those with hearing impairment and stammering when a teacher asks a question or the disabled learner wants to ask a question, they are laughed by their friends. So for them to come to school the next day he feels discouraged. So their rights are denied. (members of a focus group discussion with SMC, PTA and mother group in rural area).

Most participants discuss participation only very vaguely as a dimension of inclusive education. Though ideas are expressed on how full participation can be ensured for all children, it is framed within a special education approach by teachers and head teachers. However, children and parents show how efforts by teachers to develop acceptance and participation in the classroom are already working out. Participation in several cases, for instance, is discussed in terms of ‘mainstreaming’ in regular classes (see 3.1.3.2.3). Participants use this term in some cases when relating to the use of resource centres, as the special needs teacher at one of the schools illustrates:
I have got a lot of measures which I am thinking and proposing for the whole education system at this school. I don’t want to be with the learners full time in the resource room, my plan is just a matter of training them just for a month. After a month then they should be in the mainstreams whereby should be monitoring their progress in the main stream. (special needs teacher in an urban area)

A change in the predominance of the concept of special education in relation to conceptions of inclusive education has already been identified. In terms of participation, only a few participants – including a small number of parents who want to protect their children from discrimination, for instance – expressed ideas of segregation and a need for identified students to be sent to special schools.

The participation of students is also being discussed in schools that do not have a resource centre. Existing challenges in this regard indicate, however, that these ideas cannot be implemented adequately due to current realities in classrooms and the overburdening of teachers (see 3.1.3.2.3).

In a nutshell, although participants also express a broad understanding of inclusive education, other concepts are also vivid that still point out the relevance of concepts of special education. Hence, the analysis reveals that conceptions of inclusive education and related aspects are not clarified sufficiently. This is confirmed by findings at both meso- and macro-level. Moreover, as to be pointed out in the following chapter with regard to barriers to inclusive education, the strong focus on educational access at micro-level hints at a lack of acceptance of formal education by parents and the community.

Nevertheless, as mentioned above, and also to be revealed as an important aspect in the following chapters, a process of societal change is ongoing that is influencing attitudes and beliefs of participants and the community in general. As will be elaborated on in the following chapters, traditional values and alternative life aspirations are vivid in society, and they compete with formal educational and the development of inclusive education. Accordingly, the concept of inclusive education and its implementation has to be regarded as interrelated with the unique society.

3.1.3.2 Barriers

3.1.3.2.1 Macro-level

Barriers to inclusive education in Malawi identified with the help of the document analysis are mostly related to legislative, economical and attitudinal aspects. A main barrier lies in the absence of a consistent, clear orientation towards inclusive education in Malawian education policy, which is elaborated on in detail in Chapter 3.1.3.1.1. The policies and their implementation strategies and guidelines on teacher education and development lack clarity, and there is still strong emphasis on special needs education rather than on inclusive education. In one of the NSTED-related documents, for example, inclusive education is not mentioned at all.

Many challenges to the Malawian education system are in connection with the teaching workforce. The increase in enrolment of students in primary education after 1994 has not been reflected in a corresponding increase of the number of teaching staff. On the contrary, the number of employed teachers dropped between 1994 and 2009. In 2010, 47 percent of established teaching posts were not filled, with the situation worse in rural than in urban areas (Ng’ambi, 2010, p. 8). Ng’ambi sees poor incentives for teachers as one major cause. Teachers’ salaries are low in comparison to other SADC countries, and salaries are frequently not paid on time. Furthermore, many teachers, especially
females, are not able or willing to work in remote areas (ibid., p. 9). Working conditions for teachers are described as depressing, especially in the rural areas (ibid.).

Concerning attitudinal aspects and group-specific disadvantages, most of the evidence available focuses on children with disabilities, and girls. For parents of children with disabilities, it is pointed out ‘that some parents’ views regarding their child’s disability do influence their willingness to send their children to school. These views include perceptions that their children are stigmatized by their peer group as well as perceptions that it is not worthwhile to send their children to school as they would in any case be unable to learn anything’ (CIEM, 2013, p. 31); e.g. there “is evidence that in some instances children with disabilities are discriminated against by their peers” (ibid., p. 2). “Often, it is considered that investment in a child with disability is not worthwhile” (Norad, 2012, p. 44). These negative attitudes apply especially to girls with disabilities who are often discriminated against because of their disability and their gender and are, as a consequence, less likely to be sent to school (ibid., p. 1, 13, 15).

The data available reveals that children with disabilities more often have to repeat grades, and are more likely to drop out of school early. It is also claimed that they start school later than their peers (CIEM, 2013, p. 35). Data showed that there are “higher numbers of children with disabilities in the lower grades than in the higher grades” (ibid., p. 21) and that children with disabilities more often spend only a few years in primary school and are increasingly likely to drop out before the end of Standard 8 (ibid., p. 36). “It is likely although not certain that there are significant numbers of children with disabilities who are joining school at a later age than their peers given the prominence of children with older ages in school – particularly around the ages of 10-14” (ibid., p. 50). Hidden costs of education are still a barrier for poorer families (ibid., p. 13). The authors of this study state that direct as well as indirect economic causes (a general lack of resources) are the main reasons preventing children with disabilities from attending school (ibid., p. 29).

In the rural areas of Malawi, long distances to the next school and the lack of infrastructure are huge challenges. These long distances increase the vulnerability for gender-based violence and sexual offences (FAWEMA, 2012, p. 4). Another barrier concerns the high poverty rates in Malawi. Many of the parents cannot afford to send their children (or not all of their children) to secondary school in particular, since school uniforms, materials, transport costs and school fees for secondary school have to be paid for by the families themselves (ibid., p. 9). In the case of insufficient financial resources in the family, “girls are the first to be taken out of school” (ibid., p. 9). This statement also reflects widely spread beliefs and values towards girls’ education in Malawi that influence their access to education in a negative way (ibid., p. 13). Additionally, aspects such as early marriage or pregnancy, family responsibilities, “low level of parental education”, “lack of parental care” and the “lack of role models”, can prevent girls from attending school (ibid., p. 13). Girls are “needed for household tasks and part time jobs to generate income for their families and this explains why some of them are not doing well in their studies” (ibid., p. 13).

Barriers identified by stakeholders at macro-level are, in the majority of instances, related to the economic realities and related contextual disadvantages in Malawi. They involve, for example, the availability of structural resources with specific reference to physical accessibility of schools and the availability of technical and human resources that subsequently influences access, acceptance and participation of students with diverse educational needs.
Stakeholders raised questions concerning the impact of national budgets and the resulting lack of funding for implementing inclusive education and for access to financial and technical resources for teachers and students (including teaching material and equipment): “The challenges are lack of resources of teaching and learning materials”; “And when we talk about inclusive education there is a serious problem, and again shortage of specialised teaching and learning materials” (National Stakeholder). It was pointed out during the second stakeholder workshop that funding is available but that its use is decentralised to districts, and that schools are not always aware of funding opportunities in their own districts: “Accessing funding for Special Educational Needs is irregular and should be followed up” (comment by stakeholder during plenary session).

The availability of well-trained mainstream classroom teachers, as well as teachers who are inclusive education specialists and who can provide support to other teachers in rural and urban areas, was formulated as a major barrier by all stakeholders at macro-level. The need was emphasised to develop effective and sustainable human resource development opportunities that focus on improving the knowledge, skills, attitudes and understanding of inclusive education by teachers and teacher educators: “Overall there is acute shortage of specialist teachers”; “The current practice is that all teachers training colleges should have a component of special and inclusive education. But like I said earlier . . . it’s like we are just introducing like most of the content is something to do with the signs and indicators of disability and the emphasis is on learners with disabilities which is against the definition of inclusion” (National Stakeholder); “We have a lack of SEN coordinators in every district”; “If teachers are well trained children can be included in classrooms and just supported by special educational needs coordinators” (comments by participants in second national workshop).

Although relevant policies have been developed (e.g. “As Ministry of Disabilities . . . in the first place we generate and review policy, we have had our policy of inclusive education, a disability policy is now under review” (National Stakeholder)), the implementation of policy is challenging and causes barriers to inclusion: “You see the policy talking of one thing but what is happening on the ground is the other thing” (National Stakeholder); “For the last five years we have been working on these documents and changing them from integration to inclusion. For me now we need to move to how the teachers would handle inclusion” (National Stakeholder).

It is also not clear what roles and responsibilities the various ministries would take in implementing the policies. This leads to ambiguity and confusion in the development of inclusive education systems, and “Stakeholders are not informed on how to best support students who have disabilities in their institutions” (National Stakeholder).

Another major barrier refers to support structures at community levels, with specific reference to parents where conflicting values play a role as a result of different cultural and family perceptions; e.g. “Working in communities you find that maybe a family has got a child who is neglected, in most settings they actually discourage that child to go to school in fear that maybe he or she might fail at the school” (National Stakeholder); “Why should there be education a girl child when we have five boys” (National Stakeholder); “If we send this disabled child to schools what are we going to benefit” (National Stakeholder).

The urban-rural divide also plays a role in creating barriers to access and participation in mainstream schools; for example, parents’ perceptions of education for a child who has a disability as well as the availability of qualified teachers are as follows: “What I can see is from that living in urban is that
they are at an advantage because the parents also are a bit enlightened, some have some education while in the rural, inclusive education needs even the participation of parents. If the parents have no education there is already a problem there because children cannot get support from the home from the parents” (National Stakeholder); “Just to add up on the urban rural . . . in the rural area a lot of teachers would prefer to be in the urban” (National Stakeholder). Rural schools also lack the necessary structures to enhance physical access and well developed sanitation facilities.

Networking at macro-level between ministries, as well as between donor organisations and NGOs, is identified as a barrier due to its fragmented nature and the lack of collaborative partnerships: “What I would like to say is to avoid little islands of success in the big ocean of failure: UNICEF is signing its own success story, GIZ its own success story in one little district. I call this islands of success by attribution to each agency but in a big ocean of failure” (National Stakeholder). The need to coordinate various projects and the work of ministries, NGOs and donor organisations is therefore expressed: “I think deliberate effort has to be made to improve relationships among development partners” and “We want to have more networking at national level. That is a wish”; “Some of the problems are also created by the development partners, so you find that even when you want to do a joint project but one organisation wants to be centre they are in the lead”; “For example in some other schools there are mother support groups from FAWEMA and there is this UNICEF campaign for female education it has its own composition of the mother support groups because at one time others have suggested that, why can these not combine so that they can cooperate with those people but still everybody wants to have our own” (National Stakeholder).

Comparing barriers identified by means of the document analysis, and barriers identified by the stakeholders at national level, indicates the following: regarding the policy framework and its implementation, stakeholders consider the current policies regarding inclusive education as sufficient, and they see the main challenges in the implementation of the policies. On the other hand, the document analysis shows that all relevant policies lack both a clear conceptualisation of, and commitment to, inclusive education. However, a common awareness for barriers to education that are connected with the quality and availability of teachers, the attitudes and existing cultural values of specific groups, and the value of formal education and contextual disadvantages of learners living in rural areas, is reflected in both the analysed documents and the perceptions of national stakeholders.

3.1.3.2.2 Meso-level

Aspects that are mentioned at the meso-level confirm the analysis of findings at the micro- and macro-levels. Respondents identify a lack of resources, e.g. teaching and learning materials, and insufficient human resources with specific reference to well qualified teachers. In this regard, they point out challenges of overcrowded classrooms that also influence implementing adequate screening and assessment measures. Moreover, it limits acceptance among learners and by teachers, and creates a serious obstacle to ensuring full participation. Inadequate facilities are major challenges that negatively influence access for girls and for students who are physically impaired. The lack of teachers, and special needs teachers in particular, is emphasised as a major problem. This is confirmed by the results of the document analysis at macro-level that indicated that teaching vacancies are not filled and incentives are low (see 3.1.3.2.1).
These challenges create barriers in the implementation of inclusive education and its related aspects of access, acceptance and participation. While respondents point out a partly positive development (see 3.1.3.2.3), the barriers are still predominant.

Access: With regard to access, respondents emphasise that all children are at risk of dropping out of school as illustrated in the following quote by the district social welfare officer in a rural area:

*The dropout rates are very high. For example, when you go this year in standard one, you can get there are a hundred learners, in the second year in standard two, you can get maybe seventy or eighty. When you go in standard three in the other year, you can find say sixty. The rate is just dropping down. So that is our main challenge because we expect when standard one are hundred learners that means when they reach standard eight they should be hundred learners. (district social welfare officer in a rural area)*

Although there are widely varying reasons for different groups of children, as will be demonstrated, there are also common challenges that affect children with regard to access. This can be linked to concepts of childhood and the respective role of children in the family (Rwezaura, 1998, see also 3.1.3.2.3).

As mentioned earlier, the traditional beliefs regarding gender roles are one reason why girls, in particular, are challenged with regard to educational access. Education for girls is still less valued. A district social welfare officer and an orphans and vulnerable children coordinator point out that, although drop out is a problem throughout primary schools, in higher grades this is linked mainly to gender-related challenges, especially for girls. This is confirmed by respondents across the levels.

*Especially in standard four and five many girls drop out. We saw this when we were conducting last year’s Day of the African Child in T/A Chamba. (district social welfare officer in a rural area)*

*Especially when they go to initiation ceremonies. I don’t know what is going on there. But after coming out of initiation ceremonies, they drop out of school. Some are impregnated and get into marriage and the like. (vulnerable children coordinator in a rural area)*

Furthermore, how parents – and caregivers in general – regard the usefulness and relevance of schooling also affects whether and for how long students generally remain in school.

Other barriers in terms of access also affect other children in a negative way. The following quote points to barriers related to access that affect orphans and children from the streets, “because of issues that are outside the school” (district education officer in an urban area).

Children with physical, hearing and visual disabilities, and learning difficulties, are also mentioned as disadvantaged with regard to educational access, because they are affected by stigmatisation by the community. This still remains a problem. Moreover, the barrier created by an inaccessible school infrastructure is mentioned for children with physical, hearing and visual disabilities.

Acceptance: Some children, e. g. learners with disabilities, orphans, so-called street children, and students with HIV/AIDS, face problems regarding acceptance by their fellow learners. Children with HIV/AIDS often manage to hide their illness in order to prevent discrimination. In cases where fellow learners know about their infection or illness, they are at risk of being discriminated. A common reason for discrimination among learners is that they look different or behave differently than their fellow learners expect. Some drop out of school as a result of being stigmatised.
The following quote by a district school health and nutrition coordinator in a rural area discusses this challenge concerning children who are affected by HIV/AIDS:

*There was a lot of that one then this one even if she comes to school, he comes to school, within him or herself he could feel that, 'I think am out of place' because some of the girls, boys would boo him. you are positive so automatically, it was affecting performance in class and maybe some even decided to drop out to say I think school is not our area where we should be, we better be at home because they don’t laugh at us. (district school health and nutrition coordinator in a rural area)*

**Participation:** As the previous quote also shows in the case of children with HIV/AIDS, stigmatisation and lack of acceptance among learners can lead to concentration problems and, as a consequence, affects participation negatively. This is a general problem for children who face discrimination in the classroom. Children with HIV/AIDS in particular face further challenges in this regard. Due to their vulnerability for becoming sick, children with HIV/AIDS have problems in concentrating. As has to be pointed out in more detail in relation to the micro-level, teachers and children describe various cases in which children are mocked by other learners when they do not answer the teachers’ questions correctly. Teachers also discuss such situations in respect of adequate solutions, as will be shown (see 3.1.3.2.3).

Moreover, concentration problems in class are a major challenge for most children and have different reasons, as the analysis at micro-level shows (3.1.3.2.3).

With regard to ‘full participation’, the use of resource centres has to be taken into consideration in a critical manner. The resource centres are mainly mentioned as a way to give support to children in developing the necessary skills to join regular classes later on. However, it needs to be pointed out that inclusive education does not mean segregating learners, but providing reasonable strategies and adequate resources to include all learners in their respective classes. Resource centres should then be used as a supportive learning environment that could provide support for all learners, not only for a specific group. As explained elsewhere, broader concepts concerning the function of resource centres do exist. However, besides such broad concepts also narrow ideas exist and still are predominant which mirrors that a clear concept of resource centres is still missing. Accordingly opinions seem to vary according to the respondent and the different system levels. This confusion regarding this specific aspect is strongly related to the confusion in general with regard to the concept of and strategies to implement inclusive education already pointed out (see 3.1.3.1).

**Human resources and qualifications:** As mentioned, the lack of acceptance is a barrier to inclusive education in terms of access, and also with respect to participation. Concerning the latter, the lack of well qualified special needs teachers is relevant. In the following quote, a district school health and nutrition coordinator discusses this challenge, especially with regard to children with disabilities:

*Talk of learners who have some impairments, we don’t have enough specialist teachers so much so that those teachers who might be handling those learners may not teach in the proper way which will benefit the learners so that education for all at some time may be at a disadvantaged because the learners are not getting what they are expected to attain in class maybe because the teacher is lacking expertise. (district school health and nutrition coordinator in a rural area)*
The overall lack of regular and special needs teachers that cause a high pupil-to-teacher ratio as well as less expertise for students’ individual needs, is regarded as a great barrier. The district education manager in an urban district points out the following:

*Though we are saying the enrolment is increasing every year but the number of teachers that we have in [name of the district] are decreasing like, for example, at the moment pupil teacher ratio is one to ninety three simply because I think the ministry in two thousand seven adopted deployment policy whereby they are no longer deploying teachers in urban centres and we are relying on transfers from other districts like those that are following spouses so if we don’t have transfers in we don’t have many teachers.* (district education manager in an urban area)

As illustrated elsewhere, positive developments and innovations in teacher training have taken place (see 3.1.3.2.2). However, challenges to teacher training still exist and can be differentiated according to the pre-service and in-service phases. Thus, challenges identified in the analysis are on the one hand linked to the content and structure of the training. However, in comparison with students of primary teacher training, students of specialised teacher training feel better prepared. On the other hand the recognition structures with regard to the in-service phase still remain low (e.g. incentives, promotion opportunities, salaries). Accordingly in the in-service phase, all teacher training students refer to challenges they perceive regarding incentives and salaries. Salaries and subsistence allowances are not paid regularly, as one female student of primary teacher training explains:

*They [teachers] can last two months with no salaries. For example teachers of this school, they have yet been paid last month’s salaries. Imagine they buy papers on their own to write schemes of work. So if they are not paid, they don’t write schemes hence poor teaching. Also we were told that we will be buying resources on our own after the ones they gave us last. But for our friends of [name of organisation], they owe them three months salaries. So we don’t know what will happen for us. Teachers are not counted.* (student of primary teacher training)

This quote also reveals that the student discusses the teachers’ role in general. Her impression seems to be that teachers are less valued in society.

Travelling to receive monthly payments causes additional costs. Teachers have to go to the bank to collect their salaries.

Furthermore, qualified teachers are needed, especially in rural areas. Although there are concepts and strategies for encouraging teachers to stay in the rural areas, particularly with regard to primary teachers (see below), inadequate housing in rural areas is a counter-productive aspect. Teachers often have difficulties in being able to prepare their daily work adequately:

*You find that teachers’ houses do not have electricity and have no solar panels, so teachers are reluctant to go and teach in such schools, they ask, ‘how are we going to write lesson plans, how are we going to write schemes of work.* (student of primary teacher training)

**Primary teacher training:** As mentioned above, students of primary teacher training feel less well prepared than specialised teacher students. One major challenge in this regard is the inadequate structure of the training. Lecturers and other senior staff in teacher training, as well as students, emphasise similar challenges here. Respondents refer to a problem of inadequate training that results from the variety of subjects and topics that conflict with the short duration of training. This is even mentioned as a problem for IPTE convention training that focuses on residential students. In primary teacher training, ten subjects are taught, e.g. English, mathematics, Chichewa, life skills, and
foundation studies. Foundation studies comprise training on special education needs and inclusive education. Teacher students are also prepared in teaching methodologies, as illustrated elsewhere (see 3.1.3.2.2).

As already mentioned, there are further challenges in the in-service phase. These are strongly related to job satisfaction and motivation of the teachers. Low incentives and irregular payment are important aspects in this concern. Incentives become relevant, especially with regard to efforts to keep teachers in rural areas. Another aspect of acknowledgement is the current amount teacher students earn throughout their qualification. This is discussed by lecturers, and also at macro-level (see 3.1.3.2.1).

Students say that they feel prepared only ‘on the surface’ and refer to limitations in their training. As to be pointed out in more detail, students discuss strategies for specialisation in this regard. While students of one focus group discussion emphasise other challenges in teacher training, a student of another focus group discussion expresses that he feels insufficiently qualified:

The other thing which I have observed is that there is very little time allocated to tutorials. At the end of this academic year we are going to be awarded certificates, but there are some things which we have not learned as my colleague has explained. We are not clearly taught, we are just told that this thing is called ‘x’ and it is used when teaching learners with special needs come and see it, we are also not taught how to use it, so there is very little time according to the work load. (student of primary teacher training)

Not only students, but also lecturers and even stakeholders in the ministry refer to restrictions in the current content and structure of teacher training. Stakeholders aim at a balance between required skills that teachers should gain through training, and restrictions due to the duration of training and financial resources. In the following quote, a lecturer describes his expectations with regard to the current teacher training:

You know we usually make sure in the department that every student who comes here to be trained must acquire the necessary skills which will help them to teach the younger children in primary schools. So our curriculum or I should say basically, we make sure that all the students are trained to the standard where we feel they should go out with the necessary skills and knowledge on how they can handle the learners so that the learners in primary schools get what is required of them as basic curriculum. (head of a department at a teacher training college)

Further aspects mentioned touch the balance of theoretical and practical parts of the training. One lecturer critiques the current structure regarding practical teaching experiences comparing residential and ODL students. He expresses the need for more demonstration phases. This refers indirectly to the need for specialisation in the training. It is striking, and should be considered seriously, that this imbalance is discussed as an overall challenge that is linked to the attrition of teachers:
The ODL have a lot of time practising very little, so if we go into teaching practice, the quality of teaching is different because we go with theory knowledge only, if five subjects were taught in one year and then go for teaching practice, yea, we go and teach at demonstration school but this is not enough because it is only one lesson per year. I wished we spend more time at the demonstration school teaching the learners for the two years and the other year to go for teaching practice or they should combine theory and teaching practice. It should not look like we are suffering because when we go into teaching practice we suffer after some time we gain experience but it is hard for student teachers, that is the reason many student teachers abandon the profession. (specialist lecturer at a teacher training college)

As a consequence various possibilities of specialisation because of the restrictions mentioned. One lecturer’s suggestion is to reduce the number of subjects to study and give students the opportunity to choose between subjects. He links this suggestion to the quality of the teacher training as well as to the topic of job satisfaction of teachers:

The other thing is what he has said about dividing the subjects, and also to have an opportunity to choose what subjects to teach like mathematics, agriculture or science subjects so that during training we should be focusing on those subjects. The truth is that if you are asked to teach a subject which you did not want to teach, you simply accept because you want to keep your job, you then go and teach, but the quality of the teaching is not that good. (specialist lecturer at a teacher training college)

Another important aspect with regard to teacher training refers to the relationship of inclusive education and special needs education. As has been shown elsewhere, a module of inclusive education as part of teacher training aims at the sensitisation of regular teachers (see also 3.1.3.2.2). The analysis reveals, however, that a focus on special needs education is still predominant.

There is a lot to improve on, they have to improve in teacher training colleges because the students graduate half-baked. They do not acquire enough knowledge about special needs education. The government should revisit the special needs curriculum together with [name of a special needs education college] to share the subjects, some subjects should be taught at teacher training colleges and others at [name of a special needs education college] in order to improve this special needs education. (specialist lecturer at a teacher training college)

Moreover, the way the training is structured in this respect shows that special needs education and inclusive education are treated as different points of emphasis, as the following two quotes illustrate:

We have topics like special needs as a topic where you differentiate special needs education and special education needs. We also have rehabilitation as a topic. We also have inclusive education as a topic. We have categories of impairments well described in the course outline. (head of a department at a teacher training college)

On special needs, I think teacher training colleges are also doing a good job because there are specialist teachers in each and every college, who are trained, who have the concept of special needs education, those with different learning areas, for example here at this college we are not the only ones, there is this one who is a specialist in hearing impairment and another a specialist in inclusive education. Others are specialised in other areas so that at least students can get knowledge from these groups of specialist teachers. (specialist lecturer at a teacher training college)

Since inclusive education cannot be regarded as a single facet of special needs education, but constitutes a new meaning of diversity, the current structure has to be considered in a critical manner. This again points to the confusion of concepts concerning inclusive education, and also
shows that special needs education is still the concept that is best clarified and therefore gives a strong orientation.

Moreover, it should be taken seriously that, due to the restrictions students observe in the teacher training, the need is expressed to omit the emphasis of inclusive education and special education. In this regard one student states that regular and specialised teachers should bethink of their respective profession:

*If it is possible, if one is making an application she or he should state what subjects is interested in teaching and another thing, if at a school like this one there should be specialist teachers to specifically teach learners with disadvantages. The ordinary teacher should not be overloaded with the task of learning specialised skills at college, because some student teachers are reluctant to learn in this area. Specialist teachers should have their own programmes in college.* (male student of primary teacher training)

As the students’ quotes illustrate, primary teacher education currently seems to be overwhelming with regard to the content, while inadequate with regard to students’ preparation for practice.

**Special needs teacher training:** In contrast to regular teacher students, specialised teacher students seem to be much more satisfied with the content and structure of the training. Moreover they emphasise positively that they graduate at diploma level.

Nevertheless, the lack of incentives and the problem of attrition are also mentioned as a challenge in special educational needs teacher training. Although specialised teacher students are already teachers with at least two years of practical experience who graduate at diploma level, they do not receive any incentives. Another aspect is that of promotion for special needs teachers. Currently, promotion opportunities are low, and there is no differentiation between regular teachers and those who are specialised in special needs education. One consequence here is a sense of competition between regular and special needs teachers, as one lecturer explains:

*You see the other area is that sometimes our friends are given chances to attend interviews, so it is like we encroach or we steal some other peoples positions because it’s like we secretly attacking. We apply we do some peoples interviews, at the end when they discover and say, ‘man you are not suitable to work here’ they do not consider us, that means if at all the government could say let us give them a chance to compete, I think it could be better, than getting some employment from other areas like we going and attending interviews in chain stores or secondary schools. Already we have slim chances.* (head and a lecturer of a department at a special needs education college)

In spite of a positive development regarding the quantity of special needs teachers, there are still not enough. This lack of special needs teachers is caused partly by the low capacities of special needs education colleges:

*Developments - in fact like in the past the college was actually only training only few teachers sometimes only ten or eight, but this time the government has improved we are getting about hundred students, but still when they finish when we disperse them, when the government deploy them they still look few, but as compared as before there is an achievement.* (head and a lecturer of a department at a special needs education college)

Due to the lack of teachers, special needs teachers often feel that they are not allowed to work according to their expertise, but instead are doing regular teaching. One student expresses her dissatisfaction in this regard:
Like am a visual impairment specialist teacher, so I add up with the others. Sometimes you feel bad that the other children do not have a specialist teacher. So we take them together with the others. We say pull out system whereby we take them out of the class. You help them although we did part of that. So you just add them although you are given a class to teach. So when they hear of a specialist teacher, in their heart they feel that this is going to help us. So you help and add them together with my visual impaired learners. So we just add up. So when you report, they tell us to teach in the regular class. So they tell us there are less teachers. Then we should be waiting and we keep on waiting. And you end up completing your term while waiting without attending to special needs learners. Also sometimes, there are less learners at the school. This pains me when you see special needs learners suffering while I have services that I can help the children. (ODL student of special needs teacher training)

The confusion in the concepts of inclusive education is also reflected in this student’s quote. She experiences the fact that not only a ‘specific group’ of children needs support, but also other children in regular classes. The practice experienced demands a broader concept of inclusive education. Challenges therefore seem to be reinforced in interrelation with challenges at micro-level, e.g. large classes and lack of teachers.

Resource centres: Resource centres are addressed in both primary and special needs teacher training. The main course content introduced in training is the overall use of the resource centre and approaches to work with children in the resource centres. Nevertheless, a main focus seems to be placed on the establishment of a resource centre. Teacher students are taught how to establish a resource centre, mobilising resources and working with the community, as a special needs teacher student explains:

Resource centre can be established when there are ten or fifteen learners that need support. So you need to mobilise the community through school management committee. You have records for the resource centre. You also have to inform the Montfort that you have established a resource centre. The children come for an hour to be assisted because you use pull out system. But there are some who stay in the resource centre for a long time because they need more attention. So have a mental problem so you need to handle the behaviour of the child before sending the child to the resource room. (ODL student of specialised teacher training)

Ideas on how to use a resource centre vary widely. This has to be regarded as the result of the confusion of concepts at macro-level. On the one hand, according to the aforementioned ‘pull out system’, students with severe disabilities are expected to be taught separately. An idea of special education emerges that focuses exclusively on students with disabilities. On the other hand, ideas in the analysis reveal that it is affordable to teach students with specific and mild disabilities in regular classes. In contrast, other concepts refer to the resource centres as a possibility to have extra time and space for addressing every student who needs support. The following quotes by regular teacher students illustrate the two contrasting positions regarding the use of resource centres:

Respondent 1: There are some lessons that you cannot the child who is impaired. Like at college, we had someone who was blind and some of the lessons, she was taken to learn in the resource centre.

Respondent 2: You find time, for example when you are sick you miss lessons. So you compensate the lost time by teaching after knocking off, you can find time to teach the children the lesson you missed due to sickness. (Student of primary teacher training)
This confirms other results of the analysis at micro-, meso- and macro-level that reveal a wide variation of concepts concerning inclusive education. Although there are narrow concepts, other ideas also exist, focusing on how to include students and touch on the dimension of participation.

Transition: With regard to transition to primary school, there is a growing awareness of the importance of early childhood education. Early childhood education is regarded as becoming increasingly relevant for easing the transition to school. Against this backdrop, parents are encouraged to send their children to the community based childhood centres (CBCCs), and there is an increased attendance rate at CBCCs. In 2014, around 35 percent of children attended a CBCC (Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Welfare, 2014).

With regard to transition to secondary school, barriers refer specifically to the standardised national examination in Grade 8. Some students have individual needs for support that should be addressed; e.g. according to a district education manager in an urban district, a child who is regarded as promising to go further in his/her educational career needs support:

*It is medium because of the issue of resources. Because I will cite an example of the learner who was in [name of school] primary school, very brilliant but is got serious learning difficulties, yah, asking questions, she response very quickly, yah, but then for him to write, she shivers. So like right now we are worried as to what is going to happen during MANEB’s primary school leaving certificate examination, because we know that this learner if there was another way of assisting this learner, definitely sitting for the exam, she would pass if we could allow her to dictate while someone is writing for him. (district education manager in an urban area)*

Other barriers are related to a lack of financial resources, although grants are partly available for children. Furthermore, due to traditional values and beliefs concerning the social role of girls, and the fact that formal schooling for girls is not highly valued in some rural areas, fewer girls make the transition to secondary education.

Further aspects: With few exceptions, respondents at micro- and meso-level take similar barriers into consideration. Participants at meso-level tend to discuss barriers in a more abstract way. Moreover, because of their different roles in the education system, they consider and take into consideration political processes and decisions at macro-level. Against this background, they have in some instances a different view on processes at micro-level (see 3.1.3.2). While all participants at meso-level discuss financial funding critically, one special needs desk officer reads recent budget cuts as a different kind of lack of acceptance:

*I think acceptance is at all levels even at central level because looking at the funding that we have last year we had two point three million in the budget, now it has been cut to one point two million, already that shows that in terms of acceptance it is quite low we are failing to accept that this is a special group that needs special attention in order for us to provide equal opportunities to all. (desk officer in a rural area)*

Furthermore, they refer to challenges that are in their respective area of expertise and responsibilities. Accordingly, perspectives differ between levels, and also between sectors. As the following quote illustrates, there is a clear relevance for communication between sectors.
As of now as an office, we don’t have an actual service we conduct. But we just leave to other organisations like [name of two NGO’s]. They are the ones that are working closely with the street kids. We work hand in hand suppose there are certain issues that are supposed maybe to assist the street kids, we are communicated. So we provide any other support that is necessary suppose the child needs to be repatriated to his or her respected home, so we provide transport for that. (orphans and vulnerable children coordinator in a rural area)

However, as stated previously, a common understanding of inclusive education and strategies for its implementation are basic aspects needed to develop inclusive education successfully. It is therefore clear that clarification concerning separate and shared responsibilities in implementation strategies need a great deal of attention.

It can be concluded that respondents at meso-level refer to a lack of various kinds of resources, which challenges the implementation of inclusive education. Moreover, as has been pointed out above, children face challenges in relation to the acceptance of formal education by their parents, guardians, and the community in general. Such barriers affect all dimensions of inclusive education, access, acceptance, and participation.

The lack of resources refers to insufficient teaching and learning materials, and also to inadequate facilities and school infrastructure. Furthermore, it highlights the deficit of well qualified regular and special needs teachers. This negatively affects the dimensions of acceptance and participation. As has been shown, various challenges could be identified that are linked to the pre-service as well as to the in-service phase. Primary teacher students are challenged by the variety of different subjects that they study in a short period of time. As a consequence, some students feel ill-prepared for the challenging practical application of their knowledge. Moreover, both primary and special needs teachers face low recognition in their job practice. At macro-level, the low motivation of teachers as a barrier towards inclusive education is discussed. However, analysis reveals a high commitment by teachers, regardless of the challenges and the low recognition they face in practice (see 3.1.3.2.3). Despite this high commitment that becomes apparent on micro-level a need for a revision clearly can be identified regarding pre-service as well as in-service phases of regular and special needs teachers.

3.1.3.2.3 Micro-level

Similarly to the meso-level, challenges mentioned at micro-level refer to a lack of material resources, including insufficient human resources and inadequate physical facilities. In all cases, participants point out the lack of adequate teaching and learning materials for all students, and of specific material for learners with disabilities. In addition, physical infrastructure is inadequate e.g. in many buildings, the classrooms and sanitary conditions are not suitable. Moreover, there is a need for human resources, with specific reference to well qualified teachers. There is therefore a need for an adequate number of trained regular classroom teachers and specialised teachers, and also continuous professional development opportunities for all teachers.

As pointed out previously, traditional beliefs and values and different life aspirations still strongly influence children’s educational pathways and subsequent careers. As respondents note, Malawi is currently in a process of change, which means that other life aspirations and values gain importance; for instance, the importance of formal education and the resulting increased awareness for inclusive education (see 3.1.3.1.3).

While creative and innovative solutions, as well as a high commitment of the participants at micro-level, can be identified as has been pointed out elsewhere (see 3.1.3.2.3), in the following paragraphs
we shall focus on barriers that result from the lack of resources and inadequate conditions mentioned in the introduction to this section. The lack of resources reinforces barriers to inclusive education for children who are disadvantaged in various ways.

Access: Less valued formal education affects all children in terms of access to education. A main reason that can be identified in this regard is the predominance of alternative life aspirations and traditions that compete with the value of formal education. This barrier is therefore also related to communication between sectors; namely, between the school and other institutions and the community. As the illustration of opportunities will show, communication between school, parents and community is emphasised as a major strategy and a resulting asset (see 3.1.3.2.3). In some cases, mother and father groups show a high commitment to school-related issues and also feel strongly committed to the sensitisation of parents and community.

Barriers that still exist in this regard, and the strategies that can be identified, indicate the relevance of the traditional social expectations of children’s roles in particular communities, and the value of formal education (see. 3.1.3.2.2). Despite strong indicators of societal change, respondents still point out that there is a need in terms of sensitisation:

I am a [name of ethnic group] by tribe and what I see as the main reasons why many children do not go to school in this [name of ethnic group] region is that most of the parents are not educated. Here is the problem, when a parent is not educated, it is difficult for a child to go to school because there is no one to push him or her to school and even the children underrate their parents because they know their parents are not educated and do not know anything about education unless there is someone educated who can encourage the children to go to school and push them every morning. (member of a father or mother group in a rural area)

Against this background, the concept of childhood – especially in disadvantaged contexts – also has to be taken into account. Childhood in Africa and in the Sub-Saharan context is a relatively young concept. Nevertheless, it has always been a time of learning and observing. Children mainly learnt about topics that were present and would be relevant for their future lives (Rwezaura, 1998; Adepoju, 2005). Traditionally, children play an important economic and social role in the family system and are expected to take on economic and other responsibilities so that the family can cope. Accordingly, many children assume responsibilities for their families; they care for their siblings and help the family with the harvest, etc. This affects boys as well as girls.

As already mentioned, at meso-level, various groups that are regarded as vulnerable are also affected differently. Analysis at all levels indicates that traditional gender-specific expectations can be regarded as a major challenge. This is linked to the importance of traditional customs and different life aspirations that already has been mentioned and is of relevance especially for many families in Malawi in rural areas. They influence formal education of boys and girls as well.

With respect to the importance of family responsibilities mentioned above, boys are encouraged or even forced to earn money, as demonstrated in the following quote by a teacher:
Family responsibilities affect girls differently and, with regard to an educational career, with much more intensity. However, reasons vary locally. In specific areas, girls are expected to get married for financial reasons. In other areas, initiation customs have a strong influence regarding the attitude and the mind-set of the girl and her family towards early marriage and formal education. Initiation ceremonies are of relevance for both boys and girls.

Initiation ceremonies are most common in the Southern region for both genders (56.6 percent for girls and 43.4 percent for boys, Munthali & Zulu, 2007, 19). Based on data from a representative survey conducted in Malawi between 2002 and 2006, though, the Munthali and Zulu emphasise gender-related differences in initiation ceremonies mainly in the Northern region of the country: for girls, participation in such ceremonies in the Northern region is more common (43.6 percent) than for boys (6.2 percent).

In the present study, initiation ceremonies are referred to exclusively in the Southern region of Malawi. Moreover, respondents claim that initiation ceremonies are common in rural areas only, and point out to the importance of the urban-rural divide. Also, initiation ceremonies are relevant for both boys and girls. These results partly contradict the results pointed out by the survey. The result claiming that initiation ceremonies are common for boys in the Southern region only, actually confirms the survey’s results; but the result that this is also true for girls contradicts the survey. The present study was able to show, however, that gender-related barriers to educational access are of general relevance.

Girls as well as boys undergo such initiation ceremonies when they reach puberty. These ceremonies can be characterised as transition ceremonies (Van Gennep 2007). Those rites include certain practices but, more importantly, children are taught certain cultural practices, as well as values and orientations. As the analysis shows, though, consequences differ according to gender, and such orientations are highly problematic with regard to educational access and participation, and are therefore of relevance concerning formal education.

A main reason for this can be seen in the differing aspects on which emphasis is placed in the initiation ceremonies. For girls, the aim of these traditional ceremonies is to teach them about their role as a woman. Accordingly, girls are taught traditional values and expectations. A major aim for girls is how to behave as a wife and mother. Such initiation ceremonies partly also teach girls sexual matters. The traditional authority the chief of the group village headmen explains, with respect to the rite of cleansing of girls:

\[\text{This survey was conducted within the research project “Protecting the Next Generation: Understanding HIV Risk among Youth (PNG)” by The Guttmacher Institute and partner research institutions.}\]

\[\text{Van Gennep differentiates three rites of passage, one type is characterised as the rite of transition. This is confirmed by the representative survey (Munthali & Zulu 2007).}\]
When the girls are at the initiation ceremony, they are told to taste so that they cleanse themselves. They are encouraged by the women who are counsellors at the initiation ceremonies. We try to discourage that practice. They should also see the age of doing that practice. (Chief of the group village headmen in a rural area)

Respondents refer to a broad variety of initiation ceremonies, e.g. ‘kusala fumbi’, ‘nsondo’, ‘chiputu’, ‘chabulika’. It is also explained that these are practised by different ethnic groups: ‘nsondo’, they describe, is practised by the Yao tribe, whereas ‘chiputu’ is more common.

Initiation rites for boys include circumcision as well as cultural orientation. Munthali and Zulu (2007) point out in this respect that male circumcisions⁴ are the most commonly practised rites in Malawi and in other African societies. In the present study, one mother from a mothers group differentiates between two types of initiation ceremonies for boys, as the following quote illustrates:

And also on the initiation ceremonies for boys, as we hear on the radio that the boys can be circumcised at the hospital, instead of taking the boys to the camp in the bush for circumcision, people could take them to the hospital because at the hospital they cannot be told what they are told at the initiation ceremony. It is therefore good for parents to follow the hospital way and this practice of going to the bush should just be stopped. (Member of a father or mother group in a rural area)

Furthermore, as shown in the following quote by another mother, this difference has to be linked to religion. Muslim initiation ceremonies for boys, as well as for girls, seem to be much more commonly carried out in hospital. Additionally, as this mother observes, the different ceremonies have diverse consequences for the behaviour of boys and girls:

And there is a difference between the two types of initiation ceremonies, that of the non Muslims who just take the children to the bush and initiate them and the other one that is done at the mosque following the new rules of initiation. You will find that since this mosque initiation started some three years ago there is a difference. All those that went through this still remain in school and are well behaved unlike in the past. (Member of a father or mother group in a rural area)

In this regard, the survey referred to by Munthali and Zulu also sheds light on aspects of ethnicity and religion of groups practising initiation ceremonies, pointing out a strong interrelation between region, ethnicity and religion. Initiation ceremonies are most common for the Yao and Lomwe tribe whom the authors located in the Southern region. The survey also shows that initiation ceremonies are most common for Muslim groups⁵. In this regard, the authors indicate the “strong relationship between the Yao ethnic group and Islam” (ibid., 4, see also Shoup, 2011). However, Kaspin (1995) warns to be careful about connecting geographical regions and ethnicity. She shows that several studies considered ethnic groups in a simplified manner and were therefore able to define geographic majorities. In this respect, she discusses differences in “cultural visibility” (ibid., 601) of the diverse ethnic groups.

Although Kaspin’s consideration should be taken seriously, a relationship between formal education, religion, and therefore ethnicity – as has been pointed out – is revealed in the analysis by the present

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⁴ Female circumcisions, however, are very uncommon in Malawi (ibid.).

⁵ Available data regarding the population distribution by religion varies. According to the National Statistical Office of Malawi in 2008 the main population was Christian (82.7 percent), followed by Muslims (13 percent) (National Statistical Office 2008).
study. As this mother describes for example specific types of ceremonies can be identified dependent on the religious background. Moreover such differences seem to have different consequences for the children’s attitude towards school in particular.

Moreover, the analysis of the present study hints at gender-related differences with consequences for the educational career for boys and girls. Such ceremonies have a strong influence regarding girls’ and boys’ attitude and behaviour. With regard to boys, teachers, in particular, discuss such orientations transferred by initiation ceremonies as being problematic, since boys show negative behaviour afterwards.

Other beliefs are that when children go for initiation ceremony, they are told they are adults, so we meet problems that when that child comes to school, and we have rebuked him or her for a bad behaviour, you find his parents coming and shouting at us as on why we had to rebuke their child maybe up to the extent of calling him brother, so such beliefs affects children because they develop that feeling that they are adults and a teacher cannot do anything to them. (teacher in a rural area)

Moreover, initiation ceremonies also affect girls’ behaviour and attitude towards school negatively which leads to high drop outs of girls. Some girls, as well as a mothers group, discuss this relationship. In the following quote, girls explain about the relationship of initiation rites and attitude which again is linked negatively to educational access:

Those who are forced to get into the initiation ceremony act recklessly when they come out of the ceremony and such are the people who get pregnant. There are also other practices like kusasa fumbi [cleansing] which are taught and lead to such an ending. (female student in a rural area)

While girls describe this change of behaviour as ‘reckless’, a mother describes it in the following quote as being ‘elevated’:

What I see is that after these girls have come from the initiation ceremonies they tend to change their habits for bad instead of being good. We as parents are surprised too because these days initiation ceremonies changed their ways of advising the young girls. They do not use any obscene language as was advised by the MESA. But, the girls themselves they feel elevated. Now that I have been initiated then I am fully grown up I can do anything with any man. With that mentality they do not listen to anybody. (member of a father or mother group in a rural area)

Respondents explain that such ceremonies also vary according to the person responsible for conducting it. This means that participants experience different contents and aspects. Moreover, they refer to changes that have taken place in the ceremonies over time. One mothers group discusses a change in the age of participants. Nowadays, they explain, girls participating in ceremonies are younger. One mother discusses this aspect critically, pointing out that girls are too young to cope with the content of the ceremonies:

Maybe because these days initiation ceremonies are full of very little girls unlike in the olden days when only big girls were allowed at the ceremonies. You can imagine that very little girls who have just graduated from an initiation ceremony would stand to tell a pregnant woman that I know how you got that and I also know how you will deliver your baby from. This is bad because all what they learn from the ceremonies are nothing to them because they are very young. (member of a father or mother group in a rural area)
As the analysis shows, initiation ceremonies for both boys and girls have an important influence on their educational career. This influence turns out to be gender-related. Whereas girls are more likely to drop out of school because of early pregnancies and early marriages, boys are more likely to get into conflict with teachers, bearing consequences for their participation. Whereas a changed attitude is strongly related to the different life aspirations of girls and mainly affects educational access, this influence on boys’ attitudes is linked more to their participation in class. There again, this is also linked to educational access, since conflicts between boys and teachers can affect boys’ school attendance in a negative way, as will be discussed below.

The various aspects mentioned above touch on the importance of local authorities. Their voices are of particular importance for the community concerning the implementation of inclusive education, e.g. in developing orientations that are integrative with respect to inclusive education.

Further barriers to educational access can be identified. Long distances to school are to be mentioned as a challenge for every child. Children with disabilities face particular problems in this regard, including arriving at school in time. Late arrival at school is also related to children’s family and household responsibilities. Gender-related barriers arise due to the long distances to school. Gender-based violence taking place during their long walks to school (see document analysis at macro-level) is a predominant aspect mentioned at micro-level, and specifically affects girls. Within the schools it is officially forbidden, but sanctioned relationships between teachers and their female students still exist. In one school, girls referred to such problems and also explained that teachers, including the head teacher, also knew about it without reacting to it. The girls also told of the case of a girl who became pregnant by such a relationship and was expected to abort the child:

*Interviewer: Has a teacher never impregnated a girl student?*
*Respondent: They are given money to abort them. (female student in a rural area)*

In another school in an urban area, a relationship of a teacher with a girl in the school was reported to the Ministry of Education. However, adequate procedures to deal with such cases miss as this teacher claims:

*We currently have a case in which a teacher was in intimate relationship with a school girl. This is very bad. We wished we had proper procedures of sorting it out, it could have been a good thing. (member of a focus group discussion of SMC, PTA and mother group in an urban area)*

Additional challenges girls are faced with include sexual harassment by their fellow students. Gender-related barriers are a major challenge with regard to educational access. However, further challenges have to be mentioned. Confirming results from the macro-level: the lack of acceptance concerning the value of formal education for children with disabilities is a major reason why children who do not attend primary school at all. The following quote by a head teacher of a school in a rural area confirms this:

*People just think that the disabled are not able and cannot do anything. If parents were shown pictures of people like him during meetings, they can be convinced that this is true and real. (head teacher in a rural area)*

Also, motives such as protection from bullying and preventing stereotyping and resultant discrimination are challenges in this regard as explained in the following.
Acceptance: The lack of resources leads to situations of overburdening in the classrooms and causes various challenges. In some cases, poor acceptance amongst students and their peers, as well as between students and teachers, is mentioned as affecting all students negatively. Nevertheless, there are some students who are more likely to face stereotyping and discrimination by their fellow students. Learners with disabilities, girls and orphans, as well as poor children, are the most disadvantaged groups in this particular regard. This challenge concerning the aspect of acceptance is strongly linked to the aspect of access. Lack of acceptance amongst students in some cases causes dropout. With regard to children from poverty-stricken households, for instance, it is explained that they are confronted with insults that address their outer appearance. While in some cases this kind of discrimination leads to the students’ choice not to return to school again, in one division it was said that children tried to defend themselves by exhibiting offensive behaviour. As those students were temporarily excluded from school, this also can be interpreted as a vicious circle that correlates negatively with the students’ educational access.

Lack of acceptance by some teachers is also described as a problem that students face. It should be noted that, compared to lack of acceptance among students, this challenge is not mentioned that often. Still, it remains a problem that has to be taken into consideration. There are two challenges that have to be considered. On the one hand, teachers appear to ignore students in their class due to the inadequate learning and teaching resources, including insufficient desks and chairs and overcrowded classrooms. Teachers seem to be overwhelmed and do not have adequate methods/teaching strategies to develop full participation opportunities for every child in their classrooms. On the other hand, acceptance is an important motive for teachers to ignore, involve or even punish students. This, though, can also be discussed in terms of a need for support to teachers, e.g. by filling available teaching vacancies and providing continuous professional development.

Situative aspects therefore mainly refer to shortage of time and overcrowded classrooms. Parents referred to this barrier, and one parent pointed it out in the following way:

Even in class when there are two hearing impaired learners, teachers concentrate on teaching the other normal learners. The disabled are not well taken care of. (member of a focus group discussion with SMC, PTA and mother group in a rural area)

One teacher talks about this problem as well. He points out that the limited time frame hinders him from paying attention to learners who have additional needs and require additional explanations and support:

So where he has failed [the teachers gives one student extra lessons outside the class] I repeat several times, this cannot happen in his class, because it is difficult for a teacher to be repeating a point for several times to one child so I take such kind of children. Even in my class there are some who have difficulties with reading, some are slow learners. (teacher in a rural area)

As will be discussed later on, he also refers to strategies for dealing with this challenge (see 3.1.3.2.3). The time pressure teachers face is also linked to the lack of adequate screening and assessment instruments, and identification procedures. It is obvious that limited time must lead to a lack of awareness concerning the individual needs of single students. Accordingly, in one focus group discussion, teachers talk about the challenges of identifying students’ individual needs:
I was surprised with what one learner who came to my class was doing. I could not understand, so regular learners are the ones who told me that that particular learner had a problem and needed not to be pressurised, that is when I discovered that the regular learners accept the special needs learners. (teacher in an urban area)

In this individual case, students managed to mediate between student and teacher. This case illustrates that individual needs are hardly noticed. Especially individual needs that are not visible or easy to notice will, most of the time, fall aside and fail to receive attention. Assessment and screening procedures are also needed to collect information on all students’ learning needs as soon, and as exactly, as possible. Moreover, in terms of inclusive education, detailed information should be available for every learner and not only for learners who seem to have difficulties in following the lessons. Inclusive education should provide suitable learning conditions for all learners, including gifted learners.

The attitude of teachers towards difference is another reason why some students are ignored or discriminated against, and others are privileged. Furthermore, although it should be emphasised that a lot of students speak about their teachers positively, some of them also speak about their negative experiences that result from lack of acceptance by their respective teachers. Negative attitudes by teachers are noticeable, for example, in respect of boys who show provocative behaviour. Teachers, and one head teacher, link this behaviour to the indifferent or even negative attitude of the parents towards formal schooling. This, once again, emphasises the need for sensitisation of families and the public. Moreover, it is also regarded as being related to the initiation ceremonies in which boys participate, as mentioned earlier. Unfortunately, teachers often express the need to react with punishment and even corporal punishment.

Interviewer 1: Ok, what is it that you don’t like about this school? Let’s start with you, what do you dislike about this school?

Respondent: Corporal punishment. (student of a focus group discussion with orphans and vulnerable learners in a rural area)

Teachers also discuss the use of punishment. Although they refer to the perspectives of the student (reaching puberty) as well, they say that they feel forced to use punishment to regain control over the situation:

There is another group which is disadvantaged but in the indirect way. This group is for children who have reached puberty, maybe at the age where they are supposed to be in secondary schools. These children, when they come here, they, sometimes, consider themselves as elders, they feel like young teachers like myself, cannot tell them what to do. Those pupils when they commit an offence, are given punishment, they react rudely. They feel like whenever the situation is tough, they can even start a fight against the teacher. So because a teacher cannot accept a defeat, accepting a defeat in front of their fellow pupils, he would like to show that he is still a teacher. That child would also want to be rude as a result you can just chase that child out of the classroom. (teacher in a rural area)

It is also mentioned, mainly by students, that in some cases teachers privilege girls. Whether students are ignored because teachers have negative preconceptions, or whether some students are privileged in terms of participation, both lead to less participation for other students. Accordingly, while lack of acceptance among students is negatively linked to access, lack of acceptance by teachers hinders students’ participation.
In all cases, educational access for students is also challenged by limited acceptance of the value of formal education by the parents and the community in general. Various children face educational disadvantages in this sense: these are children with disabilities, orphans and children facing poverty, children affected by HIV/AIDS, and girls who, for instance, are held back from school due to early marriages and pregnancies.

**Participation:** As mentioned previously, concentration problems are a major barrier that children face for different reasons. Respondents, mainly teachers, describe children’s concentration problems that are linked negatively to participation. Teachers say that hunger is still a problem for most of the children. Though some structures are already set up, e.g. by NGOs, this remains a problem because such activities are not extensively available for all children. A further aspect mentioned refers again to the negative attitude of parents and guardians concerning formal education and the discouragement children face in this respect. In the following quote, the teacher explains that this affects children negatively and sometimes also leads to concentration problems:

> Mostly participation is difficult in consideration that if we can take an example of a child who is in my class, considering that she is being told by her parents to stop school, this means she is not in a good situation and that even when she is about to knock off from school, she is already thinking about that, and this may disturb her participation. Like today I asked her three questions on the topic I taught but out of the three she has answered one question. When I asked her to repeat what she was saying so that others could get it, she did not say it again because it was wrong but even the question that she answered correctly, she said it in low tone meaning that she was not in a mood that she could learn because of the problems that she is facing. (teacher in a rural area)

This already hints at psycho-social aspects that cause concentration problems. This challenge is also mentioned particularly with regard to orphans. Professionals mention concentration problems arising due to their psycho-social history which is mainly characterised by the loss of their parents:

> The other groups maybe those who are orphans because to them having no parents, they think is something that is bad for them because most of the times they think of themselves as why me so they don’t concentrate, they lose concentration. (special needs teacher in an urban area)

In this respect, problems of acceptance and discrimination by fellow learners are also mentioned which again reinforce this problem, as the learner in the following quote illustrates:

> If they come here and meet a learner who comes from a rich family, share a desk, because this one does not bring money because he does not have parents, so they mock him that he does not have parents as a result he stays at home, instead of coming to school to learn. (student in an urban area)

These various reasons are linked to major barriers to inclusive education, namely nutrition, health problems and poverty, which characterise most of the children’s living and learning situations. Furthermore, the importance of the attitude of parents and learners and the community in general is underlined.

In terms of participation, barriers towards inclusive education affect learners with disabilities in particular. Resource centres are mentioned, mainly to be used to enable children with disabilities to be given support to fit into regular classes. Positive aspects mentioned include a quiet learning environment to support the child’s learning. However, this is to be discussed critically in terms of segregating children by placing them in a separate classroom. Instead, it needs to be considered how
full participation in class can be achieved for all children, by accommodating the needs of all students who are experiencing barriers to learning in regular classrooms. Moreover, resource centres should be considered as an additional learning space that provides a learning situation with less distraction, that can be offered for every child whenever needed. Ideas reveal that participants discuss the resource centre in this manner as well (see 3.1.3.2.3).

There are further challenges regarding access and participation due to the lack of resources and inadequate facilities for children with physical, visual and hearing disabilities. Children who are limited with regard to motor skills and have to use wheel chairs are confronted with access problems outside and inside the school. Children who have visual and hearing disabilities face problems in following the lessons.

Overburdening situations/teacher training: Broad goals in connection with inclusive education contrast strongly with lacking resources, e.g. learning materials and inadequate conditions such as overcrowded classes. Particularly for teachers who face the consequences of these discrepancies, this leads to ‘negative pressures’ on them (Fullan, 2009, p. 120). Teachers meet a challenging and overburdening situation in their daily job practice. In all cases, personnel resources are mentioned as a huge challenge for schools to meet. This is confirmed by statistical data that points out a high pupil-to-teacher ratio (76/1 for all teachers; and 69/1 for trained teachers only, MoEST, 2013, p. 19).

One reason why participation is affected negatively is that teachers have to deal with large classes and with the heterogeneous individual needs of all the students. Some efforts by teachers have been identified that address these different needs adequately (see 3.1.3.2.3), but other teachers have failed in these challenges. The analysis also shows that some teachers emphasise punishment as a way to deal with the negative pressure (most students add that teachers even use forms of corporal punishment to react to provocative behaviour and the like). The teachers’ emphasis on forms of punishment can be interpreted as a way to gain control over an overburdening situation. On the one hand, this shows the conditions of the current situation, but on the other hand, it also points out the inadequacy of the teacher training. This conclusion is confirmed by regular teachers who state that they feel unprepared for handling the heterogeneous learning needs of their students.

Transition: The transition to school is a significant step for most of the children because they enter an official institution for the first time. Attendance at an ECD institution was mentioned as being important, as it supports the child’s transition to school and reduces problems in adapting to the school:

When we have the children to start standard one, we do have two groups virtually. This first group, those of children who have been going through the preschool. So, we see the difference between the two. But these ones who were at the preschool, they are easily taught, than those who have never gone to preschool. (head teacher in an urban area)

Furthermore, it indicates the importance of further transition practices, either from an ECD institution to school, or from family to school. Although the analysis also shows that initial transition practices can be identified, as will be illustrated later on (see 3.1.3.2.3), there is a great need to further develop adequate transition practices to primary school.

One head teacher refers to specific motives parents may have for sending their children to a CBCC centre or to primary school, that are not linked with the value of formal education. Rather, the parents’ motives arise from the conditions that characterise the families’ living situation.
Because of at first, they thought that ah, sending the child to a preschool, it is for only the well to do families, not another person. But these days, because everybody now is busy. Some they do send their children to preschools because they want their child to be at school and they do other things. So it is very difficult to handle that small child and sometimes when we telling that children have to start school when they are six years old. Some parents they do not know why we are saying the child can start when it is six years old. They think that any child can start school because maybe the type of the child at home the children they want to send the child to school and they do other things. And because the primary schools are free, we think that now, this is the time to send the child but for the teacher to handle a very small child, sometimes it is very difficult. Yeah, we need the growing up children, those who are six. They are able to support themselves, they can go to toilet and do other things. But when the child is very small, would toilet in the classroom. So, it is very difficult for the teachers to manage those things. (head teacher in an urban area)

This quote reveals that concepts of readiness for school still refer strongly to ideas of maturity that are associated with the child’s age. In this respect, environmental conditions that may be supportive towards the child’s learning and adaptation processes are neglected. However, it should be noted that both concepts exist: those which refer to maturity, and those referring to environmental aspects. This means that concepts of readiness for school vary widely, and they are partly contradictory. In conclusion, in the context of inclusive education, the school-readiness aspects have not yet been clarified.

With regard to transition to secondary school, the standardisation of national examinations is mentioned to be a main barrier (see 3.1.3.2.2). Moreover, with regard to transition to secondary school the analysis the importance of vocational training centres as one opportunity to establish life prospects dependent on students’ individual needs (see 3.1.3.2.3).

Further aspects: Finally, in various ways, barriers are caused by a lack of sensitivity with regard to specific local contexts and the patterns of economic survival and established social practices in specific contexts (e.g. Donald et al., 2010). Accordingly, relevant general issues show locally specific manifestations which have to be taken into account due to the challenging life circumstances children are faced with. Differences between rural and urban areas also play a role here. Whereas poverty dictates the child’s living situation in all areas, in urban areas it is linked to the child’s living conditions in different ways than in rural areas. In one of the urban areas focused on in this research project, many more children live on the streets and are addressed as a special issue by the respective case study school. Other differences within rural or urban areas include, for example, educational access for girls and how the support of parents for the education of girls in different traditional rural communities can be influenced by the value placed by society on micro-, meso- and macro-levels in Malawi on gender equality in education. This is of particular importance with regard to interventions by governmental and non-governmental organisations.

Confirming results of the analysis at the macro-and meso-levels, similarly at micro-level a lack of (human) resources turns out to be a major obstacle with regard to the implementation of inclusive education. Moreover, at micro-level the mentioned previously societal change is regarded as relevant by the respondents. Traditional life aspirations and customs in their specific local manifestations have to be considered as relevant to the inclusive education processes. It is relevant in various ways, for all children. Gender-related expectations have been mentioned in this regard, but a specific concept of childhood also plays an important role.
Such barriers challenge access, acceptance and participation. Acceptance is of importance in various connections. Acceptance of formal education by parents, guardians and the community in general, is revealed to be important for educational access of all children. Similarly, acceptance among students is also of relevance to students’ attendance at school. Finally, acceptance among students, and acceptance of students by teachers, turns out to be important with regard to students’ participation in class.

The competing relationship of formal education and traditional attitudes points to the importance of sensitisation (see 3.1.3.2.3). The acceptance among students, and by teachers, refers to the importance of an adequate number of well-qualified teachers. In terms of qualification, this also means that regular teachers need to be trained according to the heterogeneous learning needs in their classes. Moreover, there is a need to equip teachers adequately with regard to their specific job-practice situations, which means in the current situation overcrowded classes due to a high pupil-to-teacher ratio.

3.1.3.3 Opportunities

3.1.3.3.1 Macro-level

Education policies that relate to inclusive education have been revised/redeveloped and, as such, clearly mention students with disabilities as well as other students with diverse education needs (see 3.1.1.4) although, as mentioned earlier, there are some ambiguities regarding the roles and responsibilities of various government departments. These policies clearly provide opportunities for the further development of inclusive education systems, and for the increase in number of students with disabilities/diverse educational needs in mainstream/regular schools.

For example, with regard to children with disabilities, UNICEF states that through the analysis of key legislation and policies it was found that all these policies include disability issues, either explicitly or implicitly, but often they do not relate to the needs of the different forms of disability (UNICEF, 2013a, p. 24). The authors of the CIEM situation analysis also state that “a suitable framework for the advancement of education for children with disabilities” exists, but that the implementation can still be regarded as low (CIEM, 2013, p. 57).

The stakeholders at the focus group discussions have the same perception: “Now we are in the process of developing a strategy document on inclusive education and we have already started consultative meetings with different stakeholders . . . the government of Malawi has signed a number of protocols in terms of education of children with special need” (National Stakeholder).

Through the document analysis it became obvious that there is awareness for inadequate access to education for children with special needs at various policy levels (e.g. Ministry of Education, Science and Technology Malawi 2008, pp. 5-15), and strategies to be implemented with the aim of increasing access should be formulated for all education sub-sectors (ibid., pp. 6-16).

A positive opportunity that was discussed by all participants at macro-level is the role of wider school communities in supporting inclusion, and the fact that schools are affected by the values and norms and practices of their local community which, in turn, reflect those of the wider community (the reverse process, of course, is also true) (Donald et al., 2010). There is a clear awareness of key community partners that can help to address specific issues and create a greater awareness of inclusion and include parents/caregivers, mothers who can serve as role models for girls, civil and
other leaders in the local community, and relevant NGOs, as well as the formal and informal business sectors: “For example the structures are already there at traditional level, divisional level as well as district level . . . at the same time you are looking at the community”; “In the network [MASPA] we have got networking at community level, networking on district level, networking at national level . . . citizen center advocacy, you cannot advocate, maybe one unit just advocating, your voice will be voiceless. So the networking enhances that capacity” (National Stakeholder).

Advocacy programmes have also contributed to the positive participation of school communities “At community level in the area where we have worked, there are now School Management Committees and Parent-Teacher Associations which are organisations at community level and are groomed at zonal level and district level. One interesting factor is that the community itself is interested in that . . . . I think we can say that there has been the development of community structures” (National Stakeholder); “There is an eagerness to support those children that are excluded from education . . . based on our advocacy work” (National Stakeholder). Furthermore, there has been an effort to lobby for increased budgets across governmental sectors for inclusion.

The need for donor funding is acknowledged, and positive feedback regarding projects that were initiated by UNICEF, FEDOMA, FAWEMA mentioned. Furthermore, despite a tendency in government agencies, donor organisations and NGOs, to work in fragmented ways (as discussed in the previous section), there has been a growing understanding on the part of organisations and the public sector regarding the importance of addressing disabilities in a more comprehensive fashion and to combine projects to increase its impact. Sight Savers (2012), for example, state that “We work with the advocacy organisation, these are organisations that are dealing with people living with disabilities and we provide funding as well as technical support” (National Stakeholder).

3.1.3.3.2 Meso-level
As already mentioned above, respondents at the micro- and meso-levels have some perspectives on inclusive education in common. This refers, for example, to opportunities and positive developments that are mentioned by both levels. However, respondents at meso-level refer to problems in a more abstract way, relating these more strongly to a political level. One respondent describes the work as advocacy work, by explaining, “We do a lot of advocacy on making sure that education is inclusive of apart from the learning, we do a lot of advocacy with the community encouraging parents to keep their kids in school” (city AIDS coordinator in an urban area).

Whereas identified barriers are mainly aspects that are of relevance in all divisions, most of the opportunities and positive developments referred to below are examples that occur at single schools. These positive examples are a result of innovative local adaptations of general challenges, and they reveal ownership and commitment.

Sensitisation: Similarly to the micro-level, respondents emphasise the importance of sensitisation to improve the situation with respect to inclusive education. As already pointed out, competing orientations are a major topic that affects educational access negatively. Malawi is in a process of change (see 3.1.3.2.3). Against this backdrop, sensitisation is highlighted by most respondents as an important way towards inclusive education. As at the micro-level, sensitisation as a strategy is mentioned as a way to address children and the community, as well as different groups in schools and communities. It was mentioned to be important for girls because parents and communities in
some areas still place less value on formal education for this group. Parents and guardians of children with disabilities still show less awareness of future prospects for these children.

The coordinating primary education advisor in a rural area refers to the need to sensitise the community:

> Trainings are also important, sensitizations are very, very important because some of them who have special needs children, they feel that is the end. They do not know that this time a special needs learner, a special needs child will become somebody who will help even those who feel they are okay, so even the communities also need sensitization trainings, when they have been trained, they understand it is also better off and they are able to help their child. (primary education advisor in a rural area)

Sensitisation is mentioned as a strategy to address access and acceptance among learners. In this regard, NGO activities are mentioned as being important. But also (specialist) teacher training colleges are mentioned to be important in this regard. As one primary education advisor in an urban area explains they organise workshops for children with HIV/AIDS. Here, children learn about HIV/AIDS. The workshop also aims to support children in gaining self-esteem and creating ideas about future perspectives.

**Teaching methodology and teachers’ commitment:** Besides the aforementioned need for (learning) material, adequate facilities and financial support which impacts dimensions of inclusive education, e.g. participation, adequate teaching methods are a major topic at meso-level for improving participation in the classroom.

At meso-level, respondents point out various strategies for enhancing participation. In one case, a primary education advisor in an urban district explains that physical education is reorganised to include children with disabilities adequately. She also refers to extracurricular school activities, such as Special Olympics, to involve children with disabilities. In this regard, she stresses the need for all regular teachers to have knowledge concerning the heterogeneous needs of their students, and she emphasises the need for screening methods. In this respect, several strategies indicate the importance of continuous professional development to support teachers in respect of their work and current challenges. In several education divisions, continuous professional development opportunities are developed and implemented:

> Every holiday we conduct continuous professional development for our teachers, that is zonal based as well as school based. I think you are aware that the Ministry of Education is now providing grants to schools, zones and districts and we are making use of those grants to conduct some training in the schools. So we pick an area where we feel maybe the teachers are not doing well or the learners are not doing well and then we conduct trainings in those particular areas. (primary education advisor in an urban area)

In an urban district, ‘refresher courses’ are mentioned to address regular teachers in particular (desk officer for primary schools in an urban area).

Such occasions are also used to enhance “various methods of teaching inclusive learners” (desk officer for primary schools in an urban area). Strategies also aim at developing and enhancing collaboration among teachers to increase knowledge and exchange ideas and experiences. Such strategies are mentioned with regard to itinerant teachers: “several forums [for itinerant teachers] to share good ways and means of improving the status of learners with disability” (desk officer for primary schools in an urban area).
Collaboration between teachers is also used to address the shortage of special need teachers, by using their expertise to enhance the specific knowledge of regular teachers:

The teachers that we have, not all of them went for special training in terms of special needs education, but with the experts that may come and join us they can also boost our capacity so that using the skills the knowledge that we can acquire from them, that can be transferred to the teachers and later on be transferred farther to the learners. (desk officer for primary schools in an urban area)

Teacher training: It is striking that the content of the current teacher training refers partly to particular challenges in teaching practice, such as inadequate teaching and learning materials and overcrowded classes. A special needs teacher student explains:

Also the resource you are supposed to buy and you don’t have money, you can improvise buy looking at locally found materials for the lesson. You can go into the hill and look for the materials to improvise due to lack of money. (ODL student of special needs teacher training)

Both regular and special needs teachers illustrate strategies on how to deal with heterogeneity. With regard to the heterogeneity of students, teachers are taught various methods how to deal with it adequately. In the following quote, a primary teacher student refers to use of teaching and learning materials:

An addition can be, it depends on the kind of impairment, he has explained about the one with hearing impairment, but if there is a learner who is blind, there is also another way of assisting that learner in that particular group by use of varied teaching and learning materials so that this learner can be able to touch to feel the materials, that is to have the real concept and not the abstract concept but concrete concept. (specialist lecturer at a teacher training college)

Both types of teacher students are taught how to deal with large classes and students’ individual needs. Primary teacher students, for instance, are taught ‘Learner Centred Education’. As the primary teacher lecturer explains in the following, this method aims at the participation of children with disability and is implemented, for instance, by using specific seating arrangements. Moreover, regular teachers are taught to use sign language to reach all students:

According to the curriculum, we insist that they should use the LCE method, that is the Learner Centred Education, whereby in this approach, each student is supposed to participate, they are divided into groups. It is not the way how we used to learn in those days, in the past when we used to sit in rolls, but we sit them in circles. This means that if this table is having that impaired learner, that one is easily identified by that teacher and attention will be on that learner because she or he has been singled out in that group, and they are advised to use that seating plan in class, in circles or semi-circles so that learner with impairment easily sees the mouth of the speaker, so that she or he can re-plead whatever the teacher is saying. Sometimes they can use the sign language, the gestures, we encourage them to have some skills in that by practising, that is why we have the sign alphabet, it is just to have the knowledge so that when they meet such learners they can handle them that way. The first thing is to identify those learners in the classroom and have a good seating plan for them. (specialist lecturer at a teacher training college)

Furthermore, regular teacher students are taught how to use group work to deal with large classes, as a student explains:
We were taught how we can handle learners over sixty. And when we were coming for teaching practice, they instructed us to have sixty learners in our class, but this is not possible. We have more than sixty learners in our classes. So we were taught that when we have more learners in class, we should be putting them in groups. When we become qualified we may face a class with over two hundred learners. We have like a school close to ours where a class has over two hundred learners. (student of primary teacher training)

A female primary teacher student mentions multi-grade teaching as a way to deal with large classes with diverse individual needs:

We learned that in multi-grade teaching, for example in the schools there are infant, junior and senior sections. Let us say that standard three and four are juniors and their teachers are not available we combine them in one class and look for a topic which is available in both standard three and four and teach them together using resources which learners from both standards are familiar with. We learned how to teach if there large classes if there is a problem. (student of primary teacher training)

Another innovative concept mentioned is that of model schools that practise inclusive education to a high standard. This concept is planned to be implemented in the future.

I think one of these days or in the near future we should have model schools that are really inclusive so that we could really say that this is a model school that is really practising inclusive education, so that our teachers will be taken there to be taught how an inclusive school operates. In that inclusive school, we will find positive teachers, accessible buildings, we will find parents who are participative, teaching and learning materials that are available, we will have motivated teachers, we will find policies that are conducive to a child of special needs, but right now we have not reached that stage because inclusion is a process. I do not think we have established that school. In [name of city] we are trying to establish [name of a school] as model school. It will mean some ramps for the wheel chair user and so on. (principal of a special needs education college)

In this example, inclusive education is related to aspects such as motivated teachers, participative parents, adequate materials and facilities. This has to be discussed critically. As the analysis shows, the challenges highlighted are not less motivated teachers; rather, they are the challenging conditions of the current practice situation, the low incentives, and the fact that there is no clear concept and strategy of inclusive education. This means, the motivation and commitment of teachers is striking, considering the challenges they face. Furthermore, all these aspects mentioned refer to an urgent need for a change at political level in terms of financial resources and conceptual planning. The idea of an inclusive model school is very innovative but still refers to the needs already expressed: clarification of the concept of inclusive education and the development in how to implement it.

Strategies for meeting transition barriers: With regard to the transition to primary school, and the transition to secondary school, further positive developments and efforts are to be mentioned. Although these aspects mentioned rarely, some thoughts in this regard have been identified. Concerning the transition to school, it shows that there is a growing awareness with regard to the importance of ECDs for successful transition to school. Accordingly, in one education division, the social welfare officer stresses the importance of encouraging parents to send their children to community-based childcare centres (CBCCs):
When we are talking about our programs, in terms of inclusive education, let me tell you about the ECD, Early Childhood Development. Early Childhood Development is targeting a child from conception to eight years. Okay. Zero to five years they are attending CBCC Centres. Six to eight and above, they are school going children but six years is a standard one child or standard two child even seven, eight, standard two or standard three more especially standard two, one and two. Still they are in the category of ECD. Okay. Now as an office we do encourage people in the community to send children from zero to eight years more specially zero to five years to attend CBCC Centres and six to eight, they are supposed to attend standard one or two classes so we encourage parents to send those children to primary schools so that they can be cared for properly and the beginning of their future. (social worker in a rural area).

On the concern of transition to secondary school, various aspects are mentioned. In most divisions, grants are provided to help students to finance their secondary education. This financial support is delivered by NGOs that help students (e.g. CAMFED supports girls in particular) to attend secondary school. Although stakeholders at meso-level speak about low budgets, they also acknowledge their responsibility in financial support of children’s secondary education.

In terms of ownership, in one education division the identification of urgent needs led to the establishment of a vocational training centre in order also to help those children who are not expected to attend secondary school (see 3.1.3.2.3).

Evaluation processes: Respondents at meso-level refer to the need for activities to monitor diverse aspects concerning the implementation and quality of school development:

How the learners are doing, how the teachers are teaching, what is the impact of the learners, those from the street, we monitor, are they still going to school, maybe they have again dropped out of school. (primary education advisor in an urban area)

Whereas, as previously mentioned, respondents very much share a common viewpoint on the challenges of the current practice in, and barriers to, inclusive education, such innovative strategies mentioned above refer to single schools and education divisions. This is to be regarded in relation to another result arising in the analysis. Despite the overall relevance of barriers, they turn out to be very specifically dependent on the district or education division in which they occur. This means that schools identify different aspect as having the highest priority. As a consequence, solutions to such challenges are locally specific. Shortages of resources of various kinds also means focusing on barriers with the highest priority. Finally, the mentioned lack of coordination in implementing inclusive education also means that ideas result mainly from innovative strategies by single stakeholders or education divisions. This points out to a strong need for opportunities to exchange innovative solutions across districts, sectors and levels.

However, as a common aspect, those innovative strategies refer to the high commitment and creativity of respondents that is identified, and which allows the development of such locally specific strategies. This has already become obvious at meso-level, and it is also revealed in the analysis of the micro-level, as will be illustrated in the following.

3.1.3.3 Micro-level
As pointed out above, the lack of resources, inadequate conditions, and confusion of goals and strategies for implementation, represent great barriers with negative consequences for developing inclusive education practices. Nevertheless, it also becomes apparent that strong commitment by
participants at micro-level, as well as creative and innovative strategies to deal with this challenging situation, do exist. Such innovative strategies and creative solutions address all three dimensions in connection with inclusive education.

Sensitisation is mentioned by all participants as a strategy of great importance. It refers mainly to the dimension of access, but also to aspects of acceptance. All participants are clearly committed to the value of formal education as well as to strategies to reach the community. Almost all participants mention this strategy and also express their willingness to take responsibility for it. Different forms of sensitisation strategies can be identified, namely, ‘primary prevention’, as well as ‘secondary’ and ‘tertiary prevention’ (Caplan, 1964).

Most of the participants, regardless of position and profession, aim at primary prevention sensitisation strategies to improve children’s access by focusing on parents and communities. Many respondents express the need to use role models as a strategy for students, so that they develop a future perspective for their lives that includes formal education as an important facet. Such strategies address all children and some in particular. With regard to learners with disabilities, this is discussed as a need, though:

The other thing I see in this area is that for the disabled learners here, they don’t have role models who are in good jobs to inspire them. So they lose hope, they feel everybody of their nature cannot be educated. (teacher in a rural area)

Mother and father groups, as well as PTA and SMC, refer to different kinds of sensitisation. Whereas all feel responsible for sensitisation in general, which can be classified as primary prevention, in some cases such groups explain that they contact parents of students who have dropped out of school and speak with them about the importance of formal education. This strategy can be classified as tertiary prevention. Many respondents also indicate the need for sanctioning parents who do not send their children to school, which also can be understood as the third category of prevention. In this sense, strategies such as re-admission practices have to be mentioned. Re-admission policies aim at the re-admission of girls who have already dropped out of school, e.g. due to early marriages and/or pregnancies.

With regard to the dimension of acceptance (among students and by teachers), sensitisation also emerges as a major strategy. Nevertheless, statements that refer to this strategy remain vague in most cases and, as the analysis concerning barriers shows, there is still a need to address this aspect. However, in one urban school it is explained in more detail. Once a week, issues of discrimination (focusing on ‘disabilities’) are addressed during the assembly. Disability is discussed as a particular situation that can become relevant for everyone.

During assembly time we have been telling them that these learners are our friends, they are also provided with everything by their parents just the same as you so they also have to attain the education as you are doing. What comes does not beat a drum you may also find yourself in their condition, maybe ten years to come you may be involved in an accident and be like them, therefore let us love each other the same way God loves us. (special needs teacher in an urban area)

Similar strategies are mentioned at meso-level in another district. However, it should be discussed critically that only one specific group of learners (learners with disabilities) is singled out, and therefore inclusive education is reduced to this specific group. Moreover, in addressing this group, it
is once again a differentiation between ‘us’ and ‘them’. In this sense, a process of ‘othering’ (Spivak, 1985) can still be identified here.

**Teachers’ commitment:** In most cases, teachers refer to the strategy of sensitisation to improve acceptance among students. Furthermore, teachers show a high awareness of their students’ personal situations. Teachers in most cases refer to single students, explaining about their living situation in great detail, and explaining about the efforts they have undertaken in such cases to support students. This is striking when the high pupil-to-teacher ratio is taken into account (see 3.1.3.2.3). While this points out to the high commitment by teachers, it also becomes obvious that this strategy alone cannot respond adequately to students’ individual needs.

Spending extra-curricular time to enable students who seem to have learning difficulties, is another important strategy in the aspect of participation. This is mentioned by teachers and students in two different education divisions.

> Like the one we are saying in standard four, and maybe in class there are a lot of children, and when the teacher is teaching there is a time limit. That’s why I found a chance of telling him that when she knocks off him should be coming to my class, during that time we stay close and also I teach slowly and give him a chance to explain what he can manage on what I have taught. So where he has failed I repeat several times, this cannot happen in his class, because it is difficult for a teacher to be repeating a point for several times to one child so I take such kind of children. (teacher in a rural area)

In this regard it is important that teachers have instruments to identify students’ needs adequately. Nevertheless, as has been pointed out concerning barriers, this teacher discusses the difficult situation in the classroom critically (see 3.1.3.2.3).

**Teaching methodologies (and mixed seating plans):** In some cases, teachers refer to teaching method/instructional aspects in their classrooms as a way to improve acceptance among students. With regard to participation, different efforts can be identified to improve the current situation. As mentioned above, teaching methods are used to address challenges concerning acceptance. Such methods are also used in order to address challenges concerning participation. A mixed seating arrangement is one strategy to improve the acceptance among students.

> So the child is in my class and what is happening is that friends are isolating him, just recently we changed groups of learners and mixed them up and formulated new groups but it was found that the one we put with him on the desk was reluctant so I was wondering what was happening and what could be the reason, so it took me time to realise that that was the reason because everybody was refusing to sit with him in fear of being affected. (teacher in a rural area)

Nevertheless, teachers also discuss the limitations of this strategy. They refer to instructional/teaching strategies to improve active engagement, such as group work and using gestures for visually impaired students, to give students opportunities to participate. Concerning the non-availability of adequate learning materials, it should also be mentioned that some teachers develop creative solutions to compensate for the lack of materials. Observation field notes indicate that teachers encourage students to write (numbers) in the air because they have no writing materials (observation field notes of mathematics lesson in a rural area). In another example from the observations: due to the lack of adequate teaching materials and mathematic textbooks, one teacher demonstrates a subtraction method using English textbooks. He presents stacked textbooks
and removes some of the textbooks to show that he subtracts a certain number of textbooks. As the observation shows, though, this causes some irritations. Some students tried to make sense why he uses English textbooks in particular and therefore could not manage to concentrate on the certain task (observation field notes in of mathematics lesson in an urban area). This example illustrates, however, that this type of innovative strategy used by teachers to compensate for shortages of teaching and learning material, has its restrictions.

Another teacher explains that he uses different kind of teaching methods to help students to interact more freely with one another:

*You have to vary the method of teaching for all the learners to adopt it even infants when teaching because those learners are different in learning. Some of them they are talented, some of them are gifted, and some of them they are not. So the method of teaching itself should vary to suit all the students. Even because of the challenges they go through so varying the methods help them to interact freely with all other learners. Yes for example as we have said, some are poor, some are physically challenged, some are HIV positive, so many reasons so when we vary methods of teaching for example group work helps them to interact freely so that that issue of stigmatizing by and by slowing, yes. We also assess the learners. We know that to assess them we want to know the performance of the learners so we use different methods of diagnostic.* (teacher in an urban area)

**Resource centres:** The function of resource centres has to be discussed in terms of full participation. As mentioned above, resource centres have to be judged critically in terms of inclusive education, especially when they are used to segregate students from regular class. In some cases, it appears that resource centres are used to provide support to students for joining regular classes. A special needs teacher at a school in an urban area also discusses this aspect critically:

*I also suggest that disadvantaged learners should not spend all their time in the resource room but they should be there for a short time and be taken to the mainstream, so I would have loved it if the resource centres just to be an entry point, just for us to find out the learner’s problem and take him or her to the mainstream. I feel when they are kept here full time inclusive education will not be achieved. We need them be mixed with the regular learners, play together and specialist teachers help them while in the mainstream.* (special needs teacher in an urban area)

In this particular case, it also becomes apparent that the teacher refers to ‘disadvantaged learners’. This might hint at a use of the resource centre, not only for learners with disabilities, but for children in general who face specific learning difficulties. The teacher also expresses ideas on how to use the structure including the resource centre in an inclusive manner, using it for identifying the students’ individual needs.

**Screening and assessment:** Such efforts are linked to developing or using assessment and screening methods. In one example, individual educational planning is mentioned as a strategy for identifying students’ individual needs, for developing an education programme fitting to these needs, and for monitoring further progress. As the following quote illustrates, it should also be emphasized that the plan is developed together with learners, parents and teachers:
There is in this room the learners we do plan individual education plan and after doing that we make a follow up and see how they are progressing and when we see that they are progressing we take them into main stream where we advise teachers to put those with visual impairment in front and teach the basic sign language so that they at least communicate. We do advise them also to encourage them in cases where they don’t understand what is being taught individual education plan is faring well. This is an education programme composed of a teacher, parents, the learner and the head teacher whereby the learners’ progress is monitored, where things were not okay, the specialist teacher assists to correct the situation. (special needs teacher in an urban area)

Another example identified in the analysis refers to a way of receiving systematic information on the students’ living situation. It is striking that students are the ones who mention such a strategy:

Sometimes they summon parents to ask them problems which the learner has at home, she or he does not concentrate, the parents should be explaining, so when the parents have gone, they take the learner and ask her or his side of the story, the things that hinder her from understanding. (student in an urban area)

They view this positively as an effort by teachers to solve problems that occur, by speaking to both the child and the parents. Additionally, students also mention in a positive way the high awareness most teachers show.

Transition: As discussed earlier, the transition to primary as well as secondary school has gained importance. In this respect, respondents increasingly acknowledge the relevance of early childhood education to ease the transition to school and to support formal learning in general.

One head teacher explains that children who enrol at his particular school show fewer adaptation problems if they have attended a preschool before. It can also be stated that there is a growing awareness of transition practices for a successful school start. Another head teacher explains that he emphasises a friendly environment, especially for children who start school.

Here it seems like it’s not a problem, children are accepted fully, and it is a wish of the management that if possible this school should be a child friendly school, so that a child should feel good, should be offered the same environment as that of home, most of the times in many schools when a child has just come, let’s say those starting standard one, they feel it is very difficult if they compare with where they are coming from but there is initiative that everybody should be accepted and be given equal treatment to boost education. (head teacher in a rural area)

With regard to transition to secondary school, two important strategies are already mentioned. One strategy is to provide financial support for school fees; especially for learners who are not expected to go any further, the establishment of alternative support is an additional strategy. In one education division, a vocational training centre has been established to help students who will not be able attend secondary school to learn and develop vocational skills. This is an example in terms of ownership because stakeholders at micro-level identify the urgent need to support children in their transition to work. The centre was established by the school management committee and is funded by an NGO.
The training is being provided by the school management committee, because these are the people who have hired the instructor for the learner, and it is an initiative for the friends of the school, who are from [name of NGO], those who built the vocational centre and provided us with the sewing machines, but the management of the vocational training centre is in the hands of the school management committee. (member of a focus group discussion of SMC, PTA and mother group in an urban area)

While this is an innovative strategy for finding alternatives for students who will not go on with formal education, it is necessary to be sure the students do not want to go any further, or that other serious reasons exist why students cannot attend a secondary school.

Further aspects: As mentioned with regard to transition, many NGO activities exist that help single schools at various levels. NGOs support schools with learning materials and materials in general, provide school uniforms, grants and nutrition programmes. They also support the development of adequate school building facilities, as well as removing barriers especially for children with a physical disability. Furthermore, they install clubs and activities which also support students. All these aspects mentioned help to remove barriers to inclusive education. Nevertheless, such strategies need systematisation and coordination between different NGOs, and key actors at micro-, meso- and macro-levels. In order to provide a common and cohesive strategy to develop inclusive education, there is a further need to systematise such interventions. This is connected with the need for instruments to identify problems adequately (e.g. statistical data) and to monitor and evaluate interventions. As one respondent highlighted, inclusive education needs an overarching strategy, which means formulating a common understanding, identifying needs, and planning and evaluating strategies.

As pointed out with regard to barriers mentioned at meso- and micro-level, traditional attitudes and customs compete with the value of formal education and – as a consequence – inclusive education in the schools. As has been illustrated above, this barrier is addressed by stakeholders at the micro-level in various ways. Sensitisation, e.g. by role models, and also by directly enforcing communication between school and community, is mentioned as a major strategy in this regard at the micro- and meso-levels.

Similarly to the strategies at the meso-level, also at the micro-level the important role of teachers is noticed. Teachers themselves show a lot of commitment and creative strategies in dealing with challenging situations in practice and with the heterogeneous individual needs of all learners in their classes. However, it also becomes obvious that situations in practice are overwhelming. Even these creative solutions cannot hide the fact that teachers need fundamental support by macro- and meso-level. The strategies identified at meso-level are a first and important step in this direction. Nevertheless, as pointed out, activities differ widely across districts and education divisions. As respondents at meso-level emphasise, the scope of their actions also depends on a tight budget and is limited by previous budget cuts in particular sectors. This again points to the need for a cohesive and coordinated management in the implementation of inclusive education mentioned by respondents at meso-level, as shown in the context of perspectives of inclusion.

3.1.3.4 Discussion, Conclusions and Country-specific Recommendations

At all levels, the data analysis indicates that the development of inclusive education has gained importance in Malawi in recent years. This growing awareness of inclusive education reflects a
gradual societal change in respect of broader social inclusion, that is currently taking place in Malawi. However, as the data analysis indicates, existing cultural values, norms and practices in local communities – including alternative life aspirations and the dynamic relationship between culture and the demands of formal education, as well as inclusive education – need to be taken into account when evaluating the implementation of inclusive education. This dynamic interrelationship reveals itself in identified barriers to the implementation of inclusive education. These barriers are clearly identified by stakeholders at all levels when they discuss possible strategies for the implementation of inclusive education.

As the analysis has shown, multiple innovative interventions and strategies to support and enable the development of inclusive education are already in place, on which the further development of inclusive education can build. In the following discussion, we will summarise challenges that emerged from the analysis and suggest possible ways of how to address these challenges. Accordingly, suggestions mainly build on existing approaches, and the research consortium aims to suggest ways to further develop such approaches.

**Challenge: Lack of shared understanding of the concept of inclusive education in Malawi**

The analysis identified quite different understandings of the concept of inclusive education and varied according to the groups addressed and the dimensions focused on. The analysis of policy documents often still tends to connect inclusive education with children having disabilities. A narrower concept of inclusive education is related to a medical discourse and strong focus on special educational needs, where physical, hearing, visual and mental disabilities are emphasized. Learning difficulties, for instance, are rarely considered. There is, however, widened conceptual understanding by stakeholders at micro-, meso- and macro-level; this reflects an increasing emphasis on specific learning needs that are related to contextual issues rather than disabilities, and focuses on children in general who experience disadvantages. This indicates that stakeholders increasingly tend to relate inclusive education to environmental and structural barriers, rather than to the individual needs or capabilities of children.

In terms of actions, it should be emphasised that implementation is still at the development stage. Fundamental economic issues influence the lack of adequate funding for successfully implementing inclusive education, and this is mentioned at all levels as a major challenge. Moreover, there is a strong need for a common understanding of relevant concepts and terms, as well as a super-ordinated implementation strategy that draws on the strengths and capabilities of the Malawian context. This also points to the need to develop evaluation instruments and structures set up by Malawians for their own unique context. Initial developments in developing adequate strategies in the way highlighted above have been identified and already exist, for example, at policy level. In addition, efforts are currently underway to collaboratively develop an implementation strategy document.

**Suggestion: Coordination committee for inclusive education**

The results reveal that there is neither a clear, shared concept of inclusive education specifically within the Malawian context, nor shared strategies of how it can be implemented. The research consortium would therefore like to recommend that a national coordination committee for inclusive education at macro-level should be established. Membership of this committee should be transparent and representative of all stakeholders, and include different agencies (governmental...
bodies, civil society, academia). It should also come from all levels; namely, micro- (school), meso- (district), and macro- (national) level. Furthermore, participants from micro- and meso-level should be representative of the different regions and cultures and their unique contextual characteristics. The importance of the development of effective communication and coordination strategies across macro-, meso- and micro-levels has been recognised as necessary by all participants at the stakeholder workshops implemented in the course of the research project; and the establishment of a national coordination committee will contribute to both effective communication and coordination.

According to the broadening understanding of inclusive education, it is regarded as relevant for education in general and should address all educational domains. Therefore, it needs to be stressed that the development of inclusive education – including the suggested coordination committee for inclusive education – has to be embedded in the general development of the education sector in each country. The development of inclusive education should not be regarded as an addendum to existing measures and strategies in the education sector, but should be considered as a cross-cutting issue.

**Challenge: Lack of collaborative networking and coordination**

As findings have indicated, for instance with regard to the perspectives on inclusive education at meso-level – and as discussed in the previous point, there is a need to develop a common understanding of, and also shared strategies for, the implementation of inclusive education. This points to the importance of defining clear roles in the process of implementation, as well as ensuring adequate supportive and monitoring and evaluation structures for the process of implementation.

Appropriate structures of communication are necessary to link actions at micro-, meso- and macro-level (dimension of vertical communication), as well as across sectors and actors (dimension of horizontal communication). At all levels, initial efforts in this regard have been identified already.

With regard to vertical communication, perspectives at meso- and micro-level concerning existing barriers tend to be similar. This can be regarded as a main reason why innovative strategies for addressing locally specific manifestations of general barriers to inclusive education have been developed successfully. This similarity of perspectives reflects the successful identification of major challenges that, in some instances, are localised. Nevertheless, such innovative solutions occur at individual schools and point to a lack of coordinated strategies to address barriers to implementing inclusive education.

Coordination and collaboration efforts between sectors and stakeholders have been identified at meso- and micro-level, and have the general aim of developing wider school communities, including establishing a network across sectors and actors. Examples include the development of professional networks for teachers where they can exchange ideas and experiences. Moreover, results have shown an increase in collaboration between different members of parental organisations in a particular district. Consequently, strategies and resultant actions were able to be coordinated and optimised. It is clear that such groups could foster systematic monitoring and evaluation structures. The complexities of local contexts, including the urban-rural divide and its relationship to challenges that are apparent in the analysis, also point to the need for stakeholders of institutions to collaborate intensively with leaders of local communities.
However, there is a need to further intensify such efforts in order to improve their effectiveness. As the presented results have shown, stakeholders at macro-level emphasize a need for further action with regard to intensifying effective communication between sectors and actors. Moreover, it was highlighted that this is also important concerning the need to make strategies suitable ‘according to the Malawian context’ (see 3.1.3.1.1), as expressed by one stakeholder. This emphasis points to the need for coordinating communication and actions to optimise resources and make use of all possibilities.

**Suggestion: Cultivating collaborative networks between schools and between schools and other institutions**

Collaborative partnerships are one of the cornerstones of inclusive school communities (e.g. Engelbrecht, Forlin, & Oswald, 2006) and at macro-level cooperation and aligned actions can be improved through the above-mentioned establishment of a national representative coordination committee for inclusive education. At micro- and meso-level, we also suggest the strengthening of existing networking and cooperation, and the development of new collaborative networks. Networks and partnerships between groups of schools, and between schools and ECD institutions, can for example help to develop cooperative and collaborative inclusive school development and cooperative transition management in a regional educational infrastructure. Furthermore, acknowledgement of the importance of cooperation with the community, its leaders and teacher training colleges, can contribute to a holistic approach to quality inclusive school development. Referring to the idea of socio-spatial development, the neighbouring schools and ECD Centre can form a network for cooperative development of education in the particular community.

**Challenge: Regional differences in barriers and opportunities**

Broad international goals (e.g. UN conventions) have to be linked with definite national and regional goals and local contexts to be effective. The focus should be on local solutions, with respect to context and recognition of solutions that come from within (Singal & Muthukrishna, 2014). Against this background, the analysis revealed various local contextual characteristics that influence the way in which educational access is challenged. The ambivalent societal role of formal education, as well as conceptualisation of what childhood is, for example, poses challenges concerning the educational access of children in some communities. Certain motives and reasons based, for example, on cultural values and beliefs held by people in different parts of the country, were able to be identified at all levels, which challenge the inclusion of some groups and individual children. The importance of formal education and its usefulness and relevance for children with disabilities, for example, still lacks acknowledgement by many parents and communities. Furthermore, gender-specific barriers to education of girls are manifested in different ways in different regions. In some areas of the country, they are still expected to comply with traditional gender roles that compete with the demands of formal education.

A high awareness amongst stakeholders of the importance of local adaptations in the development of inclusive education was identified and indicates a sensitivity to complex contextual issues and challenges. This is evident, for instance, in the way in which interventions are developed in different contexts to meet locally specific needs (e.g. developing support to children on the street in an urban area). However, there is a need to develop systematising strategies; first of all, in identifying locally specific barriers and needs, interventions already in place, and possible collaborative strategies to
address these challenges. Moreover, this points to a further need to develop procedures to systematically evaluate the outcomes of interventions as well as current practices in identifying and addressing barriers and needs adequately.

**Suggestion: Developing locally adapted measures for implementation**

Although a general strategy for implementation can be developed, strategies for implementation and measurements to evaluate the accountability of these strategies need to be adapted to the specific geographic, economic, cultural and religious contexts of each community. Therefore, it is suggested to implement a regional committee for inclusive education as well. Membership should also be representative and transparent, and should include stakeholders from different sectors, e.g. from school, ECD and the community. This highlights the fundamental importance of local/indigenous knowledge of the specific socio-economic and cultural contexts (including their challenges) in each community. Actors working at micro- and meso-levels in the education sector should therefore work closely with local authorities (e.g. mayor, chief) and local initiatives (e.g. mother and father groups) to take their expertise into consideration before planning any intervention. It goes without saying that the integration of local knowledge must be continued throughout the any kind of intervention.

**Challenge: Existing heterogeneity at schools is perceived as burden, and teachers are faced with overburdening workloads**

The development of inclusive education requires concrete goals, as well as adequate teaching and learning resources. Instead, the analysis shows that economic realities interrelated with broad political goals challenge the successful recognition of existing heterogeneity in schools and effective ways in which to support heterogeneity. Contexts of local poverty, in combination with the lack of structural and technical resources in schools, have been identified in various ways. These are, for instance, shortages of learning materials, overcrowded classes, and inadequate facilities and educational infrastructure, as well as insufficient human resources, qualifications and incentives. Moreover, the situation realities of families in these communities (e.g. in many cases parents just cannot afford to send their children to school) become relevant in this regard.

Such insufficiencies call for compensation by responsible stakeholders at different levels and, most importantly, for those in practice at micro-level. It is striking that the analysis revealed a high level of ownership and commitment, as well as creative and innovative solutions, and stakeholders at all levels show high sensitivity regarding individual needs and the urgent challenges that call for effective intervention. The identified ownership and commitment that exist need to be supported in every way possible for both support and coordination to be successful. There is therefore a need for an overall funding strategy as well as a precise analysis of the impact of direct and indirect economic causes of the identified challenges in the implementation of inclusive education.

The emerging database that relates to the strengths and capabilities already available in Malawi indicates that there are examples of interventions that address the barriers discussed. In this way, opportunities have been, and can still be, established for exchanging experiences, challenges and innovative ideas. Moreover, there is an emphasis on continuous professional development. Such strategies need to be fostered, not least in order to prepare teachers adequately for practice and to implement inclusive education successfully, and also to further develop indigenous inclusive values and ethics in Malawi.
Teachers play an important role in implementing inclusive education successfully. However, the analysis indicates that crucial challenges exist in this regard. Teachers are faced with ‘negative pressure’ which results from discrepancies between broad educational goals and inadequate resources to support the achievement of these goals. It impacts subsequently on all levels of inclusion – access, acceptance and participation. As results have shown, teachers are overwhelmed by dealing with overcrowded classes and heterogeneous needs of learners. Accordingly, teachers tend to ignore or even discriminate against learners who need specific learning support. Learning situations characterised by low acceptance and participation discourages learners and can cause school dropout in the long run.

An additional major barrier in this regard is the inadequacy of teacher qualification and existing incentives. Teaching vacancies are inadequate or not filled, resulting in high pupil-to-teacher ratios. Moreover, the current structure of teacher education programmes contributes to the fact that many teachers are not adequately trained to teach effectively in classrooms characterised by diverse learning needs. The focus in initial and continuing teacher training programmes on basic teaching skills means that teachers do not receive support in developing innovative pedagogical approaches in heterogeneous classroom settings.

Suggestion: Promoting inclusive schools within inclusive school communities

Inclusive education has to be treated as a cross-cutting issue that points to a re-envisioning of education processes in general with regard to inclusive education. Accordingly, as a cross-cutting issue, inclusive education refers to inclusive schools which are embedded within wider inclusive communities. We structure inclusive school development on the basis of the three-way model of school development that focuses on organisational development, the development of learning and teaching, and personnel development (Rolff, 2012). The embedding within inclusive school communities refers to the importance of building up connections and enhancing collaborative partnerships between schools and communities, as well as fostering new cultures in effective communication. The development of inclusive communities requires a common understanding of inclusive education and new meanings of diversity that are locally adaptive.

I Organisational Development

For inclusive schools, a continuous process of developing inclusive education is essential. Therefore, leadership is a central aspect, and the role of head teachers is a critical element in this regard. We suggest training head teachers with a special focus on inclusive school development. Specific training for head teachers should include the development of an inclusive school programme, leadership enhancement and team development, as well as quality management in inclusive schools. Additionally, inclusive education counsellors should be trained in providing support to schools in the process of inclusive school development. These counsellors could be located institutionally, either at laboratory schools (see below) which could strengthen knowledge transfer from laboratory schools to other schools, or at teacher development centres, just like the primary education advisors are at present. The advantage of the latter is to connect to existing structures, which have proven to increase the sustainability of inventions.

II Development of Learning and Teaching

In particular challenges concerning the heterogeneity of students as revealed in the analysis and which make the current teaching practices of teachers complex and challenging, we see a strong
need to support both capacity development and the implementation of positive and innovative approaches to teaching methodologies for inclusive education. The research consortium therefore suggests implementing multi-grade classes in primary schools as one of the solutions in combination with further professional development of teachers. In multi-grade classes, heterogeneity is normal as is intended. Recognition and acceptance of heterogeneity in the classrooms triggers the development of new ways of dealing with heterogeneity through utilising, for example, peer learning opportunities, promoting self-organised learning, and establishing a differentiated curriculum by the teachers and the whole school community. Both in pre-service and in-service teacher training, modules of teaching strategies for inclusive classes should be integrated into the development of learning and teaching practices which need to include aspects of multi-grade learning, cooperative learning and classroom management.

III Personnel Development

As the analysis indicates, teachers are faced with overburdening teaching practices that are characterised by the heterogeneity of student’s individual needs. Teachers need support in dealing confidently with such situations. This means that an emphasis on professional personnel development is an essential component in the development of inclusive schools. We differentiate between two phases: pre-service and in-service teacher professional training. In both phases, special focus should be placed on teachers’ beliefs and attitudes, and the development of teaching knowledge and skills, as well as on learning and teaching strategies (e.g. multi-grade classrooms). As the findings show, teachers’ commitment is a strong and relevant resource in primary schools in Malawi, but teachers express the need for further professional development. Previous research also emphasises that teachers knowledge is an important aspect in dealing with complex job practice (Baumert & Kunter, 2006; Engelbrecht, et al., 2006; Hattie, 2012). Moreover, innovative teaching methods are a reasonable way to directly integrate characteristics of practice, such as high complexity in the planning of lessons.

Pre-service Teacher Training: Primary school in Malawi covers Standard 1 to 8. The different learning content and age groups in primary school respectively require different competences from teachers. Currently, the teacher training is exactly the same for all primary teacher students. Accordingly, it is not possible to choose subjects or to focus on certain aspects such as age groups. We therefore suggest considering the option of offering teacher training for primary schools in two different ways: teacher training for the infant and junior stages (Standard 1 to 4), and teacher training for the senior stage (Standard 5 to 8) of primary schools. Additionally, it could be considered that teacher students do not study all the subjects taught at school, but study obligatory subjects, e.g. English, Chichewa and maths in combination with two other subjects the students can choose freely. Furthermore, primary school teacher training should be upgraded from certificate to degree level (as was done recently with secondary school teacher training), to have a longer time of training at the TTCs, which seems to be urgently required to equip future teachers with the necessary skills. In addition, it is suggested that most lecturers at TTCs should be fully trained primary school teachers with teaching experience at primary schools.

In-service Teacher Training: Continuous Professional Development is an important aspect for supporting teachers in their practice to deepen knowledge and exchange ideas and experiences. As the analysis indicates, there are already some innovative strategies in this regard. We therefore suggest broadening existing strategies that focus, for example, on aspects of assessment and
continuous learning support, the development of learning and teaching, and collaborative team development.

**Laboratory schools as a suggestion for how to meet the issues proposed**

Model schools are only one example that came up in the analysis as an innovative strategy to be established in Malawi. Using the term 'laboratory schools', we will propose additional strategies to further develop such strategies, against the background of a broadening understanding of inclusive education. In the following, we would like to introduce this concept as a possible way of integrating the suggestions emphasised for inclusive school development, as well as wider inclusive partnerships of schools, other institutions and the community. We suggest the establishment of inclusive laboratory schools as nuclei for inclusive school development in different districts. Developing inclusive laboratory schools in different regions of Malawi can support the development of regional adaptations of inclusive education, in order to reduce discrimination and promote social participation. Integral parts of developing inclusive laboratory schools are, for instance, close cooperation with the community. In this respect, the importance of sensitisation has been mentioned already. Many participants of the study noticed that this is a necessary leverage for granting every child the right to education and for implementing inclusive education, and various efforts in this regard are already under way. Successful sensitisation is therefore already taking place, and it is necessary to evaluate positive experiences and document lessons learnt for the development of local versions of sensitisation strategies.

Aspects addressed by such laboratory schools are: networking with surrounding schools and institutions, in particular with teacher training colleges and teacher development centres, in order to deliver continuous support to teachers concerning specific and changing challenges they meet in their job practice. Finally, the concept of a laboratory school also refers to the relevance of school development which includes curriculum development, organisational development and personnel development. As will be emphasised below, evaluation studies are important in the development of inclusive schools and communities.

In concrete terms, concerning the implementation, it is suggested that laboratory schools collaborate intensively with other schools in the district. Accordingly, two or three schools are suggested to establish a network to work closely on similar developments and benefit mutually through exchange and collaboration in the process of inclusive school development.

**Further research needs**

Against the background of broad political goals of inclusive education, suitable concepts and strategies have to be developed that addresses all educational domains. A broadened understanding of inclusive education refers to the implementation of inclusive education through inclusive schools and inclusive communities. Such processes have to be understood as a multi-dimensional process. Accordingly, further research is essential. Monitoring and evaluation studies are needed to address the various topics referred to above, to develop actual knowledge of its possible outcomes. Further research should focus especially on concepts that support children effectively, in accordance with their respective individual needs. Such evaluation studies should support stakeholders at different levels, not only in evaluating existing innovative interventions and support strategies, but also in analysing current processes of schooling and instruction to further develop existing strategies. Additionally, the development and establishment of conceptual understanding of inclusive education
and strategies in implementation, have to reflect unique contextual complexities in order to be adapted to local contexts. One possible approach that seems to be promising is to analyse and develop such concepts as suggested in the context of laboratory schools in which evaluation studies could be conducted.
3.2 Country Study Guatemala

This chapter presents the results obtained in Guatemala to answer the two questions that the research meant to understand: first, how is the concept of inclusive education built at different levels (macro, meso and micro) and from what perspectives (stakeholders within and without the education system), and second, what opportunities and barriers can be identified that will allow to reach conclusions about development cooperation actions/measures?

As a developing country, Guatemala relies on education as the means to transform the relations of inequity in society and to revert the cycle of poverty for all citizens, regardless of their personal characteristics or life conditions, with the aspiration to achieve an inclusive education system that helps every person ‘to become someone in life’.

3.2.1 Contextualisation

3.2.1.1 Regional and National Context of Inclusive Education

According to information on the workshop ‘Diagnostic of Current Situation and Future Challenges’, developed for the World Bank on Inclusive Education in Central America and Panama, there exists previous experience on inclusive education and in every case it centres on persons with special education needs, with or without disabilities.

It was also observed that all the countries recognise the extended vision proposed by the concept on inclusive education, there does not seem to be a common vision about its meaning, or a transition process from a paradigm of special education towards an approach of expanded opportunities for all vulnerable or marginalised groups in the regular education system. The vision’s broad approach is recognised, be there has been no advance towards achieving its aims.

Countries have a general legal framework that favours inclusive education in the broad sense of the vision, a framework that indicates what needs to be done to make existing regulations operational and what commitments States need to make for the required investments, recognizing the necessity to invest in such issues as teacher training, technology, pedagogical materials, awareness of key actors like families and communities, etc.

However, as a precondition it is necessary to guarantee inclusion of those in need of inclusive education, i.e. persons with special education needs with or without disabilities, who face discrimination as well as obstacles to access school infrastructure

3.2.1.2 Socio-demographic Profile of the Country

The profile of the country presented in this chapter summarises the information that results in the document analysis carried out as part of the investigation, the report of which is attached. The historical context is addressed, as well as the characteristics of the population and their living conditions, work situation, and the poverty that Guatemalans face in general.

According to UNICEF (n.d.), to understand the reality of Guatemala it is necessary to look at the country’s post-war setting which is the result of the armed conflict of 1960-1996, whose causes are attributed to the inequity in the distribution of assets and capital, mainly the distribution of land and the discrimination of indigenous peoples. The internal conflict was ended thanks to the signature of
the Peace Accords (1996) that sought, among other things, to contribute to the transition towards an equitable society with better opportunities to achieve sustainable development.

The Guatemalan population is as diverse as the national territory it inhabits. This diversity is amplified by deep social inequalities that according to (PNUD, 2013) divide the country and are expressed in inclusion-exclusion dynamics, racism and discrimination, which prevail even after the signature of the Peace Accords, as be seen in the fragmentation of the social fabric, a weak State and the persisting conditions of poverty and inequality. According to a UNICEF press release issued in 2012, “the country is the most unequal country in Latin America and the Caribbean in economic terms, with a Gini coefficient of 55.9” (UNICEF, n.d.).

The last population census was out carried by the National Statistics Institute INE in 2002. According to the projections, the number of inhabitants was to stand at 15,073,375 in 2012, of which 51.2 percent were to be women. The median age of the population was projected to be 17 years. In the census, 40 percent of the population identified themselves as being indigenous people at a national level. There are 22 language communities of Mayan origin, in addition to the Garifuna and Xinca people. According to official figures, 51 percent of the population lives in rural areas (INE, 2013). Guatemala’s population is eminently rural, with only two departments showing a high index of urbanization (Characterization, Republic of Guatemala, INE).

Concerning the population’s economic activity, the National Survey of Employment and Income, ENEI-2 2013 reports that approximately 9.9 million people are 15 years old or older, which constitutes the Population of Age to Work (PET), of which in turn 5.9 million form the Economically Active Population (PEA). This means that at national level, 60 out of 100 individuals of the age to work are working or looking for employment. As reported in the same Survey, the participation index of women in the PEA is lower than the participation of men, and the national total for men is 82.9 percent and for women 40.6 percent. It is also reported that the biggest difference is in the rural areas, where the index for women participation (33.4 percent) is less than men’s (86.4 percent). This same survey stresses that 69.2 percent of the population working at the national level is employed in the informal economic sector. In Guatemala’s rural area, almost 8 of every 10 workers are employed in said sector.

ENEI-2 2013 defines child work, prevalent in the whole country, as “any form of economic activity carried out by children” (p. 21). At the national level, 9.5 percent of children aged 7 to 14 carry out some kind of economic activity, with highest rate of child labour being recorded in the rural area (12.5 percent), while the lowest rate is in the urban metropolitan area (4.3 percent). Boys are more involved (69 percent) than girls (31 percent). Furthermore, given their ethnic origin, at the national level 68.6 percent of the children who are engaged in some kind of economic activity are indigenous (ENEI, 2014).

Poverty is a common denominator in Guatemala. More than 50 percent of the population lives in conditions of poverty, which affects the development context of the school age population, and access to public services in general and to education in particular. The National Survey of Living Conditions (INE, 2011) indicates that total poverty was 53.71 percent, of which 13.33 percent was extreme poverty and 40.38 percent non-extreme poverty. At national level, total poverty in urban areas was 34.97 percent, while it reached 71.35 percent in the rural areas (INE, 2011).

In Guatemala, malnutrition is a vulnerability factor linked to poverty. According to the National Survey of Mother and Child Health ENSMI (2008-2009), the total percentage of girls and boys of 3-59
months of age who suffer from chronic malnutrition is 49.8 percent and 21.2 percent of them present signs of acute malnutrition. It is also mentioned that the indigenous population is more affected since 65.9 percent present chronic malnutrition, 31.3 percent of which is identified as acute malnutrition.

In addition, as reported by the World Bank (Banco Mundial, 2009), poorer homes are also more vulnerable to events like reductions in remittances they receive from abroad, changes in food prices, crime and violence, in addition to climatic phenomena which are a constant threat for all.

### 3.2.1.3 Guatemala’s Education System

This section presents information about the national education context. First it relates to information on education infrastructure in the country, and then data related to school age population is presented as well as four education indicators which came up repeatedly in the research: 1) entry; 2) retention; 3) repetition; and 4) over age. All the other education indicators that are key to a full vision of the education situation in the country can be found in the document analysis.

With respect to the country’s education infrastructure, most of the schools at the pre-school and primary level (82.62 percent and 84.55 percent respectively) are public (DIPLAN, 2014). Of the total number of pre-schools, most are located in the rural areas (76.19 percent) and are monolingual Spanish (77.82 percent). Data shows the same trend at the primary level, since 80.85 percent of the schools at this level are located in the rural areas and 59.48 percent are monolingual Spanish (DIPLAN, 2014).

At the primary level, there are three types of schools: a) graded (44.32 percent); b) multi-grade (42.16 percent); and c) uni-teacher (13.52 percent). Graded schools are those that have “one teacher or more per grade”, multi-grade schools have “teachers looking after several grades” and uni-teacher schools, as implied by their name, “have one teacher who looks after all the grades” (DIPLAN, 2014).

INE’s population projections for 2012 indicate that 41 percent of the inhabitants had 14 years or less (INE, 2013). Table No. 1 shows the school-age population from 2009 to 2012.

#### Table 1: School-age Population per Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total School-age Population</th>
<th>Pre-School 5 to 6 years</th>
<th>Primary 7 to 12 years</th>
<th>Basic 13 to 15 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>4,061,874</td>
<td>811,741</td>
<td>2,242,118</td>
<td>1,008,015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>4,139,010</td>
<td>824,714</td>
<td>2,283,326</td>
<td>1,030,970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>4,217,299</td>
<td>837,938</td>
<td>2,325,140</td>
<td>1,054,221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>4,297,735</td>
<td>851,572</td>
<td>2,368,090</td>
<td>1,078,073</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministerio de Educación, 2013

In the following, we present information on the four indicators referred to at the beginning of this chapter.

#### 3.2.1.3.1 Entry

Students who enter the national education system might or might not have the expected age at the level or cycle they are enrolled in. Given the importance of this issue for the country, this chapter will first present information about the number of students of any age who are enrolled at a level or academic cycle, and then those who are enrolled to a level or academic cycle and are within the expected age range.
Table 2 shows that primary is the level at which most of the population enrols, regardless of whether or not they have the expected age for this level or cycle. Pre-school and lower secondary (basic secondary) are the cycles with lower numbers of entry. Between 2009 and 2012 there was a drop in the number of boys and girls who enrolled at the levels of pre-school and primary.

Table 2: Gross Schooling Rate by Year, Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-school</td>
<td>72.00%</td>
<td>70.10%</td>
<td>67.80%</td>
<td>63.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>118.60%</td>
<td>116.20%</td>
<td>113.70%</td>
<td>107.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Secondary</td>
<td>66.70%</td>
<td>70.90%</td>
<td>70.30%</td>
<td>69.20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministerio de Educación, 2013

Table 3 shows that both at the primary and the lower secondary levels, more male students than female ones enrol, regardless of their age. However, the opposite happens at pre-school level, where more girls than boys enrol.

Table 3: Gross Schooling Table by Year, Level and Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year / Gender</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level / Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-school</td>
<td>71.40%</td>
<td>72.70%</td>
<td>69.40%</td>
<td>70.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>121.30%</td>
<td>115.90%</td>
<td>118.30%</td>
<td>114.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Secondary</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>63.30%</td>
<td>74.90%</td>
<td>66.90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministerio de Educación, 2013

Observations from a review of available data on boys and girls entering the different levels of primary school or lower secondary within the age range for the corresponding level or cycle show that primary is the level at which the majority of the population enters. However, not everybody does. For 2012, 10.9 percent did not enter into primary school as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Net Enrolment Rate per Year and Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-school</td>
<td>57.10%</td>
<td>54.90%</td>
<td>47.60%</td>
<td>44.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>98.70%</td>
<td>95.80%</td>
<td>92.80%</td>
<td>89.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Secondary</td>
<td>40.20%</td>
<td>42.90%</td>
<td>43.30%</td>
<td>43.20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministerio de Educación, 2013

For the pre-school level and lower secondary cycle, there still is a huge gap. For example, in 2012, 55.1 percent of the boys and girls within the age range for entering pre-school did not actually do so, while at the lower secondary level, 56.8 percent of youth did not enter.

Both at the primary and lower secondary levels, more male students enrol than female ones. In the lower secondary cycle the gap is even larger, while in primary the gap has been reduced. In the case of pre-school, between 2009 and 2010, the number of girls who entered at this level was larger, although there was parity in 2011 and 2012 (Table 5).
Table 5: Net Rate of Schooling by Year, Level and Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level / Gender</strong></td>
<td><strong>Male</strong></td>
<td><strong>Female</strong></td>
<td><strong>Male</strong></td>
<td><strong>Female</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-school</td>
<td>56.8%</td>
<td>57.4%</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
<td>55.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>99.8%</td>
<td>97.6%</td>
<td>96.4%</td>
<td>95.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Secondary</td>
<td>41.2%</td>
<td>39.3%</td>
<td>44.5%</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministerio de Educación, 2013

Most students enter the system in 1st grade of primary school, while the lowest entry numbers are in the 1st grade of basic secondary studies (Table 6).

Table 6: Net Rate of Schooling by Year and Level of Transition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of transition</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-school</td>
<td>57.10%</td>
<td>54.90%</td>
<td>47.60%</td>
<td>44.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st primary</td>
<td>76.40%</td>
<td>70.20%</td>
<td>61.40%</td>
<td>59.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd primary</td>
<td>40.50%</td>
<td>42.00%</td>
<td>40.70%</td>
<td>39.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th primary</td>
<td>30.40%</td>
<td>30.80%</td>
<td>31.80%</td>
<td>33.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st lower secondary</td>
<td>23.60%</td>
<td>25.60%</td>
<td>25.90%</td>
<td>26.60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministerio de Educación, 2013

When looking at the data by cohort, it can be observed that out of 76.4 percent of boys and girls who entered 1st grade of primary school in 2009, only 40.70 percent entered 3rd grade of primary school in 2011. Of the 40.5 percent of boys and girls who entered 3rd grade of primary School in 2009, only 33.1 percent entered 6th grade primary school in 2012. Finally, a decrease in the number of students was noted for the transition from 6th grade of primary school to 1st grade of lower secondary school, which represents 4.8 percent (2009-2010), 4.9 percent (2010-2011) and 5.2 percent (2011-2012).

When looking at the data segregated by gender (Table 7), the 3rd and 6th grades of primary school have larger percentages of girls enrolling than boys. The opposite happens for 1st grade of primary school and 1st grade of lower secondary school.

Table 7: Net Rate of Schooling by Year, Level of Transition and Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level or Grade / Gender</strong></td>
<td><strong>Male</strong></td>
<td><strong>Female</strong></td>
<td><strong>Male</strong></td>
<td><strong>Female</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-school</td>
<td>56.8%</td>
<td>57.4%</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
<td>55.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st primary</td>
<td>77.4%</td>
<td>75.5%</td>
<td>70.8%</td>
<td>69.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd primary</td>
<td>39.7%</td>
<td>41.4%</td>
<td>41.1%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th primary</td>
<td>30.1%</td>
<td>30.6%</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st lower secondary</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministerio de Educación, 2013

Once that it is know how many boys and girls enrol in school, an important question arises: how many of them remain in school for the whole academic year?

3.2.1.3.2 Retention

A high percentage of boys, girls and youth who enter the levels of pre-school, primary and basic secondary do finish the school year. In addition, data shows that throughout the years, the trend is for more boys, girls and youth to finish the school year (Table 8).
### Table 8: Retention Rate by Year and Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-school</td>
<td>92.18%</td>
<td>90.77%</td>
<td>92.45%</td>
<td>93.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>94.49%</td>
<td>94.01%</td>
<td>95.23%</td>
<td>95.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Secondary</td>
<td>91.78%</td>
<td>89.71%</td>
<td>94.81%</td>
<td>93.11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministerio de Educación, 2013

When reviewing the data by gender, it can be noticed that at the levels of pre-school and primary, the number of boys and girls who finish the school year is very similar as years gone by. In the basic cycle it is usually girls who finish the school year and not boys (Table 9).

### Table 9: Retention Rate by Year, Level and Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level / Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-school</td>
<td>92.03%</td>
<td>92.33%</td>
<td>90.46%</td>
<td>91.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>94.3%</td>
<td>94.7%</td>
<td>93.78%</td>
<td>94.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Secondary</td>
<td>91.09%</td>
<td>92.56%</td>
<td>89.14%</td>
<td>90.35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministerio de Educación, 2013

In 1st grade of primary school and 1st grade of basic secondary school, more female students finish the school year than male students. However, in 3rd and 6th grades of primary school, the percentages of boys and girls finishing the school year are similar.

### Table 10: Retention Rate per Year, Level of Transition and Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level / Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st primary</td>
<td>91.55%</td>
<td>92.59%</td>
<td>90.46%</td>
<td>91.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd primary</td>
<td>95.31%</td>
<td>95.79%</td>
<td>94.66%</td>
<td>94.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th primary</td>
<td>96.58%</td>
<td>96.29%</td>
<td>95.83%</td>
<td>95.55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st basic secondary</td>
<td>88.62%</td>
<td>90.82%</td>
<td>85.17%</td>
<td>86.92%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministerio de Educación, 2013

Based on the data, it can be said that most of the students who begin to study remain in school until the end of the school cycle. However, how many of these boys and girls do actually pass? In pre-school, students pass automatically. Most students at the primary level, who finish the school year, pass as well.

### Table 11: Promotion Rate per Year and Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>86.40%</td>
<td>85.10%</td>
<td>84.80%</td>
<td>85.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Secondary</td>
<td>68.40%</td>
<td>66.20%</td>
<td>67.80%</td>
<td>68.20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministerio de Educación, 2013

Both for the primary level and the lower secondary level, more female students pass the year in comparison to male students.
Chapter 3.2 – Country Study Guatemala

### Table 12: Promotion Rate per Year, Level and Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level / Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>85.60%</td>
<td>87.20%</td>
<td>84.20%</td>
<td>86.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Secondary</td>
<td>64.80%</td>
<td>72.30%</td>
<td>62.60%</td>
<td>70.30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministerio de Educación, 2013

For the different grades and throughout the years, more girls pass in comparison to boys.

### Table 13: Promotion Rate per Year, Level of Transition and Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level / Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st primary</td>
<td>71.50%</td>
<td>74.10%</td>
<td>69.60%</td>
<td>72.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd primary</td>
<td>88.50%</td>
<td>90.00%</td>
<td>86.50%</td>
<td>88.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th primary</td>
<td>97.50%</td>
<td>97.90%</td>
<td>96.90%</td>
<td>97.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st lower secondary</td>
<td>62.70%</td>
<td>70.40%</td>
<td>58.50%</td>
<td>66.70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministerio de Educación, 2013

3.2.1.3.3 Repetition

As can be seen in Table 14, the rate of repetition is higher in primary school than in lower secondary school.

### Table 14: Rate of Repetition by Year and Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>11.49%</td>
<td>11.90%</td>
<td>10.92%</td>
<td>11.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Secondary</td>
<td>3.06%</td>
<td>2.96%</td>
<td>2.80%</td>
<td>5.63%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministerio de Educación, 2013

In 2009 and 2010, both at the primary level and the lower secondary level, the rate of repetition is very similar for boys and girls, but in 2011 and 2012, more boys repeated than girls.

### Table 15: Rate of Repetition per Year, Level and Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year / Gender</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>12.30%</td>
<td>12.65%</td>
<td>10.61%</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Secondary</td>
<td>3.32%</td>
<td>3.45%</td>
<td>2.76%</td>
<td>2.41%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministerio de Educación, 2013

Table 16 shows the grade that more students repeat than any other, which is 1st grade of primary school, and the grade where the least number of students repeat, which is 6th grade of primary school.

### Table 16: Rate of Repetition per Year and Level of Transition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of transition</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st primary</td>
<td>23.90%</td>
<td>25.19%</td>
<td>22.94%</td>
<td>24.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3nd primary</td>
<td>8.95%</td>
<td>8.99%</td>
<td>8.82%</td>
<td>10.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th primary</td>
<td>1.56%</td>
<td>1.71%</td>
<td>1.23%</td>
<td>1.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st lower secondary</td>
<td>4.19%</td>
<td>4.11%</td>
<td>4.10%</td>
<td>7.70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministerio de Educación, 2013
Data shows that the percentage of male students who repeat is larger than the percentage of female students, with the exception of 6th grade of primary school, where percentages are very similar. The only year where there were more boys repeating than girls was 2012 (Table 17).

Table 17: Rate of Repetition per Year, Level of Transition and Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2009 Male</th>
<th>2009 Female</th>
<th>2010 Male</th>
<th>2010 Female</th>
<th>2011 Male</th>
<th>2011 Female</th>
<th>2012 Male</th>
<th>2012 Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st primary</td>
<td>25.44%</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
<td>28.60%</td>
<td>22.03%</td>
<td>24.19%</td>
<td>21.60%</td>
<td>25.97%</td>
<td>22.58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd primary</td>
<td>9.68%</td>
<td>8.18%</td>
<td>10.23%</td>
<td>7.81%</td>
<td>9.53%</td>
<td>8.09%</td>
<td>11.41%</td>
<td>9.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th primary</td>
<td>1.52%</td>
<td>1.60%</td>
<td>1.78%</td>
<td>1.65%</td>
<td>1.40%</td>
<td>1.04%</td>
<td>2.06%</td>
<td>1.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st lower secondary</td>
<td>4.60%</td>
<td>3.71%</td>
<td>4.82%</td>
<td>3.32%</td>
<td>4.87%</td>
<td>3.19%</td>
<td>9.23%</td>
<td>5.88%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministerio de Educación, 2013

3.2.1.3.4 Over Age
According to MINEDUC’s definition, the over-age rate relates to the “relation that exists between those students who have two or more years of delay with respect to the ideal age for the grade they are at” (Ministerio de Educación, 2013). Starting in 2009, the number of over-aged students within the school system has dropped. For that year it was 51.69 percent and in 2012 it was 21.78 percent. There are more over-aged students in rural areas.

Table 18: Rate of Over-Aged Students per Area and Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>51.69%</td>
<td>26.55%</td>
<td>22.95%</td>
<td>21.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>29.73%</td>
<td>14.18%</td>
<td>12.27%</td>
<td>11.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>59.06%</td>
<td>31.21%</td>
<td>26.92%</td>
<td>25.59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministerio de Educación, 2013

When comparing the average rate by gender, more cases of over-aged male students are found. In the rural areas, the percentage of over-aged male and female students is greater than in urban areas.

Table 19: Rate of Over-Aged Students by Year, Area and Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year / Gender</th>
<th>Total Male</th>
<th>Total Female</th>
<th>Urban Male</th>
<th>Urban Female</th>
<th>Rural Male</th>
<th>Rural Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>55.08%</td>
<td>48.05%</td>
<td>32.76%</td>
<td>26.56%</td>
<td>63.50%</td>
<td>56.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>28.13%</td>
<td>24.88%</td>
<td>15.71%</td>
<td>12.59%</td>
<td>32.74%</td>
<td>29.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>24.51%</td>
<td>21.29%</td>
<td>13.73%</td>
<td>10.75%</td>
<td>28.47%</td>
<td>25.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>23.60%</td>
<td>19.84%</td>
<td>13.28%</td>
<td>10.07%</td>
<td>27.45%</td>
<td>23.59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministerio de Educación, 2013

In summary, indicators would seem to bear out the conclusion that throughout the years, there have been improvements, in particular at the primary level. This is the level with the highest entry of students, although it should be noted that there is a certain percentage of the population who do not have access, and there are more girls in this segment.

The pre-school level and the lower secondary cycle are the ones with fewer entries. In 2009 and 2010 more boys than girls entered pre-school and for 2011 and 2012 the percentage was the same. The lower secondary level sees more male than female students, but there has been a subtle increase in the number of female students who entered this cycle.
The retention rate shows that most students finish the school year. It is interesting to observe that more girls finish the lower secondary cycle than boys, despite the fact that fewer girls enter the lower secondary cycle in comparison to boys. The same can be said about the promotion rate, where the lower secondary cycle has more girls who pass than boys.

Most of the students who repeat the lower secondary cycle were enrolled in 2012, when the rate reached 5.63 percent. In general, the highest percentage is boys who repeat.

In conclusion: in 2009 and 2012 there has been a decrease in the number of over-aged students. At the national level, there are fewer over-aged female students in the education system. In the rural areas there are more over-aged students of both sexes.

3.2.1.4 Overarching Legal and Policy Framework

In the first instance, this chapter addresses Guatemala’s legal framework for education. This is followed by a description of the education system pursuant to the law. Finally, the education policies are listed (there is a description on this issue in the document analysis).

The legal framework that governs Guatemala’s national education system aims at guaranteeing the population’s right to receive an education. Its first element is the Political Constitution of the Republic of Guatemala (1985). According to the constitutional principles and precepts on education matters, there is a group of laws, among them the National Education Law, Decree Number 12-91, the Integral Law for the Protection of Children and Teenagers (LPINA) Decree Number 27-2003, the Law for Attention to Disabled People, Decree No. 135-96, the General Decentralization Law, Decree 14-2002, the Social Development Law, Decree 42-2001, the National Languages Law, Decree 19-2003, the Special Education Law for People with Special Capacities, Decree 58-2007, the Framework Law for the Peace Agreements, Decree No. 52-2005, in addition to several treaties, conventions, and international agreements ratified by the State of Guatemala.

The Accords for a Lasting and Strong Peace (Peace Accords) subscribed in 1996 by the Government of the Republic of Guatemala and the National Guatemalan Revolutionary Unit (URNG) are also part of the legal framework of the country. These accords are considered a formal commitment of the State of Guatemala. The Political Constitution of the Republic of Guatemala stipulates that the State has the obligation to provide and facilitate free education for its inhabitants with no discrimination, to achieve the integral development of the individual. In addition, it guarantees freedom of teaching and the right of parents to choose the education to be given to their minor children. It establishes that the inhabitants have the right and the obligation to receive an initial education, i.e. pre-school, primary school and basic secondary school, within the age limits defined by law. The State is committed in the Constitution to providing and promoting scholarships and academic loans, in addition to promoting special, diversified and extra-school education. In 1985, when Guatemala’s Constitution was approved, Guatemala had a high prevalence of illiteracy, so Article 75 declared that illiteracy was a matter of national urgency. Between 1986 and 2013, the country experienced a decrease in its illiteracy rate from 52 percent to 16.2 percent (CONALFA, 2013).

In Section four of the Constitution, the State assumes the responsibility to decentralise and regionalise the education system and stipulates that schools established in predominantly indigenous areas will preferable teach using a bilingual methodology.

The National Education Law sets the principles and objectives for education in the country. Among the principles on which education is based in Guatemala, are the inherent right and the obligation of
Chapter 3.2 – Country Study Guatemala

the State to respect the dignity of persons and in fulfilment with human rights. Therefore, the student is considered to be the centre and the subject of the education process and this needs to take into account a multi-lingual, multi-ethnic and pluri-cultural environment.

The objectives established in National Education Law are summarised as being the provision of an education based on human, scientific, cultural and spiritual principles, based on the integral training of the student through an education that will guide his preparation for work and social cohabitation, while providing opportunities to access to other levels in life. It establishes the promotion of co-education at all academic levels and the promotion of the systemic education of adults.

Articles 3 and 6 of the same law define, describe and explain the functions and organization of the national education system. It defines the education system as an “organised and inter-related group of elements, processes and subjects, through which the education actions take place, according to the characteristics, needs and interests of Guatemala’s historic, economic and cultural reality” and describes this as a participative, regionalised, decentralised and de-concentrated system. It is formed by three main components, namely: the Ministry of Education, the Education Community and the Education Centres. With respect to its structure, it is formed by two subsystems: the scholarized education subsystem and the non-scholarized and mixed modalities education subsystem.

The main function of the education system is to “investigate, plan, organise, direct, execute and assess the education process at a national level, in its different modalities”. The Ministry of Education is responsible for the coordination and implementation of education policies and for guaranteeing that the education system remains operational at every level and in every instance that is part of the system. In terms of inclusion, Articles 28 to 32 of the National Education Law are of special interest with respect to the two education subsystems, because on the one hand the school education subsystem organise the education process by levels, cycles, grades and stages, from initial to middle education. On the other hand, the non-scholarized or mixed modalities subsystem (education programs provided by entities outside the school system) is the way in which the education process provided by the State is delivered to excluded segments of the population who have not had access to school education and/or who having had them wish to expand them, as a modality that is not subject to a rigid order of grades, ages, or an inflexible system of knowledge. The law stipulates that the Ministry of Education will promote the organization and operation of services that offer alternative modalities of free learning and distance learning. Their operations are to be governed by the regulations of the law.

Article 32 of the National Education Law stipulates that non-scholarized modalities will be regulated. However, there are no regulations that allow for non-scholarized modalities to be enforced. In view of this, the regulations that belonged to the previous National Education Law are being used, regulations that were issued through Government Agreement Number 12-77 dated 7 November, 1977.

The education system has the Directorate General of Non-scholarized and Mixed Modalities Educational Programmes (DIGEEX), which was created as the non-scholarized and mixed modalities Education Subsystem (Ministerial Agreement 3552-2011) pursuant to article 3 of Government Agreement Number 225-2008, Organic Internal Regulations of the Ministry of Education.

In Article 12, the same Government Agreement makes DIGEEX responsible for the provision of the education process to over-aged children and youth, using modalities that are different from the scholarized education subsystem.
With respect to the country’s education policies, the National Education Law stipulates that the Ministry of Education is responsible for their establishment and for guaranteeing that they remain operational, as well as the system at every level, and the Ministerial Office is the responsible body.

The educational policies in place are the following: coverage, quality, administration model, human resources, bilingual, multi-cultural and inter-cultural education, increase of education investment, equity, institutional strengthening and decentralization (see document analysis to obtain more information on the education policies).

In addition to the education policies just mentioned, Guatemala has an Inclusive Education Policy for the Population with Special Education Needs with or without Disabilities. The purpose of this policy is to ensure access and high quality attention to this segment of the population, and provide equal opportunities and conditions to facilitate the development of their physical, intellectual capacities and their abilities and skills to participate in society (Ministerio de Educación, 2008). The existence of this policy is a relevant antecedent in Guatemala for future actions in favour if inclusive education with an expanded vision.

In summary, Guatemala has a legal framework and education policies that favour inclusive education, but there are barriers to take into account, such as the lack of regulations to enforce the National Education Law, the lack of clarity in the implementation of the bilingual education model and in the focalization of the inclusion policy on the population with special educational needs with or without disabilities.

The national education system defines operational three levels, as presented in a graph below. The first is the macro-level, which is responsible for the execution of education policies through the Ministerial Office, the Vice-Ministers, the Directorates General of Education and their connexion with other external stakeholders directly linked that support education (for example universities, research centres, international cooperation, etc.). The second is the meso-level, understood as the articulating body or intermediary between the macro-level and the micro-level. It represents the stakeholders involved in the delivery of education services at a regional level and the central figure corresponds to the Departmental Education Directorates that inter-act with other stakeholders to contribute to education. Governmental organizations that offer other services (for example health services) and non-governmental organizations with regional presence (for example development organizations) stand out among the meso-level stakeholders. The micro-level is formed by the education community and the context around it. This level presents a greater point of interest because it is here where inclusion practices happen every day. Just as at the other two levels of the system, there are stakeholders in the local context whose actions impact education.

At every level, stakeholders were consulted about their perspectives on inclusive education, the opportunities and barriers that they can identify on their level and the relation with the national education system. At the macro-level, a social network analysis was carried out, to obtain information about collaboration of stakeholders involved and the level of collaboration within and outside the system. This data is presented to provide information on about how the education system works.

Every participant on this level (Education Directors General, Sub-Directors General and external stakeholders working on education, public servants, academics, researchers, specialists in the attention of vulnerable groups)
was asked in writing to assess collaborative relations (with whom do they collaborate), the levels of collaboration with others (on a scale of 1 to 6, where 1 is little collaboration and 6 is a lot of collaboration), and the explanations about their opinion of these relations (explanations given about the grades assigned and relations that need to be created or strengthened). The replies given are shown in maps that represent the social networks with internal collaboration (education system stakeholders) and external collaboration (stakeholders outside the education system). The nodes in the network represent the key stakeholder and the lines represent the collaboration relations between said stakeholder and others involved. It is important to note that the lines in the map do not represent levels or values assigned to each collaboration relation. The maps below show the relations according to the following informants: 1) Directors General of Education; 2) Sub-Directors General of Education; and 3) key external stakeholders (outside the education system).

The exercise to initially explore the relations between stakeholders at the macro-level was meant to describe how the system operates with respect to intra- and inter-institutional collaboration, since inclusive education is recognised as a strategic process towards the social inclusion of each citizen, a task that involves the education system and other stakeholders who are committed to education in this country.

*Map 1: Internal relations among stakeholders in the education system according to Education Directors General*

Map No. 1 shows relations according to the Education Directors General with other members of the education system. The Directorate General for Bilingual Inter-Cultural Education (DIGEBI) and the Directorate General of Non-scholarized and Mixed Modalities Educational Programmes (DIGEEX) were described as those with more collaboration relations with internal actors (8 and 9 lines respectively). The way in which each participant reported could change the number of collaboration lines recorded. For example, DIGECADE showed its relation with DS (Substantive Directorates), i.e. the 12 substantive directorates of the Ministry of Education.

As in the previous map, the following maps show that some people replied naming institutions, while others named stakeholders within the institutions (for example: municipalities and/or mayors). This can be interpreted in more than one way, because it can be a relation at the personal level and/or an institutional relation, which the data, however, does not differentiate.
Map 2: External collaboration relations between stakeholders of the education system and stakeholders involved according to the General Education Directors

Map 2 shows the collaboration between internal and external stakeholders as described by the Education Directors General. According to what the Directors reported, DIGEESP has a relation with the National Education Council and CONADI, as well as other governmental entities such as the Congress of the Republic or entities like the municipalities or other ministries, as well as civil society and international cooperation organizations. DIGEEX reports collaboration relations with national and international cooperation and with other governmental entities like SEGEPLAN and the Ministry of Public Finances. DIGEDUCA reports cooperation relations with the international cooperation. In the meantime, DIGEACE reported relations with governmental and non-governmental organizations together. Following is an explanation of the replies given by the Sub-Directors General of Education with respect to the collaboration relations within the system and with outside stakeholders.

Map 3: Internal relations between stakeholders in the education system according to Education Sub-Directors
Map No. 3 shows the collaboration relations between internal stakeholders according the Education Sub-Directors, who state that DIGEBI (18 collaboration lines), DIGEEX (20 collaboration lines), and DIGEACE (10 collaboration lines) are the three directorates with the highest number of cooperation relations between internal stakeholders. This map shows the reports of DIGEEX about having collaboration relations at the three levels that form the national education system since it mentions for example collaboration relations with the technicians of the programmes, the parents, even reporting internal collaboration lines with local authorities (mayors). The same can be seen in the case of DIGEBI which reports collaboration relations with the three levels of the education sector and with external stakeholders identified as internal, without distinction among them.

Map 4: External collaboration relations between stakeholders of the education system and stakeholders involved according to Sub-Directors General of Education

Map No. 4 shows the collaboration according to the Sub-Directors General of Education between internal stakeholders and external stakeholders of the education system. According to the reports, DIGEBI (8 lines of collaboration) and DIGEEX (17 lines of connection) showed a larger number of relations with external stakeholders. DIGEEX reports collaboration relations with universities, international cooperation, local authorities, and foundations, among others. Directorates like DICONIME and DIGECADE reported their own collaboration relations, jointly reporting the stakeholders involved. For example, DIGECADE summarises it with three stakeholders: civil society, international cooperation and municipalities. DICONIME reports relations with the executive branch, among others. It is also remarked that according to the area of work, there are relations with specialised organizations such as DIGEBI, the Commission against Racism and Discrimination CODISRA or the National Council for Mayan Education CNEM, to mention some examples.

When designing this research, three groups were identified as vulnerable due to the risk they face of being left out of the education system: the children of indigenous groups that demand bilingual education, people with special education needs with or without disabilities, and the population that faces poverty that prevents their permanence within the scholarized system as a result of migration, work, over age, etc., all of them groups that are receiving attention through regular schools and
through the non-formal modality (a detailed description of the situation of these groups can be found in the document analysis contained in the annexes). Education for girls is an issue of interest because it is known that women face more difficulties than men when pursuing studies. In the framework of the national education system, attention to these groups is the responsibility of three Directorates General: bilingual education by DIGEBI, attention to persons with special educational needs with or without disabilities by DIGEESP, and the remaining scholarized system by DIGEEEX. This is the reason for trying to understand the value attached to the collaboration relations between the participating stakeholders and the explanations given.

With respect to DIGEEESP, the replies given by the principals obtained an average of 5 when describing the levels of collaboration. Among the explanations given, it was mentioned that this Directorate had guided the process of adaptation of the evaluation system and that it had always shown desire to facilitate information.

The Sub-Directors General rated the collaboration relations at a level of 4 and remarked the need to establish closer collaboration relations and to strengthen monitoring plans and projects.

With respect to DIGEEEX, the Directors General of Education gave 3.7 points on average to describe the level of collaboration with this Directorate, while the Sub-Directors attributed 4.3 to describe the level of collaboration. Some explanations provided by the Directors included the support and attention this Directorate is giving to pregnant girls, and the good disposition to provide information, while remarking on the need to put in place joint work.

Finally, with respect to DIGEBI, the level of collaboration graded by the Directors General of Education was 3 and the explanation was the need for further coordination of policies and monitoring to bilingual education. Sub-Directors General of Education rated it as 4.3 and coincided on the need to establish a closer relation with DIGEBI.

Other relevant data relates to the assessment of the collaboration relations obtained by the Ministry of Education as rated by external stakeholders involved. The average describing the levels of collaboration is 3.2 and to explain this grade, they stated that the Ministry of Education accepts joint work proposals in favour of improving education quality and support to teachers. Some commented on aspects to improve the collaboration relations, which include an increase in presence and participating in joint actions. The decisions taken do not always translate in support policies and it is difficult to achieve change. Local capacities need to be strengthened and there is need for more empowerment and sustainability of the process.

Finally, the participants of the Ministry of Education were asked to indicate the stakeholders within and without the Ministry with whom they should improve or start collaborative work in favour of IE. Among the replies given with respect to collaboration relations, the one related to beginning with the Congress of the Republic and the universities stands out. With respect to the answers that talk about collaboration relations that need to be improved, the National Education Council, different entities of the executive branch such as SEGEPLAN, the Ministry of Finance, the National Mayan Education Council, parents and teachers, as well as relations with the different Directorates General of Education like DIPLAN, DIGECUR, DIGEBI and DIGEEEX were mentioned, as well as with Departmental Directorates of Education.

In summary, the collaboration networks allow first to infer some aspects related to the way in which the education system operates when considering them in function of their adjustment towards an inclusive education system. In the first place, there is the collaboration work reported by the
Directorate General of Non-scholarized and Mixed Modalities Programmes with external stakeholders of the governmental and non-governmental organizations. This relation is relevant given that the legal framework contemplates it as a subsystem dedicated to providing attention to the population outside the scholarized system and thus all the collaboration relations established strengthen it and favour transit from a Directorate General to a true subsystem of non-scholarized and mixed modalities education with more financial resources and education management tools and methodologies to look after the population that is outside the scholarized education system.

In the second place, there are multiple and evident collaboration efforts amongst education system stakeholders and also external stakeholders. However, the impression offered by the data is that these efforts are unable to achieve the joint execution of policy actions, rather constituting ad hoc efforts for defined actions. This situation maintains the idea of separate compartments for specific education segments of the population. This could hinder an integral vision of development and of inclusive education.

Another important aspect worth stressing is that joint work with local governments and stakeholders in regional fora is gaining visibility, both at the macro-level and the meso-and micro-levels. This issue needs deeper consideration because it can contribute information to implement horizontal management actions within the education services from a meso-approach to the micro-level, pursuant to the Directorates at the macro-level, to help the macro-level strengthen its governing function for education policies.

### 3.2.2 Country-specific Adaptations to the Research Design

A number of changes in methodology were implemented in Guatemala at each stage of the research process, which are reported in this chapter, divided in two aspects: 1) research procedure, and 2) selection of cases to be studied. A third section shows a description of the participants at each of the three levels of the education system and other stakeholders involved, by level.

#### 3.2.2.1 Research Procedure

**Document Analysis**

During the first months, the analysis of secondary sources and document analysis was done by researchers. The purpose was to build a frame of reference for the study. This framework included the analysis of national statistics, educational statistics, national general laws, educational laws, educational policies, government plans, institutional reports, previous studies done in the country about: poverty, bilingual education, girl’s education, education of children with special educational needs associated or not to disabilities. Also, statistical information from meso-level as well as documentary information of each school were analyzed in order to characterize the local context where each school is located.

**Fieldwork**

The fieldwork included consultations with stakeholders from three levels. A total of 169 consultations were done through individual interviews, focus group discussions and classroom observations. In addition, 17 individual interviews were done to members of the Ministry of Education who work as pedagogical advisors. An insider from each region was part of the research team during the fieldwork. This person was responsible for accompanying researchers.
### Participants/Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Macro-Level:</th>
<th>Procedure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There were two workshops</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One workshop with stakeholders from government organizations non-government organizations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One workshop with members of the Ministry of Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual interviews with stakeholders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 focus group discussions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 individual interviews</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meso-Level:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Four Departments were selected as part of the study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits were conducted in each of them in order to interview governmental authorities including employees from the Ministry of Education as well as representatives of non-governmental organizations working in each region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 individual interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 individual interviews to pedagogical advisors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Micro-level:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Six schools and their educational communities were selected to characterize and represent the diversity in the country (Marginalized School, Inclusive School, Ladino-Enclave School, Multi-grade rural School, Urban-No-Bilingual School located in a bilingual community; Agro-Industrial community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools were visited in two different times. The first visit was to introduce the research team to the local authorities and to explain the purpose of the study. The second visit last one week in each school and the purpose was to collect data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 individual interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43 focus group discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 classroom observations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data was analyzed using MAXQDA® software. The team built a code system that was used in both countries. Periodic virtual or in person meetings between the national team and the international advisor were hold in order to do the inter-coder reliability and data analysis. A workshop was conducted for validating preliminary data with stakeholders from the three levels. Moreover, a presentation of preliminary results was done to the international team and the Advisory Board. A national report was written. In addition, six case study documents from each school were written. A video with the main results was produce as a resource for presenting results for a very wide and heterogeneous audience. The video was in Spanish and it will be translated to different Mayan languages. An executive summary was published.
Table 20: Adaptations in Methodology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Design Adaptation</th>
<th>Actions Carried Out</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Operational definition of the notion of national education system</td>
<td>For the purposes of the research, and based on the system scope proposed in the research design, the notion of Guatemalan education system was made operative at three levels: 1) macro-level formed by the central level of the Ministry of Education and decision-making stakeholders within non-governmental organizations, international cooperation entities and universities; 2) meso-level formed by the Departmental Education Directorates and governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, universities that work in areas of interest; and 3) micro-level formed by the Education Supervision, the education community (principals(^5), teachers, students, and parents), governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, community leaders, organised civil society working in the community. The description of the participants is presented later on, in the section about research participants.</td>
<td>Development of a definition of the national education system used for the purposes of this research Identification of the main informants by level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Selection of study cases</td>
<td>With the support of a group of national education experts and international ones belonging to the refie project team, the selection criteria for the study cases were defined (see attachments).</td>
<td>Criteria for the selection of cases defined and agreed upon by the International team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Preparation of Field Work Stage</td>
<td>Actions put in place</td>
<td>Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Adaptation of information gathering instruments</td>
<td>The interview and focus group discussion guidelines were adapted to the context, mainly with respect to language, vocabulary and support resources for greater participation. In addition, questions to explore more contextual aspects were added, for example: 1) the use of photographs for focus group discussions with boys and girls; 2) the development of mother and father focus groups to ensure that women had the chance of expressing their ideas, which could be limited by the presence of men in a same discussion group; and 3) questions about local context posed to the principal instead of questions about the national education situation as initially proposed). For focus groups with children, photographs were used to support discussions about the three dimensions of the research (see annexes).</td>
<td>The instruments were adapted for the interviews, focus groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Development of observation instruments</td>
<td>Based on the instructions for the research design and with the support of an international expert of the refie project, the national team developed observation tools for the classroom and the local context (see annexes).</td>
<td>A preliminary version of the observation guidelines in the classroom, the school and the local context was obtained</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^5\) In Guatemala heads of schools are called ‘principal’, in Malawi ‘head teacher’.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Design Adaptation</th>
<th>Actions Carried Out</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Validation of instruments</td>
<td>The instruments were submitted to a test in an urban public school located in a department that was not part of the sample for the research work. This school was visited because permission was granted by the principal to test the instruments there and because it was similar to the urban schools included in this research. The principal was interviewed, classroom observations were carried out, and focus groups with teachers and students were organised to validate the different instruments. Based on this, changes and adjustments in the vocabulary originally foreseen for the instruments were made. In addition, support strategies were prepared to favour group discussions in the focus groups and the maximum use of the time invested in their development.</td>
<td>A validated version of the instruments used for the research was obtained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Handbooks for field visits</td>
<td>Two handbooks were developed to organise the field work at two times: 1) preliminary visits to approach the regions and the education centres; 2) information gathering visits to the departments and selected schools. The purpose of the first visit was double-sided. In the first place to collect information at the meso-level and in the second place to introduce the research team to the local authorities, a practice that is recommended in the national context as a sign of respect towards the local authorities. With respect to the second visit, it was related to information gathering activities and was carried out during a week in each education centre.</td>
<td>Two handbooks guided the work of the research teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Creation of stakeholder mapping instrument</td>
<td>An instrument was developed to identify the main stakeholders and the relations between stakeholders at the macro-level. This instrument was required for the identification of the main stakeholders at the internal and external levels of the Ministry of Education, with whom joint work actions were promoted as well as an assessment of the level of collaboration as provided by the informant on a Likert-type scale in which 1 was little collaboration and 6 much collaboration.</td>
<td>Use of an instrument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>Periodic meetings with International advisor</td>
<td>During the preparation phase periodic meetings with the International advisor were held to guide the decisions made in each activity executed.</td>
<td>Team work for the implementation of the phase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Spanish-English translation</td>
<td>The final version of the manuals and instruments was translated from Spanish to English to obtain feedback from the International team.</td>
<td>Documents presented in English and Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Preparation for Data Analysis Stage</td>
<td>Activities Executed</td>
<td>Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Development of code system and their operational definition</td>
<td>Based on the research design guidelines, a code system was developed and each code was assigned an operational definition. The codification tree was translated into English as a way of sharing the criteria used in Guatemala with the Malawi team</td>
<td>Code tree with operational definitions per coded aspect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Chapter 3.2 – Country Study Guatemala

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Design Adaptation</th>
<th>Actions Carried Out</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Periodic meetings with the International advisor</td>
<td>In a number of meetings with the International advisor, the code system organization was discussed, clarifying the operational definitions proposed for the inclusive education dimensions, in particular the dimensions of acceptance and participation</td>
<td>Validation of code operational definitions with expert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Development of field work</td>
<td>Activities Executed</td>
<td>Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Previous visits at a regional and local level</td>
<td>Before the information gathering visit, a recognition visit was organized to introduce the team of investigators to the departmental and local authorities. In these visits, departmental authorities were interviewed, as well as key informants working on education matters in the regions of interest. It was agreed to visit each education centre chosen for this research as an introduction visit, to explain the purpose of the research to the education authorities and the municipal mayor.</td>
<td>Preparation of information gathering work with departmental and local authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Identification of key stakeholders by level</td>
<td>The identification of informants at the meso-level was done from the refie project head office. To this effect, the team of researchers made an initial mapping of the governmental and non-governmental organizations with presence in the different regions as defined in the design of the research (for example, human rights organizations, academic organizations, entities that provide assistance to vulnerable groups, etc.). After their identification, each one was contacted in writing and by phone to request a meeting to carry out interviews at the meso-level. The same procedure was followed at the micro-level and the list for that level was developed in consultation with the informants at the meso-level, and a review of the websites of the different organizations.</td>
<td>Participants identified and contacted to gather information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Hiring of local support personnel as a link between local investigators and stakeholders and for the translation of the instruments and the collection of data in local language</td>
<td>A local person was hired in each community with study cases to fulfil each of the following purposes: 1) having a recognised and credible person in the local context to introduce the investigators to the different participants of the study; 2) in Spanish-Mayan language bilingual communities, the support of an investigator who would know the language spoken by the community was needed to translate the instruments and facilitate the focus groups and interviews with some local stakeholders.</td>
<td>Access to every person and institution of local and regional interest Facilitation of focus groups and interviews in the local language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Two workshops to gather macro-data</td>
<td>The collection of data at the macro-level was carried out in two separate sessions. The first one had the participation of key informants from non-governmental organizations and the participation of the international team of the refie project. The second one had the participation of officials from the Ministry of Education and the workshop was handled with the national team with the support of the International expert research advisor of the refie team.</td>
<td>Discussion guide developed and macro-level data gathered as foreseen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Field work</td>
<td>The National investigators, in coordination with the National coordinator collected data at the local level during approximately five days</td>
<td>Collected information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Design Adaptation</td>
<td>Actions Carried Out</td>
<td>Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Accompaniment by International Expert in field work</td>
<td>The International advisor accompanied the research team to three of the six schools part of this research.</td>
<td>Verification of the data collection procedure and approaching the study cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Information Analysis Stage</td>
<td>Activities Executed</td>
<td>Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Hiring of transcribers</td>
<td>A team of six transcribers was hired to accelerate the preparation of the files to be coded. Most of the files were reviewed by the team of investigators to verify the quality of the transcription, which was made using a transcription handbook developed by the national team.</td>
<td>Availability of transcribed information to be coded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Coder meetings to assess the level of reliability</td>
<td>During the coding process, weekly meetings were organised by the coding staff to verify the level of reliability. To this effect, case documents were randomly chosen and worked on jointly by the coding team.</td>
<td>Every session had joint conclusions and reports by the coding staff and they agreed that the level of reliability was over 90 percent according to their self-assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Periodic meeting with the International advisor</td>
<td>Consultations about specific cases were organised to define the coding and interpretation of some data with the International advisor. Based on assessments made during the progress of the coding process, decisions were made on these matters.</td>
<td>Expert advice during coding process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>Support by a Ph.D. student for the analysis of the stakeholder maps at the macro-level</td>
<td>Support from a Ph.D. student from the Arizona State University for the analysis of the stakeholder map at the macro-level, using the UCINET software. This process required meetings via Skype and the accompaniment and support of the National team.</td>
<td>Five maps available which report the relations between stakeholders at the macro-level and a detailed report of the type of relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Report Drafting Stage</td>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Preparation of each case and team analysis of results for the report</td>
<td>In addition to the country report, elaboration of a complete report of each study case. Based on this, elaboration of a chapter on micro-level results.</td>
<td>Country report consolidating the results at the micro-level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>Revision of preliminary data by the team and the International advisor</td>
<td>Each results report was disseminated among the team of investigators to obtain comments and remarks on the different documents. The International advisor made a detailed review of each chapter of the national report and the different cases of the study before their translation.</td>
<td>Reports reviewed and enriched by the criteria of the research team and the International advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>Spanish-English translation</td>
<td>The preliminary results were translated for discussion with the International team. These results are presented in the final report.</td>
<td>Documents presented in English and Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>Results dissemination strategy</td>
<td>In order to contribute to the understanding and analysis of the results of this research, a proposal for an animated presentation of results was prepared, to explain the main findings and promote their discussion.</td>
<td>Proposal presented for the consideration of the International team</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2.2.2 Selection of Study Cases: Sample

The selection of the school centres was done with advice from a team of national experts and international members of the refie team. Based on their recommendations it was agreed to choose six school centres, two more than originally proposed in the design of the research, to include an inclusive school and an urban marginal school as part of the research work. Furthermore, the following other basic aspects for the selection of schools were defined: a) location area: urban, rural and urban-marginal; b) ethnic mix of the school population: indigenous and non-indigenous (ladino\textsuperscript{7} for the selected areas); c) situation of poverty of the education community (rural poverty map, municipalities prioritised by governmental programmes, municipal HDI); d) modality of the education centre depending on language: bilingual (Mayan-Spanish) and monolingual: Spanish; e) type of education centre depending on multi-grade organization (teachers in charge of several grades), graded (one teacher or more per grade) and inclusive (school that enrols children with SEN linked or not to disabilities in their regular classrooms); and f) size of school centres. The size was defined as big schools and small schools. Big schools are those with two or more sections per grade and multi-grade schools were small schools (they have teachers in charge of several grades).

The purpose of choosing schools that would reunite these criteria was to have school centres that would illustrate the diversity that characterises the country (see document analysis in annex). Furthermore, the case study was done from a systemic perspective, i.e. taking the school as central element of the case and gathering information taking into account its local context.

The following table summarises the application of these criteria to the education centres chosen. They all belong to the public sector and are mixed schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Study Case</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Languages</th>
<th>Type of School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban-marginal school</td>
<td>Big</td>
<td>Urban-marginal</td>
<td>Ladino</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Monolingual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive school</td>
<td>Big</td>
<td>Urban-marginal</td>
<td>Ladino</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Monolingual/ Inclusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ladino enclave</td>
<td>Big</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Ladino</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Monolingual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-grade school</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>K’iche’</td>
<td>Bilingual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monolingual school in bilingual context</td>
<td>Big</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Indigenous</td>
<td>Mam</td>
<td>Monolingual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School in agro-industrial context</td>
<td>Big</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Ladino</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Monolingual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The case of an urban-marginal school and the case of an inclusive school that function in the same building, although they are administratively registered as two different schools. They work in two different schedules. The first works the morning shift and the second the afternoon shift. It is important to add that the selected inclusive school was identified by the Directorate General of Special Education (DIGEESP) of the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC), as one of the 32 schools for the

\textsuperscript{7} ‘Ladino’ is a term used in Guatemala to describe non-indigenous, Spanish-speaking part of population.
special education needs population linked or not to disabilities. The Ministry of Education defines inclusive schools as those that “represent a favourable framework to ensure equal opportunities and full participation, contribute to a more personalised education, promote collaboration among all the members of the school community and constitute an essential step to advance towards a more inclusive and democratic society” (p. 21). The Ladino enclave and the multi-grade school were located in a same department within the Republic of Guatemala. This department is mostly Maya K’iche’ in most municipalities, but where the Ladino enclave is located, the population is mainly Ladino. The multi-grade school was the only school centre considered in the research that had three teachers servicing students belonging to levels that range from pre-school to the full primary school. One of them works as principal. The school was located in a Maya K’iche’ speaking rural area. The fifth case called monolingual school was an urban school centre located in an area with mainly Mam population, where the mother tongue of the majority of the population is Mam. Finally, the sixth case, school in an agro-industrial context, was a rural education centre located in an area where the most important economic activity is the production of sugar cane and where most of the population is Ladino, with Spanish as their mother tongue.

Table 22: School Population and Number of Teachers in the Case Study Schools for 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>School population 2014</th>
<th>Number of teachers 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban-marginal school</td>
<td>937</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive school</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ladino enclave</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-grade school</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monolingual school in bilingual context</td>
<td>476</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School in agro-industrial context</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://estadistica.mineduc.gob.gt/fichaescolar/ on November 25, 2014

3.2.2.3 Participants

In the context of this research key informants were identified according to their level of belonging within the national education system (stakeholders at the macro-level, stakeholders at the meso-level and stakeholders at the micro-level) and related to the Ministry of Education for attention to public education. According to the design of the research, the people directly responsible for the services within the education system and stakeholders involved in education programmes or projects or projects in support to education from different areas would be contacted directly, such as non-governmental organizations working on research, implementation and/or assessment of education services, international donors financing research programmes or projects and experts in providing attention to the four vulnerable groups of interest for this research: persons with special education needs linked or not to disabilities, bilingual education, gender and poverty.

The following table summarises the information related to the participants at each level. The participating group at the macro-level was formed by representatives from different sectors involved in education, coming from the public sector and academic, development, research organizations and entities that provide direct services to the population with special education needs. It also had the participation of entities that provide advice on public policies about key topics, such as attention to disabilities, attention to the education of girls and the bilingual population of the country.
### Table 23: Information about Participants at Each Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Entities of the Ministry of Education</th>
<th>Other governmental institutions</th>
<th>Other organizations/stakeholders that support education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Macro-level</td>
<td>• Directorate General of Quality Education (DIGECADE)</td>
<td>• Secretary of Planning and Programming of the President of the Republic (SEGEPLAN)</td>
<td>• National Council on Disability (CONADI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Directorate General of Evaluation and Educational Research (DIGEDUCA)</td>
<td>• Human Rights Ombudsman (PDH)</td>
<td>• Members of the international cooperation community, GIZ and USAID</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Directorate General of Special Education (DIGEESP)</td>
<td></td>
<td>• University of San Carlos de Guatemala (USAC), Del Valle University (UVG), Rafael Landivar University (URL), Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Directorate General of Non-scholarized and Mixed Modalities Educational Programmes (DIGEEEX)</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Guatemalan Foundation for Deaf and Blind Children (FUNDAL)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Directorate General of Bilingual Education (DIGEBI)</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Plan International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Directorate General of Curriculum (DIGECUR)</td>
<td></td>
<td>• National Council for Mayan Education (CNEM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Directorate General of Monitoring and Quality Verification (DIGEMOCA)</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Teacher’s Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Directorate General of Accreditation and Certification (DIGEACE)</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Association ‘Eduquemos a la Niña’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Directorate General for the Strengthening of Education in the Community (DIGEFOSE)</td>
<td></td>
<td>• World Vision Guatemala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meso-level</td>
<td>• Directors of Departmental Directorates of Education (DIDEDUC)</td>
<td>• Departmental Governor Secretary for Planning and Programming of the President of the Republic (SEGEPLAN)</td>
<td>• Businessmen for Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Secretary for Food and Nutrition Security (SESAN)</td>
<td>• ICEFI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Ministry of Public Health (departmental office)</td>
<td>• Guatemalan Association for Autism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Education Commission of the Congress of the Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Santiago Development Project (Prodessa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Universities with presence in each department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• NGOs with presence in the department and with education programmes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Chapter 3.2 – Country Study Guatemala

#### Entities of the Ministry of Education

- Education supervisors
- Principals
- Teachers
- First, third and sixth grade primary school students
- Parents

#### Other governmental institutions

- Municipal Council
- Ministry of Public Health (municipal office)
- SESAN
- Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman (PDH)
- Peace Judge
- Professional support personnel hired by the municipalities
- Other governmental entities

#### Other organizations/stakeholders that support education

- Members of the COCODEs
- Religious leaders
- Local leaders
- NGO representatives

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### 3.2.3 Results from the Guatemalan Country Study

#### 3.2.3.1 Perspectives of Inclusion

This research posed the question of how the concept of inclusive education is built within the three levels of the national education system, namely: macro-, meso-, and micro-level. The points of view expressed in the answers given by the stakeholders interviewed were defined as perspectives for inclusion. The first part of this chapter presents the results at the macro-level, consisting of four general perspectives. The second part analyses the attitudes and the mediating role of the points of view described in the perspectives.

#### 3.2.3.1.1 Macro-level

**First Part**

**Perspective No. 1**: The concept of inclusive education is a paradigm in transformation framed in the historic and social context of the country, questioning notions such as the purpose of the school and the definition of the target group.

Among the macro-level stakeholders, the concept of inclusive education relates, at first sight, to special education, which was the field that introduced this paradigm in the national education context. However, the stakeholders interviewed recognise that inclusive education has a larger scope, reaching larger groups, in particular vulnerable groups who have been marginalised by scholarized education. But the definition of target groups still needs clarification. This is not exempt from tensions, given that the majority of the population is vulnerable as a result of the living conditions and many different sources of vulnerability, making it complex to define specific groups.
**Perspective No. 1: The concept of inclusive education is a paradigm in transformation framed in the historic and social context of the country, questioning notions such as the purpose of the school and the definition of the target group.**

| From special education (clinical focus in the 70s) it develops into inclusive education; that is, education for all under equal circumstances. | The first discussions about education are precisely related to how to include those currently excluded, but those excluded as a result of a condition for which neither them nor society has a direct responsibility, because what can you do if a child is deaf? So these were the 60s, 70s when everything was related to the logic of isolation; that is, they need a special education and then we started to, let’s say mainly thanks to the Human Development Reports, we started talking about the idea of us as an unequal country. (Public Servant) |
| It is necessary to begin with the historical purpose of the school and the meaning that inclusive education could have under this perspective. | A so called ‘universal’ school, it is based on the opposite, it relates to organizing boys and girls by age, in grouping them by age, and according to their economic condition, because there is a school for poor people, one for middle class people, and a different one for rich people, it divides and tries to standardize; that is, the school itself is an institution that is not prepared to accept differences and work with these differences. (Academic) |
| Inclusive education is developing in a context of social relations characterized by a segregationist, racist, and discriminatory nature. Does everyone want to be included? | The concept of inclusive education has shades. When introducing for example the topic of inclusive education and indigenous peoples, there are deterrents, because here we have individual and collective rights, language rights. Up to what point can I use inclusion? There could be a certain desire for autonomy: I do not want to be included or integrated. I want to have my own system. The concept of inclusion could clash with the issue of rights. (Representative of International Cooperation Agency) |
| The different vulnerable groups intersect with each other as a result of the factors behind their condition of vulnerability (socioeconomic and/or the person’s own conditions). The country’s context contributes to the fact that people are considered vulnerable (e.g. disabilities or orphanage linked to violence). Categories keep changing. | The causes of disability today are not the same as five years ago. Today, for example, chronic malnutrition in the country generates critical conditions. (Specialist in the attention of vulnerable groups) |
| Inclusive education is framed in the understanding of the country’s social problems and its consequences on the population’s right to education. | When one category mingles with the other one, where a person falls? (I: what does falls mean?) If a person, let’s say, suffers from a disability. He or she does not speak Spanish and is disabled, in what group is this person placed? (Specialist in the attention of vulnerable groups) |
| Society is racist, so inclusion begins with understanding cultural diversity. | What are the matters that concern us? What is the level of poverty? The level of violence? Because when I hear about the matter of inclusion I think beyond that, I am even thinking of the people, the youngsters who are members of gangs (groups operating outside the law) and then they want to be included in scholarized education; it is truly hard, it is hard for these people to be accepted, there are no schools that would open their doors for them. Unless we created special schools but they would still be alienated, they could not be integrated into society. So we need to build a special school for them, a special school for pregnant girls...we need special schools for all these groups of children who feel different from the rest, so a different school for each, so when you talk about inclusion, this goes beyond. You cannot understand it if you don’t consider the whole. (Representative of Human Rights Organization) |
| Being a racist country, inclusion begins in part by understanding the country’s cultural diversity. Including someone different from my culture, my language, my way of thinking and of behaving, means that I need to respect, it means I need to be tolerant, but the National Education System has done the opposite, it has been an eminently excluding education system. (Leader of Teachers Union) |
Perspective No: 2 Education and/or inclusive education are recognised as issues of national interest.

Education and inclusive education, as a concept under discussion, are recognised as a development priority for the country. This priority is a task of the society as a whole and its due implementation has the potential to reverse the conditions of inequality, as well as to serve as a means for social mobility.
## Perspective No 2: Education and/or inclusive education are recognized as issues of national interest

### Education is a development priority and a mechanism to end inequality. An agenda for change is being developed, which has a social inclusion element (qualified children, young leaders).

We are making a proposal for a 20-year national development plan. One of the priorities of this plan is a bet on education and it could be said that the focus we are taking here is precisely the same focus, ok (it relates to inclusive education), because education needs to be a mechanism to compensate for inequality, ok. I believe that afterwards we will have inclusive education. Education must be the mechanism to compensate inequality to guarantee that in fact all Guatemalan boys and girls have the same opportunity to successfully integrate into the economic, social and political life of this country. (Public Servant)

### Inclusive education is an issue of interest for everyone, ‘an agreement that includes everybody’, including vulnerable groups.

These two issues are the ones we need to break, the matter of the budget and the pact. The way in which negotiations are made behind the National Education Council, behind the indigenous association, even behind Congress itself. But it is necessary to break this cycle and generate an agreement that includes everyone, which includes all segments of the society, women, indigenous, disabled populations, Garifunas, Xincas, all of the society, to reach an agreement to establish the necessary mechanisms to achieve inclusive education. (Academics and Researchers)

### Eliminating structural barriers for education is a task that involves the State as a whole. Nevertheless, the idea of inclusion generates tensions in a society that is organized for exclusion.

It is that we need a group of measures for positive actions in favour of education, measures to raise awareness among the population about the fact that education is a right, not a concession made to society, but something to which people can legitimately aspire; and then the State needs to assign resources, develop better methods, identify ways of structuring an education that meets the needs of the people. (Representative of International Cooperation Agency)

### Inclusive education is an effort of society as a whole.

One of the situations for us is the State itself, we need to strengthen our influence, we need to strengthen our activities. The truth is that this is really hard without the support of government policies, we are always going to be in an impasse. We can’t really advance. (Specialist in the attention of vulnerable groups)
**Perspective No. 3:** The building up of an inclusive education system implies changes in the focus, organization, and management of education.

According to UNESCO (2005), inclusive education is an approach that analyses how to transform education systems and learning environments to meet the diversity of pupils. This perspective confirms that macro-level stakeholders recognise that Guatemala’s education system needs to transform in order to work as a ‘lever for change’ towards inclusive education (in the terms of Ainscow, 2004). Change refers to aspects such as quality of service, internal and inter-institutional management, and education policies, among others.
Perspective No. 3: The building up of an inclusive education system implies changes in the focus, organization, and management of education.

We have a fair number of difficulties at the level of the Departmental Directorates and also at the central level because we first need to understand how we are organized and who coexists in this country, to then be able to say how we will act at other levels. It must be understood that inclusive education is not special education. Inclusive education means that other types of needs will be taken into account. There are student needs that relate to the fact that the students don’t speak Spanish and work is being done, so that is what I mean, first we need to define that inclusive education must not be confused with special education. Inclusive education means access for all, giving the same opportunities to everyone. (Public Servant)

Inclusive education involves the three levels of the national education system. Quality defines the results of the System. Management is internal and inter-institutional among GOs and NGOs.

To achieve an inclusive education system, the following are necessary: social participation, budget, and decentralization.

An inclusive education that necessarily goes through very complete programmes and budget, we really don’t need to re-invent the wheel, another key element is decentralization. Going forward I would mention those three: social participation, budget, and decentralization. (Academics – Researchers)

The education system does not serve all citizens equally. To achieve an inclusive education system, a flexible management is needed, adapted to the context and of a multi-dimensional nature with respect to policies.

With respect to attention to disabled populations, and trying to have incidence in the Ministry, because they say that the National Basic Curriculum does not apply to deaf and blind children, we do what we can but we reach the top, but we reach the ceiling of sixth grade, but they have youngsters aged 14 and 35-years old and they provide occupational training, incorporating them to some companies as interns but at the time of hiring they are looking for an accreditation, for a person that is qualified, so the ministry does not give that accreditation if people don’t have their basic and diversified studies and obviously these people cannot study the basic and diversified cycles. (Representative of International Cooperation)

The education system operates with general policies and compensation or affirmative action policies. The existence of policies does not necessarily guarantee the existence of conditions for inclusion.

There is an inclusive education policy, it was initiated by the previous government with a campaign encouraging all schools to be inclusive. How can this be with the current structures if there are no teachers trained to provide attention to this type of population, and not only disabilities, inclusion is not only about disabled populations. Diversity in the way we learn, special education needs, there is no capacity to say, yes, there is inclusive education in Guatemala; however, efforts are being made because more progress has been achieved in some departments than in others. But it can be deduced that really, so the structures, the conditions to achieve this objective. (Specialist in the attention of vulnerable groups)

Inclusive education implies minimum conditions and the articulation of the System with other governmental and non-governmental organizations.

I don’t know if it is compulsory or requested by senior management within the Ministry [of Education]: at school you must receive every child. Right! That is one thing, how is the teacher going to do it? They are not trained to provide attention, and they do not have the capacity, even if they have the will, they cannot do it in the classroom. It is already hard to differentiate between learning rhythms within a more or less homogeneous group, imagine in a group with more technical, more complex needs and you don’t know how to address these needs. I believe it is necessary to identify the key issues, those where the Education System needs to stop and say: we need structural deep changes that relate to, probably budget, because it is also linked to that, ok. And if we get into the matter of budgets to provide attention, there would be a lot to discuss. (Representative of Development NGO)
Perspective No. 4: Inclusive education includes access, acceptance, participation, and academic performance measured by the system, not the student. Inclusive education begins before starting school and concludes with social inclusion.

According to macro-level stakeholders, the dimensions of inclusive education are: 1) access, meaning it refers to conditions to learn in school; 2) acceptance, i.e. it has an axiological explanation (respect for the other, tolerance); 3) participation, i.e. it concerns the process of learning in the classroom or school as a result of the management of the two previous dimensions; and 4) academic performance, the final result achieved by an education system. If the system works, the person has a successful academic performance. Within a vision of an inclusive education system, the criteria to assess its results are not based on the student’s performance at school, but on the conditions provided by the system itself for successful learning.

In addition to this notion of inclusive education, there is an inferred premise linked to the ideas of the macro-level stakeholders about its application through education actions. It is asserted that in order to achieve the purposes of inclusive education, actions begin before schooling does; they include the whole period of formal and/or informal learning and transcend it to achieve social mobility and poverty alleviation. The following quote explains this idea:

Because inclusive education is one that guarantees and takes every measure to ensure that all the children have the same opportunities, but what we have nowadays is an egalitarian education. Education services are provided equally to all, but the starting point of each child is a very different starting point, so some are at a starting point that allows them to take advantage of all the conditions provided by the System, but other children are far from it, and although the System provides them with the same opportunities, there is a gap that nobody is covering, there are no policies. Efforts are being made to develop a Social Protection Policy which are incipient, we are still giving baby steps, developing the part that relates to public policies within the Ministry of Social Development which was created only two years ago. (Public Servant)

In summary, the previous perspectives suggest that there is clarity about the points of view and challenges among the macro-level stakeholders, i.e. the paradigm of inclusive education demands a transformation of the education system and a closer link to the development agenda of the country. The new paradigm is based on the historical context and confronts social inequality, given that it works for the right of a very diverse population to education. In order to address the challenges identified, it seems that the big question is not ‘what?’ but rather ‘how?’

Finally, when analysing the perspectives of inclusion held by macro-level stakeholders, it is necessary to look for the attitudes that might be underlying the dimensions of inclusive education. It is important to mention that attitudes explain the perspectives of inclusive education at the level of individual behaviour, an important aspect of the problem in question, but not enough to understand and address the roots of social exclusion.
Second Part

According to the data, the attitudes towards inclusive education mediate the decisions or actions taken in reality. UNESCO (2005) reports that the negative attitude of teachers and other adults (parents and other members of the education community) is the main obstacle for inclusion. Based on a systemic approach, this research considers that the attitudes of stakeholders at the three levels of the system could turn into obstacles and/or opportunities for access, acceptance, and participation. They change in their role as mediators of behaviour, whether in favour or against inclusion of some vulnerable groups.

Based on the evidence, it is remarkable how attitudes serve as buffers or justification/rationalization mechanisms for the decisions or actions taken or not taken to provide access to some groups, acceptance of relationships between stakeholders at school, and the participation in key learning processes for each one of them. Data shows, for example, how arguments are justified or fine-tuned when trying to explain the convergence of different groups at school, and how this generates acceptance and participation challenges. In other words, the attitude of the person shapes his/her points of view or actions in favour or against inclusive education for every person with no distinction. The findings allows the identification of four different cases in which attitudes explain the points of view taken with respect to the right to an education.

A common platform was identified for the four cases, since they relate to education and this is recognised as a fundamental right for all persons, with no exclusion. However, cases 1 and 2 show how this right is toned down when diversity comes into play, a diversity that characterises the individuals who exercise these rights; that is, when trying to define the target group for inclusive education. Cases 3 and 4 show how the system operates and how the attitudes mirror the opinions of macro-level stakeholders.

Case 1

Evidence shows that the system focuses inclusive education on the attention of specific groups (e.g. special education needs with or without disabilities, indigenous populations, school-age population outside the school system, etc.). This is a way to serve the citizens depending on their characteristics and needs.

- School and non-school population are divided into specific groups (bilingual education, education for girls, population with special educational needs, over-aged students, migrants, incarcerated, etc.).
- In some cases, there are specific agendas promoted by stakeholders that are committed to the group to which they belong to, while others do not seem to be identified with specific groups within the school and out-of-school population, i.e. not every vulnerable group is reached and identified.
- There is a differentiated level of attention consisting of integration into regular classrooms, but inclusion is not always achieved (acceptance, participation, and performance).
- There are questions about specialized services versus return on investment.

For case number one, attitudes go from asserting that groups with different needs cannot be mixed, such as a population requiring bilingual education and those with special educational needs. This explains the existence of a specific management of education policies and budgets that enable the provision of specialised attention, and monitoring and assessment of the impact of the services
offered to each. This is backed up by the technical capacity available within the Ministry of Education. In a country like Guatemala, where the majority of the population is vulnerable as a result of the existing conditions of poverty, the case described might be a model for exclusion if both the vulnerable groups and their living conditions are not identified.

But it is important to go beyond the indigenous and rural subject, because nowadays we are talking about a school that does not accept poor children who come from marginal areas or that turn these children into victims or unwanted persons within the school. The same thing happens with youngsters, especially youngsters from marginal areas who are not well understood at school and do not receive attention; and people with disabilities, but we seem to have a zero level of acceptance. If we carried out a survey, I believe 90 percent of the teachers would say that these children should be enrolled in a special centre and should not be in the regular classroom because they hinder the learning process of everyone else. (Academic)

So I think it is complicated to mingle the issue of disability with the issue of indigenous peoples, who are a majority in this country. They are excluded for reasons understood by everyone here and I think each person has his/her own vision. So I believe it is extremely complicated to mingle the ethnic theme with the disability theme. Because these are completely different issues; one is a problem related to the structural racism of this country, resulting in having the indigenous populations outside public services, in particular education, which is one of the basic structures of our country, sadly. So addressing this as a matter of exclusion seems, a lot, complicated to me. I would never mix the two. (Academic)

Case 2

A system that proposes education for all. The country's diversity results from its context. It is necessary to work to provide everyone with access to school, as a right, although the acceptance of the fact that everyone is different does not automatically result in offering a diversity of learning opportunities. It could happen that the learning environments are the same for these and the others, without taking into consideration the differences and individuality of each.

- Classrooms are inclusive because their population is diverse.
- The assumption that diversity is a natural condition brings opposing views, since this could lead to a homogenization of learning processes (e.g. everyone learns in Spanish).
- This approach fosters integration but not always inclusion (acceptance and participation).
- It could be more profitable to invest in regular students than in those with special educational needs with or without disabilities. Is this still education for all?

In the second case, the arguments confirm the idea that if the country is culturally and socially diverse, the (scholarized) school population is also diverse, so the conditions for inclusive education exist automatically. The idea of inclusion and the explicit acceptance of this reality may generate actions oriented towards the homogenization of educational practices as the demands rooted on different learning needs are not visible, so it is not necessary to transform the educational institutions and/or practices. The system is not clear on how to adapt to these differences. Accepting that the classroom population is diverse does not guarantee that there will be different learning opportunities for one or the other, or conditions to establish an acceptance of diversity.
So, it is hard to find a classroom in Guatemala that is not diverse. It is also hard to find a classroom in which children do not accept each other as something normal, because we do not have facilities, for example, facilities within the public system. I talk about the public system and the school system, we don’t have exclusive or specialised facilities. Therefore, we are an inclusive system but we lack methodology. (Directorate of Ministry of Education)

I see a serious risk there. ‘Because methodologically we are not doing well’. So what happens if we reach a homogenization instead of an inclusiveness? We are going to reach a homogenization. (Directorate of Ministry of Education)

The first two cases present a possible challenge for inclusive education, i.e. the search for an equilibrium for the education system, to allow it to comply with two purposes: a) in the context of scholarized education, to guarantee learning environments with attention focused on the students that need it within an inclusive classroom/school; in other words, an environment that accepts and offers them significant learning opportunities; b) in the context of non-scholarized and mixed modalities educational programmes, which by the way is less visible in the opinions given by stakeholders, to guarantee flexible and diverse education programmes that reach those who do not benefit from scholarized education but who demand a system of opportunities to develop life competencies through a two-tier training: academic (significant learning) and work-oriented (entrepreneurship).

Case 3

The System seems to work with an interpretation and compliance of ad hoc guidelines and regulations (lack of regulations).

- There are legal frameworks that are not enforced or are arbitrarily constructed.
- The will of the decision-maker guides the norm.
- A positive attitude might benefit from the permeability of the guidelines.

With respect to case number three, the laws that govern the compliance with the right to an education favour and guarantee inclusive education for everyone. However, it is common that these are interpreted arbitrarily without any consequences for those who do so. This seems to result from the fact that stakeholders believe their actions are solely dependent on their decision or personal will and not on regulations governing their behaviour. If there is a positive attitude towards inclusion, this permeability may favour it, while a negative attitude obliterates it. The following quotes serve as examples of these.

But in general in the area of direct attention, I do believe the matter should be everyone’s responsibility, not only the responsibility of some, or only for experts and parents but, from primary school, from the school supervisor, the principal, even if he/she is not a specialist. I believe this is one of the main challenges. Sometimes the legal framework is not fully enforced, not much is demanded. (Government Official)

We have had principals who have expelled girls because they were pregnant, because of their pregnancy (Directorate of Ministry of Education)
The custom is for each one to carry out the management, it is not mandatory to do A or B with this type of boys and girls. (But what, doesn’t it prevent it? – Comment from one participant-). No, it does not, but there is nothing to cover you one hundred percent. (so there is an existential vacuum –another comment from one participant- ). The discourse of how to address diversity has changed. In practice, each one does what is humanly possible and again there are school supervisors who are very supportive and others that aren’t, so, there is no common scenario for all the cases that is my interpretation. (Academic)

**Case 4**

There are actions reconciled with expectations about the ‘different’ person, or are they based on an ideal?
- Society responds to vulnerability with selective assistentialism (scholarships for the ones who show more ability)
- The school protects the vulnerable but does not expect them to learn (the ‘stupid’ goes to school to avoid being hit out on the streets)
- Relationships go from rejection to indifference
- Educational practices sometimes replicate prejudices and ignore cultural values.

Finally, the fourth case explains the tension generated by the acceptance of differences existing at school and in society. There are attitudes of acceptance, assistencialism or charitable, protective, open rejection, and little empathy. These attitudes define the expectations of IE on the individual.

After spending a few days in a school, at the end a researcher approached and asked the teacher, have you realised that there are two children with special educational needs in your classroom? Yes, I know. Why don’t you modify your curriculum or treat them individually? The teacher gave a very automatic answer: How am I going to do that? If I reveal them as being different, the whole group will begin to treat them badly. (Academic)

I conduct research about Bullying since 2007. The latest research has focused on social dynamics to determine what makes a group reject a certain group or hurt another child. What I have found is that so far a child considers him/herself different from his/her group, in any one of the aspects I study, that child has a greater chance of being bullied. (Academic)

In the classroom children coexist, live, and now with social media, with technology, well you would think they would be more united, but no, my perception is that some students feel that exclusion, live it, because in fact some students have told me that they have experienced racism, they say ‘When we dress with our uniform the teachers look at us and treat us differently than when we dress in our indigenous or regional clothes. They treat us differently and so do our peers.’ (Leader of Teachers Union)

In conclusion, attitudes can serve as mediators when they serve as a buffer or justify the decisions and perspectives towards inclusive education. The following quote shows the extent of the challenge to overcome attitudes or obstacles and achieve an inclusive education system.
In addition to the lack of resources, structural transformations, we are also talking about 90 thousand teachers who need to have a different attitude, let’s say. A disposition, a will to address the matter and the implications it brings. For me this is huge, the main challenge lies on the implications of a Ministry willing to make changes, deep changes depend on them, and partly on Congress and what depends on more macro-level decisions related to budget, that is a different challenge. Does the Ministry of Education have the will to do it? From its structural or budgetary limitations, are they willing to change their attitude? Are teachers willing to do it? That is, let’s say, the way in which they see it. They will always look at it as work load and complexity in their work, because now they must pay attention to more and more evident differences in their classrooms as a result of this policy of inclusiveness, which is correct, but the Ministry also needs to support it, because we can also find on the other side teachers with the will to do it, who are convinced that they need to modify their learning tools, their teaching, their methods, their blah blah blah, but who don’t have the resources.

(Representative of NGO)

The initial question about inclusive education perspectives for developing countries is undoubtedly an unfinished matter. However, the answers so far obtained advance it significantly by being considered as a paradigm of change that aims to counter inequality and social exclusion through an education for all. There is an understanding about how inclusion removes sensitive issues which provoke different attitudes towards ideas apparently shared such as the assertion of education as a universal right.

There are still crucial questions that need to be resolved, such as the link between the attitude aspects with the social, historic, and cultural aspects conjured up by the paradigm. It is clear that in countries like Guatemala, a focus only on the psychological aspects (attitudes) results in interpreting inclusion as a project of persuasion, i.e. the only thing needed is to change the minds and hearts of people; a simplistic mechanism that leaves out the recognition of larger challenges that involve the changing of structures, institutions, and systems that fail to benefit all Guatemalan citizens equally.

3.2.3.1.2 Meso-level

For the purposes of this research, the meso-level of the national education system was made up of different governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, who work for public education in the departments where the case studies were carried out. Four regions were defined, where the six schools to be studied are located: cases 1 and 2 in a region located in the department of Guatemala; case 3 and case 4 in the department of Quiché; case 5 in the department of Huehuetenango; and case 6 in the department of Escuintla. Two schools belong to the department of Guatemala and two to the department of Quiché.

The importance of this level within the education system relates to its intermediation functions, as defined by Trujillo (2014), as the main connection between the macro-level that defines the education policies and the micro-level that provides direct services pursuant to these policies. The meso-level also includes the representation of the Ministry of Education in the specific region and its articulation with other government offices that invest in education through the Development Council system and the municipalities, as well as non-governmental organizations working on education matters at the regional level.

In each department the education system is represented by a Departmental Education Directorate, the body in charge of planning, directing, coordinating and executing education actions in the different departments of the Republic (Government Agreement N° 165-96). This research took the
Departmental Directorate of each department chosen as a key informant, adding the participation of other governmental and non-governmental stakeholders with presence in the corresponding departments and who carry out work linked to education, as can be seen in the following table.

Table 24: Stakeholders at the meso-level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Governmental institutions consulted</th>
<th>Non-governmental institutions consulted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Departmental Directorate of Education</td>
<td>Universities with presence in the region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Departmental Governor</td>
<td>Non-governmental development organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary for Planning and Programming of the President of the Republic</td>
<td>Foundations working on education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Rights Office</td>
<td>Organizations that specialise on the attention of the groups of interest in this research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Security Secretariat</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Courts</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Offices of the Health Ministry with presence in the region</td>
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</tbody>
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The representatives of these organizations were consulted for two main reasons. First, the design of the research looked at a systemic approach, and in the country there is a growing recognition that there are inter-institutional actions within the delivery of education services, so it was deemed convenient to learn about the perspectives they have about inclusive education. Second, the vulnerable groups of interest for this research receive assistance from public and private organizations that contribute to the education process in favour of these segments of the population in different ways.

This chapter presents the perspectives on inclusive education after an analysis of the replies given by stakeholders at the meso-level. Points in common between cases confirm the existence of two main ideas: 1) education is a fundamental right that the State tries to guarantee using different mechanisms according to the population being served; 2) education can be a motor for regional development and must be linked to opportunities in the labour market in each region. It was evident that the concept of inclusive education is mainly linked to servicing individuals with special education needs. Details for each of the perspective mentioned are given below.

Perspectives of inclusion at the meso-level

Before the presentation of a detailed description of each of the three perspectives, it is important to mention that the answers and points of view of the informants speak about education in general and not necessarily inclusive education, although an analysis of the answers allows the identification of some points of view that correspond to the dimensions proposed by it.

Education as a right

For stakeholders at the meso-level, education is a human right. However, they recognise this right is not awarded to everyone equally. Most of the interviewees that mention this point agree that rural women and persons with SEN linked or not to disabilities are the two segments of the population that suffer most from marginalization. In addition, there are other groups that in view of characteristics like language, socio-economic level and origin, are vulnerable to being left out of education and therefore some of the informants believe it is necessary to act ‘strategically’ in areas where there is more need.
Well, I cannot give you the rate if I don’t have it, but there is a difference when more priority is given to the studies of boys than girls, this difference has always been there. We can even see it in the rural area where we see young girls who should be in secondary school and they are helping their mothers at home. (Department of Escuintla)

So in a way the local political actor needs to prioritise these matters to push for them and ensure their prioritization and the allocation of resources to help us advance them at the departmental level. We, at the departmental level, do not have the authority or ability to change the priorities coming from the municipal level, but sometimes at the municipal level they prioritise, for example, the pavement of their streets, the construction of community centres, and there are what they call the elephant in the room, right, because there is the huge building with a very nice facade but that does not fulfil any social function, one meeting a month or someone who hosts a social event there and rents it, and the COCODE charges rent for the room and, but when we look at the cost, there are millions of quetzales [Guatemalan currency] invested there. But the school that is next door has cardboard walls and wood, so there is a bit that is missing in local politics, when identifying the needs to be prioritised from the local level. (Department of El Quiché)

This perspective of a right and the need for priority attention faces the challenge of how to define priorities when there are different groups in need and with equal rights. That is why for some, education needs to be linked to other development policies, as explained in the quotes below.

**If we bet on education in the department I am 100 percent sure that there won’t be any more children suffering from malnutrition, because parents will have a high level of education, they will know how to give their children a good education, good nutrition is indispensable to develop the child’s abilities and for his/her brain to develop and for the child to become productive in the future.**

(Department of Huehuetenango)

**Education is a right for all Guatemalans. So if we don’t put our two cents we won’t be able to achieve it, so we need to begin from our homes, by raising awareness among the parents, among the children, and among those who have an education so that they take advantage of it.**

(Department of Huehuetenango)

**There are many factors that relate to education, as well as nutrition, there are also many factors that condition it and other factors that are determinant, because here it is like that, the law says that every child has the right to a free education, but we do not comply with the law.**

(Department of Escuintla)

Moreover, more than one opinion considers that the right to an education is universal, but the way to meet it differs depending on the target group and its capacities. Those with SEN, linked or not to disability and/or difficulties to learn at the same pace as the rest of the group, are expected to have specialised services either through resource classrooms, integrated classrooms or specialised centres, a point of view that shows that inclusion does not consider all of the population as capable to being included in a regular classroom. In other words, the idea of inclusive education is linked to the type of service known, which legitimises the exclusion of certain groups within the education system.
Well up to now this is the first school for special children with different capacities, but I think opportunities should be given in this sense too, because they also have a right to do, to receive information in the context of their situation. (Department of Escuintla)

It is important to mention that for some of the regions analysed, access to special education services is relatively recent for the population with special education needs linked or not to disabilities, and it is therefore necessary to consider that inclusion is an innovative alternative introduced in this context as a specialised and segregated approach to serve the population with special education needs, and this is the concept that is generally accepted on inclusive education.

However, when bilingual education is discussed as a right of the population, opinions differ depending on the region of the study cases. For those coming from the departments of Escuintla and Guatemala, where people mainly speak Spanish, offering education in this language poses no problem as the few students who do not speak it are capable of learning it and will have the advantage of being bilingual in comparison with students whose mother tongue is the language of instruction, so it is not necessary to offer bilingual education in monolingual contexts because the Ladino students are not expected to learn other national languages. With respect to the cases in El Quiché and Huehuetenango, where the majority of the population speaks a Mayan language, there are contradictory ideas about the right of the child to a pertinent education adapted to his or her culture, and the parents’ expectation about a preference to have their children learn in Spanish, as this is the language that will help them participate in the labour market. Therefore, in those regions in which Spanish is spoken, it is assumed that children with a different language do not require of bilingual education because they will learn the new language by being constantly exposed to it. In the regions that use languages different from Spanish, the education system promotes a bilingual education policy that aims to guarantee learning Spanish as a second language.

A certain tension was also observed in relation to the recognition of a right to an education and the views or aspirations of the students and their parents to benefit from this. Those parents who had little access to a scholarized education have low expectations about what the school can offer their children, as explained below:

The parents say: ‘What I want is for my child to learn to add, subtract, multiply and divide, because that will already generate an income since I will be able to put him to work in a store’. (Department of El Quiché)

This subject in particular can generate erroneous interpretations of the different points of view presented, by confusing the priorities of the parents (daily livelihood) with the aspirations they have for their children (improvement through education) and putting on the table contradictory ideas from the different stakeholders. It is mentioned that the parents have low expectations about scholarized education, mainly those parents who are illiterate or have a low level of schooling, which is a limitation to accessing a life that demands beyond the basic competencies of mathematics, reading and writing and an ample vision of what further access to knowledge means. However, parents usually do their best to enrol their children in school, although according to the statement of some of the interviewees, their aspirations are limited frequently to offering them an elementary (primary) education as the maximum goal to achieve (these aspirations coincide with the limited access offered by the State itself for middle education services in different regions of the country). The confusion is to assume that their preference to have their children work relates to their low aspirations on what education can offer for a future life, when in reality it could mean postponing or
limiting these aspirations to take care of immediate needs (for example, daily food).

This way of thinking has been, it is not new, ok, it is a way of thinking that has been passed
generation to generation and that if we think about the family, the parents are the main
element of society to guide these children towards development, but if I as a father did not
have access to education, I do not value education because I don’t have it, and when I talk
about education I mean education received at school, enriching our intellect, because there is
also the education of a person who knows how to deal with people, who has principles and
values. But what you learn in school is generational, those parents who have had access, even
if a little, or a lot, are the ones that at a certain time say, let’s assess and help our children get
it, this is why I think it is fundamental for any project or education support to communicate
with the parents, to teach our parents who are already old, the parents to help them
understand that the best inheritance they can leave for their children is an education, and in
this sense any sacrifice they make for their children to be able to attend school, is important.
(Department of Escuintla)

Based on these attributions, some stakeholders at the meso-level recommend that it is necessary to
start by raising awareness in the family about the importance of education. Interestingly, this action
leaves it at the discretion of the father or mother who received the information, the decision of
whether or not to fulfil his/her child’s right to an education, and this could mean that some students
will be left out of school.

The families do not have the habit, they are not used to sending their children to school. There
are different reasons for this, one of them is that they do not trust the school. I remember a
parent who has always questioned me because he is very scared of school and I have always
asked myself what did that person go through in school to be so scared to send his younger
children to school. So how to understand that there is also a story behind this, a habit or
tradition based on what their families have lived through, which makes them scared of
attending to school, and they do not want to expose their children to this. (Department of
Escuintla)

I also think that there is a connection with the parent’s level of schooling, those who have
been able to reach the diversified high school level or the university level aspire to have their
children reach this level. (Department of Huehuetenango)

In summary, stakeholders at the meso-level in governmental and non-governmental organizations
recognise education as a right for all. This constitutes significant progress in the country. However,
this concept of education as a right varies depending on the region and depending on individual
variables pertaining to the context and the different vulnerable groups. These variations in speech
are reflected in the way in which the right to an education will be met, which is not always in an
inclusive way and shows a range of options of segregation, mainly with respect to groups that are
different from the dominating majority. The education aspirations may be influenced by priority
needs and the ideas or previous experiences of the adults, which leads to the idea of the need to
disseminate information on the importance of and the right of all to an education.

Function and aspiration

Education as a motor for development. From the point of view of the majority of stakeholders at the
meso-level, there is an evident relation between education, aspirations and quality of life of the
individuals and their communities. Education is considered as a means to bring dignity to the person,
something that allows them to integrate into society and allows them to fight the problems that
affect their living conditions. The lack of an education has a negative impact on their capacity to face the challenges ahead, as shown by the following quotes.

- It is necessary to study to get a good job they tell you, and that shouldn’t be the case, ok, that is, it is necessary to study to improve yourself, to get to be someone, to integrate to society, not a consumption society but a society of knowledge. It is necessary to study (only) to get a good job, so education is seen as something commercial. (Department of El Quiché)

- I would think without a doubt that education is basic, it is the key to development, to the advancement of a community, a people, and that it is this service, to put it like this, that is responsible for this, and that means that if you want to change the indicators, let’s say the human development index of the community and the country, it is necessary to begin by improving the levels of education. (Department of Huehuetenango)

- They have been able to make a living as day workers, working out on the fields, with a wage that is not over 2,000 quetzales, so here [education programme] they have a career as electricians, mechanics, they will be able to earn that, they will generate 5,000 quetzales, 6,000 quetzales and that will change these families for the better, it can be that they change houses, or they change cars, they will generate this in five years, so in little time they have a better life. (Department of Escuintla)

- So when we find a problem and we look into it deeply, we realize that it is necessary to strengthen education to overcome the different problems we have in Guatemala. (Department of Guatemala)

The evidence reported shows differences in the aspirations linked to education. For some, it works for a common good (development of the country) while for others the emphasis is on the individual (self-development). It is also asserted that education brings hope and aspirations, but education will only fulfil its function when it becomes an education of quality. This marks an interesting topic for discussion in relation to inclusive education, from the perspective of developing countries, since it questions social inclusion for all individuals with no distinction, for their own social mobility (self-development) and to make them agents of innovation and change in society (development of the country). IE is the beginning of social inclusion. Therefore, access, acceptance and participation need to be analysed within this larger context.

*The school will be the one to change to story of the family; that is, they put their full trust, their dreams, on the school ‘If my child goes to school he will be someone better’. (Department of Escuintla)*

*Families leave disappointed for the education available. In Escuintla we know some boys who have graduated from high school with so much effort that is hard to imagine. Working all week to go to a mediocre institute on weekends where we know they won’t be able to find a job ever with the training they received but they place their hope there because the mothers feel that piece of paper is worth it, they never had it but their children will have it. (Department of Escuintla)*

Some stakeholders at the meso-level are of the opinion that education, as a motor for change, needs
to be modern and forward-looking: it needs to teach initiative, creativity and entrepreneurship to promote social mobility. It is also suggested to take advantage of the interest the population has for technological advances, and to use this a way to favour learning opportunities.

*I would like to have education in all the communities where there is nothing I would like to have schools where there is no access, not even rural roads, let alone education for the children. I would like to see my department like this in five years, mainly with respect to technology, if we were all up to date and technology would continue to advance, we would be able to get a grasp on technology, to teach our children.* (Department of Huehuetenango)

For the informants at the meso-level, the link between personal and social development, quality of life and education is evident. The latter is a genuine aspiration of the population, although the living conditions of some hinder them, and these aspirations are put on hold because of the need to look after basic needs. However, poverty does not justify delays in education. On the contrary, it requires looking for opportunities in favour of relevant and useful learning in the modern world. This is clear when considering education as a link with the labour context, as explained below.

The study revealed that in some of the regions there is a shared idea that education requires a connexion with work opportunities that leads to social inclusion. Some opinions even establish a direct link and condition between work opportunities and social inclusion, a situation that shows great weakness in the current education system, as there is no link between education offer and work requirements. In addition, the national education system needs to respond to the work demands, national and international, to achieve modernization and bring about the changes that the country needs, without cutting the education programmes from the national context, its history and cultural characteristics.

In addition, it is necessary for some to ensure that education offers include aspects of academic training and aspects that relate to work, i.e. practical competencies that will enable people to generate an income. Some examples are reported, which combine education based on the national basic curriculum and practical education generally orientated to generating small enterprises.

In summary, at the meso-level, the education offer needs to be adapted to the characteristics of the context and the economic activity, so that the people who finish in the education system find job...
opportunities to achieve their social inclusion and contribute to the development of their own regions. At the moment, there is a lack of relation between the education offer available and the demands of the regions, although there are actions in place oriented to this. It was also mentioned that those who successfully finish in the education system frequently find their expectations to incorporate into the work field thwarted and at times they return to the traditional activities of their families, even if these do not require an increased investment in scholarized education.

According to the informants, these perspectives require the involvement and active participation of different stakeholders, in particular teachers. There are hopeful examples of individual and collective efforts in support of education for all, which favour access, permanence, acceptance and participation of the students in the system. Following are two quotes that show these joint efforts in favour of education. The first quote shows the work developed by a teacher who built a support system to teach how to read to a student who tragically lost his sight.

The attitude of the teacher is very important, instead of Braille, the teacher had a board with caps, I don’t know how she did it, but she used to tell me: I have searched on Internet, I have trained myself on Internet because it is necessary. So she really loves him [her student] and she would find the way. She had a Braille with caps and he would touch the board. She told me the story that another child had shot him with a gun and hit him, he hit him in the eyes with shards, they took him out in a helicopter, I don’t know where they took him. (Department of El Quiché)

The second example shows how decisions work to define access to education in contexts characterised by poverty, and how a collective commitment can be built in support of each other.

Well, I used to tell them, the father says he has no capacity and it is all about money, ‘I would like to help my children study but I can’t’, so you need to pair them, this one studies so many years and the other one so many. Sometimes one is quite smart and he says ‘I will tell my brother’ so they push each other (support one another). And in Huehuetenango there are professions who serve as examples of life, where one became a professional and the other one was committed to helping the other one and that one the other. In Nentón there was an organization of professionals in which teachers got organised and said ‘Friends, that one is the poorest in Nentón, but he is smart’, let’s help him study until he becomes a teacher under the condition that when he graduates, he must promise to help another one. And this has become quite the chain in Nentón, Huehuetenango, and they have been outstanding, so there have been strategies, a bit entrepreneurial but without the raw material, but at least some actions are there, at sight. (Department of Huehuetenango)

The two previous examples lead to the conclusion that at the meso-level, education is an asset highly valued by people, although it is sometimes delayed because of the precarious living conditions which dictate other priorities. Education can change living conditions, open new horizons and contribute to individual and collective wellbeing. Education is a right recognised by all, but fulfilled differently for ones and for others. Each context has its particular characteristics. Education programmes need to take these into account to ensure that education options are linked to potential sources of work which favour social inclusion. The human quality and commitment of people are other attributes identified among the people of the different regions, which suggests that by uniting efforts, positive changes can be brought about.

3.2.3.1.3 Micro-level
The inclusion perspectives described in this chapter summarise the opinions expressed by micro-level stakeholders, both those related to the school and those who work outside of the school but are
contributing to the development of education in their communities. According to the reports presented, there are five perspectives on inclusive education: 1) education as a right for all, but not the same for everyone; 2) academic expectations; 3) the roles involved in education and their compliance; 4) inclusive education for those outside the system; and 5) the classroom, a place with a homogeneous methodology for different students.

A description of each perspective identified is given below. It was noted that some are similar to the perspectives of macro- and meso-level stakeholders, although the explanations and arguments show specific variations when analysed from the local point of view.

1. **Education as a right for all, but not the same for everyone**

Reports indicate that education is recognised as a human right for every person. However, meeting this right is restricted or limited by particular conditions or situations that characterise the individual who enjoys this right, i.e. there are different interpretations about who enjoys the right and how it must be met. Among the conditions or situations that limit the right to an education the following were mentioned: girls/mothers, persons with special education needs with or without disabilities, over-aged students who can be repeating or not, migrant students and students linked to criminal groups (gangs), roles attributed to the girl. The arguments on how to meet the right to an education differ, depending on the assessment made of each case.

For the case of pregnant girls, their continuity in school is determined by the attitude assumed by education authorities who need to mediate between the right of these girls to an education and the rejection of the education community prompted by their personal situation. Standards are applied in an ad hoc manner, depending on the decision taken by the education authority. There is also evidence in two of the education centres that adjustments were made for pregnant girls to help them continue with their studies, although the measures taken in some cases were exclusive themselves (distance learning with no medical orders). A times modalities achieve the goal of retaining the girls for a few months more, but after the birth of the baby they stop working because the new mother finds it hard to continue with her academic activities as she is busy taking care of her baby. It was also remarked that when there is institutional support, the right to an education is met at least during the pregnancy.

> Since she had her baby, [name] came back. She got pregnant halfway through last year; we gave her the chance to come during her pregnancy, to take her exams. She had her baby in September, she took three bimesters [two months period] only and we gave her a certificate, and she came back to study sixth grade. The problem is that with the baby, everything is different. So she would come two days and then miss two days. She continued studying during half a year and then dropped out. She said it was better to drop out, that she was thankful but the baby wouldn’t let her do her work. Last year a similar case dropped out. This year she tried to come back, she came during the first two months and then she stopped. We know that they leave and they come back but they have completely different responsibilities, it is hard, they have nobody to look after the baby and if they do, they have no time for us to work with them in the afternoons to reinforce something or to tell you that they would be thinking there, the same maternal instinct doesn’t allow them to study. (Principal Inclusive School Case)
What is in the future for these ladies? The majority won’t study. They stay there, with their children. Many times, their boyfriends don’t really support them, so they are alone with their parents but when that is not the case, the stay with another relative, but they don’t really get prepared, they won’t have a profession, they have too many limitations. (Municipal psychologist when talking about teenaged student moms Case of Urban Marginal School and Case of Inclusive School)

The right to an education for persons with SEN with or without disabilities is met, if the following conditions exist, as reported in the different study cases: a) when the teacher is willing to receive the student in his or her classroom (ad hoc measure); b) if infrastructure barriers can be overcome by the person attending school; c) if the parents are able to overcome their feelings of shame or their fear of rejection that their child could face; and d) if the child presents an SEN as long as it is not a severe mental retardation. In summary, complying with the right to an education in a regular school for persons with SEN with or without disabilities is dependent on a series of factors that work together, including attitudes of decision-makers, which play a determinant role.

We also have a child with Down Syndrome, but he is here to socialises mainly, because he used to be in the special school and he was already in fourth grade. They tell us that there they need to advance one year independently of whether they have learned or not. He knows some letters, he can’t read and he is in fourth grade, I would prefer if he were placed in first grade here at school. We asked the CTA and they said you can keep him there but the system won’t allow you to enrol him in first grade, because the system shows he is in fourth grade. (Interview with Ladino Enclave Principal)

I definitely see it as everyone having the same rights regardless of any physical, socio-economic challenges, but it is not all of us who put this into practice. It is written in the law (but) in the practice I don’t see it being applied. Until last year they started talking about special education, to train us. They have come from the Departmental Directorate to have meetings, actions that we must implement, and that the children have the right to be included with the other children, but the truth is they don’t do it. They haven’t been accepted in other establishments, so we definitely accept students here regardless of external factors, religion, economic status, special conditions, physical conditions, nothing. We receive the student regardless of this. And although we are, how to say this, we are not trained, my colleagues do what they can, and they do wonders with them. (Principal, Inclusive School Case)

Over-age was another issue questioned when talking about complying with the right to an education in a regular school. There are different points of view in the schools analysed in this respect. The inclusive school has adopted an acceptance policy for over-aged persons and established standards or conditions that must be met to remain in school. In the other schools, the over-aged population is considered a problem for the students and the teachers, as there is no learning methodology that adequately responds to the students’ characteristics and education needs. Parents also gave contradictory opinions. For some, schools must exclusively accept students within the age range stipulated by the Ministry of Education for each academic level. For others, it is not right to deny over-aged youth the opportunity. For the school located in the rural area, over-age and being a woman form an intersection of conditions that leads to the affirmation that studying is no longer an option for that person and that she needs to abandon school and assume her role in the family. The point that needs to be debated, again, is that the right to an education varies depending on certain characteristics of the students.
Here we have many over-aged children; they are not denied the opportunity. Although the suggestion is that they should be in establishments that are specifically for them; however, remember that not every place has a night school or not every place has somewhere to go, at least here there are no adequate places to help these children continue studying primary school. Here the boy respects certain norms and the father helps because over-age can be addressed. But if the child follows the parameters, it is possible to work with them, to ensure that this right is not denied to them. So the ideal would be to have adequate places for over-aged persons. (Teacher Inclusive School Case)

The Ministry of Education says that it is necessary to give priority to first graders aged seven to twelve. But that there shouldn’t be older kids. But if the Ministry of Education issues that order, it needs to be respected by the school, because if the Ministry says, no more kids, the school just accepts, so no, but that was the opinion she gave, to send them to an adequate place to study. (Focus Group Fathers Urban Marginal School)

We all deserve a second chance and children are not to blame because their parents enrol them in school too late. And for younger kids to mock them, or parents to forbid them to: ‘Don’t befriend him because he is over-aged, he will put things into your head’. There are older children that do have a good education. (Focus Groups Fathers Urban Marginal School)

Here in our community, when they reach 15 or 16 years of age, people criticise them, they are women, they are old, and they should get married. I have heard people in our community criticise the older students of our school saying that they should get married and not be studying, this is discouraging for the young ladies, that is what some people think. Instead of helping a 16-year old girl, they discourage her, but well, if everyone would tell her to study, to fight, If everyone were to cheer her up, she would get motivated, but what they do instead is discourage her through criticism, what they do is force them to quit their studies. (Focus Group with Mothers, Multi-Grade School Case)

Being a woman and aspiring to continuing with your studies can create tensions when addressing the right to an education. Again, the idea that women do not need to study because they will become mothers and wives comes up, so education is not a priority.

We have also seen that the majority of the kids are studying. At the primary level we do see many girls, but at the basic secondary level, the presence of girls or female teenagers in class is scarce. I imagine that this is because the ideology, since there is a macho attitude here that doesn’t allow girls to have the same opportunities to study. (Other Informants, Micro-level, Multi-Grade School Case)

The right to an education for migrant children is also questioned. When it relates to internal migration, the migrant can learn to relate with the group that frequently discriminates him. When parents migrate to another country, the adults that are responsible for the care of the child do not always provide the attention required.

There are children that migrate, who come from other departments, and you ask them, ‘What are you doing?’, ‘I am here, trying to earn a living’, ‘So, are you studying?’, ‘No’, they say, ‘because I don’t have time, because I am working’. It is hard to see here a street child or a working child who looks for a way to study, some work as shoe shiners in the morning and study in the afternoon or vice-versa, but this is not common, but I have found boys and girls out on the street, selling gum, candy, cookies, chocolates to make a living who don’t study, it is a rather large group. (Other Government Officers, Agro-Industrial School)

Finally, there are children and youth linked to criminal groups, for whom there is a certain level of
reserve and questions about the advisability of accepting them in a regular school; i.e. allowing them the right to an education. In some cases, the families are the ones linked to gangs and they take advantage of this situation to create fear among the teachers, so some reject the idea of receiving these people in school.

*Here at the school there is one case of a girl who is studying. Her brothers belong to a gang; even her mother when she took her to class with a teacher, the teacher says she was very angry. The mother came and told the teacher, if you do anything to my daughter, the school won’t be large enough to drag you around (physically harm you). (Focus group, fathers, Urban Marginal School)*

In summary, education is recognised as a human right at the local level. However, compliance is questioned in the light of aspects that differentiate some people from others.

2. **Expectations about education**

Micro-level stakeholders stated that their aspirations with respect to education encompass three dimensions. The first is that it is considered as a means for a person to be placed in a job and become autonomous. The second is for the person to fulfil his/her professional aspirations and become an agent of change in the community. The third perspective relates to a higher expectation of self-accomplishment, which begins with the recognition that the lack of freedom produces ignorance and how an educated person can open a range of possibilities for itself, its community and the development of the country.

Following is a description of each expectation, indicating the variations between the study cases. While reading about these aspirations, it is important to keep in mind that they are a reflection of the desires of the ordinary citizen, those who live day by day, those who trust and work for what they believe.

The priority of education according to micro-level informants is to help a person obtain access to job opportunities. The objective of education is mainly utilitarian and the credibility of the investment made in years of study is questioned, generating tension when someone who graduated cannot gain access to work opportunities. As explained in the following quote, this situation drives people to migrate to other countries.

*Sometimes parents don’t want their children to study because of the work situation, because there isn’t much work, they conclude their studies and there is no work, they graduate and there is no work, even some are professionals and there is no work. Only a few are working and the majority just stays at home, this is why they decide to leave for other places. (Local Leader, Monolingual School in Bilingual Context)*

A second expectation expressed by micro-level stakeholders is that they hope people will achieve their professional aspirations through education. There is a wide range of opinions about the expectations that surround academic achievements. For some parents, their maximum hope is for their children to learn to read and to acquire basic mathematics skills, while for others, expectations are oriented to university academic achievements, which for them is ‘a privilege’.

*And God willing in ten years this boy will graduate. (Mother, School in an Agro-Industrial Context Case)*
Well, for me, it will be as you say in twenty years, hopefully my son will be a lawyer, or a doctor, or a mechanic, it would be a privilege for me if that were the case, that’s all. (Focus group with Fathers, Urban Marginal School)

Well, the father wants her to finish the third grade of basic secondary school and become a teacher, a doctor, but she needs to cooperate. That is what the father wants for his daughter. He says that he does not want to send his daughter to work at a tortilla show when she turns fifteen or sixteen; he says he feels he is responsible for her until she turns twenty. (Focus Group with Mothers, Multi Grade School)

It is important to stress that the opinions of some parents coincide with what was expressed at the meso-level when looking at the type of careers offered by the education system at the moment, and the possibility to diversify the education offer, as seen in the following quote.

We want for our children to become lawyers, get a degree, get experience as a doctor, airplane pilot, ship captain, that is what we want, also soldiers, commanders, or musicians, that is what we want. (Parent, Monolingual School in Bilingual Context)

Personal aspirations add up to the expectations of some micro-level stakeholders, which are oriented towards a collective benefit to the communities, i.e. local actors value education as a common asset, an issue that is described in more detail in the following perspective on inclusive education.

So education, we are telling our youngsters that they need to have it; we are using it to promote culture, which is what we are seeking, because we know that a municipality with a better level of education will result in more developed people in any domain, but this is a long-term vision. (Municipal Authority, Case of Urban Marginal School and Case of Inclusive School)

The third expectation relates to the higher aspiration of what education can offer people, what is called self-accomplishment, which in the terms used by the informants means: “learning and moving on” (mother, inclusive school case), “having goals and being able to achieve them, graduating to take your own decisions, becoming great soccer players” (mother, Ladino enclave), “to be an example and a source of motivation to other people, that in Guatemala we can also make it, not only in the United States” (municipal authority, Ladino enclave), “making an effort to achieve what you want” (father, monolingual school in bilingual context).

The previous paragraph summarises what is considered inclusive education in this research from the point of view of micro-level stakeholders. There is a bigger idea in addition to this personal dimension, which might differentiate the emic vision from other developing countries with respect to the meaning of access, acceptance and participation in school. Education is not always seen as a key that opens doors for a person, but for a whole community. For micro-level informants, the lack of an education means lack of freedom, being dependent on others, feeling shame for not understanding the world around us, or experiencing ‘a little sadness’ for not being able to communicate in another language, as shown in the following quotes.
I don’t want them to be like us who don’t know a thing because they should at least learn something, to get to know something. Because I know it is necessary, but everything is necessary, studying is necessary, but unfortunately we did not get a chance to go to school. In our case they ask us to go to a certain address and we don’t know where to go. They tell us: ‘Take that bus’ and it is as if we were blind because we don’t know how to take a bus. Some don’t because a lot of people. When you ask, they say: ‘Aren’t you ashamed to be asking for directions?’ So I tell my children that we don’t want for them what happened to us. (Mother, Inclusive Case School)

We need to find a solution to our little sadness because the majority, in the first place doesn’t speak Spanish and we can’t progress like that, but when we do speak it, we realise we can find a solution. (Focus Group, Fathers, Multi-Grade School Case)

On the other hand, access to education means the option to ‘awaken’, the option to change your living conditions, the possibility to contribute to the common good and to transcend to other levels of long-term development that will contribute to the development of the country, as explained in the following quotes.

Studying is good for me, learning is good because it awakens you, and it takes the blind from your eyes and puts you in charge, that’s why it is good. (Father, Monolingual School in Bilingual Context)

Here is where they need to set aside other situations and work for the wellbeing of all, and I think that they have been working for some time like this, to contribute. I was telling you about the case of equal education, without separations, which has been supported at all levels. (Local Leader, Ladino Enclave Case)

Well, I believe that in a way we always take a traditional stance, as an example the comments made by some parents, but this is not what prevails, the comment of why children need to study if they won’t find a job anyway, but we definitely find that education will always be an economic and social opportunity anywhere you go. In this sense what we are looking for is a long term vision as a municipality, as an agricultural municipality, because they have this calling, to turn it into an agro-industrial municipality, if you look at it that way, that is their calling too, this municipality has very good places, to turn the municipality into this, a municipality that can welcome tourism centres, in fact, we have some that are financially growing, regardless of whether we have support from governmental or non-governmental organizations, so we have them and we want to encourage them to become focal points of economic attraction. (Municipal Authority, Urban Marginal School)

Participant 1: I organised an activity. What do you want to be when you grow up? Most want to be doctors, engineers . . . the biggest trouble maker in the classroom and the most hyperactive boy said he wanted to be a gang member . . . when everybody left I asked him: why do you want to be a gang member? They are strong; they are always leaders, Miss. Participant 2. I did the same thing, a boy told me he wanted to be a drug dealer . . . he said, they have many women and a lot of money. (Teachers, Case of School in an Agro-Industrial Context)

In summary, expectations related to inclusive education derived from the ideas of micro-level stakeholders pose three aspects that need to be achieved: the option to have a job to gain autonomy; professional development as a means to achieving social mobility; and the self-accomplishment that a person can achieve for itself and for its country.
3. Roles involved in education, their compliance and existence

Another perspective addressed by micro-level informants relates to the fact that in order to achieve the purposes of education, each stakeholder needs to take responsibility for it, to assume his role and do his part. According to what was said, there are duties in the education community that belong to the parents, others to the teachers and the directorate of the education centre, and yet others to the students. Furthermore, at the local level, the role of municipalities in the context of education is generally recognised. It is sad to think that if everyone did their job as expected, the expected objectives could be achieved.

But everything is the responsibility of the parents, not to allow them to have the option of not sending their children because there are other needs like eating, dressing, and that they need to feel that they must comply with the child’s education needs because I have seen people that feel that they can’t afford to leave their children out of school, because there are parents who have the possibilities, but they are not conscious of the importance of this. (Principal, Ladino Enclave Case)

There are many who are more concerned about house chores. They pay more attention to their problems and leave their children aside, and I think this cannot be the case. The responsibility doesn’t fall completely on the teachers, it also falls on the mothers, we need to be concerned about our children and come to school and ask: ‘How are they behaving? How are they doing in class? Are they paying attention or not?’ (Mother, Case of School in Agro-Industrial Context)

It is obvious that in the six cases studied, which represent different contexts and regions, there are questions about the Ministry of Education’s compliance. Different stakeholders at the local level recognise that the municipalities are assuming responsibilities that in their opinion correspond to the Ministry of Education and that these responsibilities are growing, starting with the construction of school buildings, but they are being expanded to other areas like the hiring of teachers or support staff. They even question the importance of articulating with the governing body, when issues are being increasingly solved at the local level.

The municipality here, well pays the janitor, pays the guards, pays the teachers, the supervision secretary; so the problem we have now is that the Ministry of Education is not covering the positions it should, because this is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. (Municipal Authority, Case of School in Agro-Industrial Context)

A great difficulty here on the side of the Ministry is that they haven’t assumed their commitment towards the communities, so now, parents say, it is better to keep our children at home than to leave them in the classroom, because they are violating their rights. We have other problems, there are classrooms that need painting, others that don’t have desks. As a municipality, we have changed the roofs, we are paying the diversified secondary school teacher but the law doesn’t allow us to pay for teachers, because there is a Ministry that must comply with these commitments. (Municipal Authority, Monolingual School in Bilingual Context)

4. Inclusive education for those outside the system

Another perspective inferred from the analysis of the evidence presented by micro-level stakeholders refers to the right of individuals, regardless of their age, to have access to education. It is recognised that the Ministry of Education, with the support of the municipalities, offers services for adult persons who cannot read or write or who cannot study because of their work, so they are
taught during special hours and shifts. They also mention that the challenges to reach out to persons outside the education system are huge and this is even worse in the rural areas.

Here on Sundays we are teaching adults and minors, those who didn’t finish their primary education, they are finishing it here, and those in the basic secondary cycle graduate on Sundays here. We have almost everything close by. What we don’t have is money. (Mother, Case of School in Agro Industrial Context)

The challenges are huge, because here, with CONALFA, that is the name, right? We have been helping them, we want to have a municipality that is free from illiteracy, and we really want to have a developed municipality in this area. (Municipal Authority, Ladino Enclave Case)

In summary, the micro-level has a clear perception that there are segments of the population who are out of school and who also have a right to an education, so access to alternative services offered by the Ministry of Education is highly valued.

5. **The classroom, a place with a homogeneous methodology for different students**

Finally, at a macro-level there is a relevant perspective that helps understand the practice of inclusive education and the challenges faced for its implementation in the school context. The micro-level confirms what is described in the macro-level perspectives, namely that in the classroom, teachers are faced with a reality characterised by a school population confronted by different risks or situations that could lead to describing them as vulnerable. As explained in the following quote, in a group of 30 students, there might be multiple social and economic problems with which the teacher needs to deal.

I am a bit sorry because a Mayan student show up, but I have 30 children who have problems, violence in their families, nobody pays attention to them, they don’t eat, they only eat one meal a day, they live alone, some are the children of prostitutes, there are children who, the majority I believe, from the whole group three or four have their mom and their dad, there are fathers who . . . I am sorry but I have a tremendous group, there are a lot of problems, some are children of gang members, of those who charge an extortion, so what do I do? So you need to explain things to him over and over again and he finally understands, because nobody helps him at home, because if you were to ask him for a clip about the sense of taste (Teacher, Urban Marginal Case)

The question asked by the teacher in the above quote, about what to do in the face of the challenges posed by diversity, seems to be a pending issue in the agenda for inclusive education in contexts such as the one analysed in this research. Evidence shows that what the teacher is able to achieve depends on the following: a) the context of the school and the measures taken to provide attention to the individual needs of the students, so for some it is a challenge and for others it is a problem; b) attributions given to the teachers because of the differences of their students and their own capacity to handle this. In this sense, teachers feel competent to manage some differences, for example different learning rhythms, attention to individuals with motor or language disabilities, as explained below.
We have the case of a boy in sixth grade. Can you say the word insufferable? He is always teasing everybody, he hits, he pulls the hair of the girls and if we go to his house, the father is on drugs. And when you call the mother, she says: ‘Miss, I can’t stand it at home, I can’t stand him, I don’t know what you do with them, but I can’t control him’. In these cases there is nothing we can do, we talk to the children, I talk to them, asking them to behave, to change, to study to have a future, so that they don’t need to go through what they are going through at home. But it is very, very hard. (Principal, Case of School in Agro-Industrial Context)

In the case of the inclusive school, there are reports about efforts to provide attention to the school population, in addition to persons with SEN with or without disabilities, who are accepted in regular classrooms, which adds an element of challenge to the issue of managing diversity in the classroom. Some of the challenges identified relate to the procedures used to establish the academic needs of a student and how to coordinate the work of the school with other support services. There is evidence that shows that at times the ‘diagnosis’ is made in an empirical way, but more to respond to an administrative requirement than to guide the training for that particular person in the classroom.

Experience reported shows that the teacher, as well as other members of the education community require support systems (training, accompaniment in the classroom, support services) to look after a very diverse school population.

Consequently, the many challenges faced by the teacher in the classroom, with the students, do not necessarily result in the use of differentiated learning methodologies. As seen during the field work carried out, teachers face challenges in the administration of their time and structuring of the learning activities. In addition, they had difficulties in several cases to control the group and generate an environment conducive to active learning. The activities observed were, in general, more repetitive than the result of reflection, as described in the participation dimension.

In summary: in order to achieve acceptance and participation as daily practices in the classroom, educational methodological tools are needed to generate a climate that favours learning and offers rich experience, which in turn leads to learning opportunities.

### 3.2.3.2 Barriers

#### 3.2.3.2.1 Macro-level

This research intended to identify barriers that have an impact on inclusive education. This chapter explains the barriers identified by stakeholders at the macro-level. In the first part three barriers related to the education system are described. Afterwards, the second part presents access barriers contemplated in the notion of inclusive education and which relate to what makes it difficult or prevents a person from entering a quality education system and remaining in it until successfully concluding.

**First Part: Barriers in the education system**

According to the results, there are three barriers faced in the education system: 1) an education system that faces financial limitations; 2) the administration of education services; and 3) the conception and administration of non-scholarized and mixed modalities educational programmes. Before presenting each of these elements, an explanation is provided on the contradictions observed while analysing the information which relates to the barriers to inclusive education.

The data obtained in this research coincides with previous research work (Asturias, Escobar, & Sazo...
2011), which indicates that, in view of the commitment of the Guatemalan State to provide access to education for its population in general, and in view of the fact that there are insufficient financial resources, the administration of education services is guided by ‘selective allocation’ decisions in different aspects, such as: education levels (primary versus secondary), teaching language (Spanish versus other indigenous languages), modality of delivery (intercultural bilingual education versus others), and location of schools (urban areas versus rural areas).

While this mainly relates to the situation in middle schools the selective logic applied to decisions, which are taken based on financial availability to satisfy education needs, is a key point because it explains how education policies, which try to be equitable and inclusive, arise from a reality that from the beginning weakens the possibility of achieving its objectives and therefore may unintendedly feed the exclusion of some groups in relation to others. The evidence in this research shows this contradiction in the objectives, expressed in different legal sources and education policy documents, which recognise the right to an education for all as a responsibility of the State, and the financial capacity of the State itself to achieve this. A recurrent question is: How? And in this case: How to transform the current national education system into a more inclusive education system, capable of responding to the diversity of the education population?

Following is a detailed explanation of each barrier reported by stakeholders at the macro-level.

1. **The limited financial capacity of the education system marks the rhythm and the priorities in the delivery of education policies**

The education system is guided by national and international legislation, education policies, governmental plans and, based on all this, promotes its programmes and projects for the general population and, in some cases, actions focused on providing attention to different vulnerable groups that require of an education service adapted to their needs (for example, over-aged population, population with special education needs linked or not to disabilities, adult population, etc.).

The main barrier that the education system faces is the aspect of financing, in addition to other historic and socio-cultural aspects that make the task of providing attention to a very diverse population, very complex. When considering inclusion as a matter of analysis, there is evidence that not all citizens aspire to be included in the education system, which is considered a way of exclusion according to the opinions of some of the informants. In addition, there are administrative difficulties related, for example, to the need for decentralization in the administration, and pedagogical aspects like the need to have bilingual teachers to cover 23 different languages.

Therefore, having conventions and country mandates that need to be fulfilled in specific terms, the recognition that financial resources to service all of the population with a right to an education are insufficient, and the fact that there are different needs and aspirations within the population, produce a negative pressure on the administration of services for which the Ministry of Education is responsible. Informants at the macro-level recognise the existence of important efforts to date, but question the capacity of the State to fully comply with the commitments in a timely manner.

For some actors at the macro-level, the barriers mentioned have structural roots which pre-determine the framework of action governing the education system and force a management style that is guided by certain priorities, which brings inequalities in the opportunities provided to citizens or the quality of the education services received. This assertion coincides with Asturias et al. (2011).
Yes, it would be necessary to differentiate between individual barriers and collective barriers, and admit that in the country there is a powerful structural barrier. The powerful structural barrier is that although the country admitted the discourse of education as a right, the education system continues to behave as if education were a privilege only for certain elites; namely, non-indigenous, urban population with no special needs. This concept is immanent within the education system. The education system is designed to perform this way, and this a structural barrier. As you can see, we don’t provide attention to those who have special needs because we don’t even provide attention to those who don’t; we don’t give to the indigenous, why educate indigenous peoples if what they do is plant corn; we don’t provide education for people in the rural areas for the same reason, or to girls. So there is a group of elements that are present, not only in the way in which state institutions behave, but also in the collective imagination, which accepts this as normal, exclusion as a part of life. (International Cooperation Representative)

Below is a description of the barriers reported by stakeholders at the macro-level:

**Table 25: Barriers at macro-level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial barriers</th>
<th>Legal barriers and public policies</th>
<th>Administrative barriers</th>
<th>Pedagogical barriers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First financial resources for the expanded group requiring inclusion, then the financial aspect, and a bit in relation to human resources who have the openness necessary to provide differentiated attention to reduce the risk of drop-outs or remittances resulting from a lack of an enriched context. So financial and human resource aspects would be the main limitations. (Academic)</td>
<td>Legal frameworks, policies have been put in place little by little. What happens is that gaps are huge and advancing in the path to inclusion has been very difficult and something that transcends the Ministry of Education. So it is necessary to develop more integral policies, ok, policies that look after social development. (Government Official)</td>
<td>I believe that this relates to budgets, and I repeat decentralization. There is no way, even if we had resources, today, if Congress were to make a revolution and would say, no, we will give 25 billion dollars to education, this is more than double its budget, there would be no capacity to execute these funds, because everything is centralized, so it is necessary to decentralize and to continue debating about the matter of the collective imagination, the matter of languages, culture, gender, we need to continue discussing these things to have a school that is really a place where everyone feels welcome and we can learn. (Academic)</td>
<td>There is need for increased knowledge and use of inclusive education methodologies that will guarantee learning opportunities. (Sub-Director General of Education)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, there appears to be some tension between legal mandates and education policies which recognise the right to an education and look within its current format for equity and quality of services, with the capacity, mainly financial, of the State. From a perspective of inclusive education,
this is not the problem, but the capacity to satisfy the citizens is.

2. **Management barriers: time, place and human resources for high quality education services**

The Ministry of Education faces administrative barriers; that is, the capacity to provide access to high quality and timely services. This has an impact on the conditions of the places where education practices are carried out. This is reflected, according to the informants, in the quality of the infrastructure to provide education services (conditions and location); the lack of education resources; the management of teachers; and the absence of education services for some levels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers related to infrastructure</th>
<th>Barriers related to education resources</th>
<th>Barriers related to human resource management</th>
<th>Barriers related to offer of services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schools are completely inaccessible mainly for children with physical disabilities, there are no ramps, there is no access to the classrooms. (Specialist in attention to vulnerable groups) Education centres are very far away from where they live. In some communities they have to walk 3 to 4 hours to get to an education centre. (Specialist in attention to vulnerable groups)</td>
<td>In this we have the construction of school buildings and the provision of school furniture and school materials to provide an adequate attention to these people. (NGO Representative)</td>
<td>And this means that we would also need to review the career of the teachers and the incentives provided. This is a huge challenge because we have a union that wants to treat everyone equally but the truth is, a new teacher or the one that is not liked in a school, gets the first grade as if this were a punishment and those who end up being punished are the children. (Government Official)</td>
<td>In the basic and diversified secondary cycles, we find that the education services are not public. Basic secondary studies are 50 percent public and 50 percent private. So for a child to attend secondary school, parents need at least Q100.00, even if they find a cheap school. The diversified secondary cycle is covered in 75 percent by private institutions. (Government Official)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unfavourable conditions related to access and quality of school infrastructure result from the interaction of different factors: 1) financial (limited budget of the Ministry); 2) non-compliance with the law (for example, there is a manual that regulates the construction of school buildings, but it is seldom applied); 3) accusations of institutional corruption in the area of school construction (for example, programmes like FONAPAZ have been accused of badly managing public funds and lack of clarity with respect to which public institutions are responsible for the construction and maintenance of school buildings; and 4) limited public offer of education services at some levels. According to MINEDUC, 52.87 percent of basic secondary cycle establishments and 18.31 percent of diversified high school cycle establishments are public (figures for October 2014, Ministerio de Educación, 2015).
3. 

**Concept and management of non-scholarized and mixed modalities educational programmes:**

**How to serve the non-scholarized education sector?**

The national education system works on serving the population with no access to scholarized or school education, and also those who were not able to remain in school and to conclude their studies within the scholarized system. To this effect it has created specialised institutions (Directorate General of Non-scholarized and Mixed Modalities Educational Programmes DIGEEX), the political and legal framework (for example, the Inclusive Education Policy) and a successful background on this matter. However, non-scholarized and mixed modalities educational programmes face barriers that, well addressed, could become opportunities for the inclusion of vulnerable groups. The following graph summarises the four aspects.

As reported, the existence of a specialised directorate is a door to inclusive education and thus an opportunity to reach groups outside scholarized education, although it is necessary to address the barriers mentioned before to achieve the expected purposes. The following quote illustrates the challenges ahead.

*Within the Ministry, also within the Ministry we have the name of extra-school, this sets our minds to thinking it is extra, like it is outside or in addition to school. Furthermore, but that is only my own perception, we shouldn’t call it extra, because we are a true subsystem serving a population with special characteristics. So there are difficulties that relate to budgets, number of staff, concept of extra school education, the way this is perceived by people, how to erase the stigmatization, you know, because they want to ‘schoolitise’ us too much. But they don’t stop and think that we have students who are parents, who are in jail, so they can’t be placed in a school system, do they need to do everything in the same way that a 15-year old kid would? So this is a challenge, ok, that is where we are. (Sub-Director of Extra-School Education)*
The conclusion is that the education system is facing financial barriers and administrative difficulties in the delivery of education services for all the population. In the case of non-scholarized and mixed modalities educational programmes, although stipulated by the law stipulates it and despite significant progress, there are basic challenges that need to be solved to ensure that the population outside the scholarized education subsystem finds an alternative education offer adapted to their characteristics and needs.

Second Part: Barriers linked to the access dimension

With respect to the dimension of access, the research included matters related to infrastructure (already mentioned before), offer of services and education programmes, institutional measurements, and transition between education levels. Access is understood as the possibility to enter the education system, remain in it and move from one level to the other.

Access (entry and permanence), which pertains to the whole education journey, from first level education and pre-school to diversified high school, faces barriers throughout the school trajectory. Undoubtedly, there is a common barrier that is present all along, related to the conditions of poverty that families face, which have an impact on the possibilities to access to and remain in school (for example, place of residence, in particular in rural areas, parents’ level of schooling, type of work of family members, internal or external migration of the parents).

   Living far away from a school or belonging to a family of scarce resources makes it difficult to pay for transport costs and school expenditures. (Director General of Education)

The results obtained from the informants at the macro-level stress two barriers throughout the school journey, as explained in the following table. The first barrier relates to the difficulties that arise from the beginning, when the starting points are very different for each student, depending on the life context they come from. Later on in the journey, evidence shows that the education programmes offered are not always linked to the work offers that would justify an investment by the family, because those who conclude their studies do not always find work opportunities that match their training. The second barrier also faced during the education trajectory is the constant tension generated within the families, in particular the poorest ones, by the need to fulfil the obligation to educate the children while at the same time having to satisfy other basic needs such as food and health. Children often contribute to the family’s economy and play the roles that have been traditionally assigned to them.

Following is a description of other barriers identified in the school path or trajectory.
### Table 27: Barriers identified in the educational trajectory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Initial Pre-School Education</th>
<th>Primary Education</th>
<th>Middle School and Diversified High School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pertinent school proposal linked to the realities of the life of the</td>
<td>Questions about cost-</td>
<td>No evidence</td>
<td>Questions about the benefits of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>target population.</td>
<td>benefit of this education</td>
<td></td>
<td>studying with no alternatives for social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>level. If the service is</td>
<td></td>
<td>mobility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>available, it is used.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There are gaps within the</td>
<td></td>
<td>The articulation of education and the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pre-school population.</td>
<td></td>
<td>productive apparatus is something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>important.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unequal starting point due to existing gaps (for example, malnutrition)</td>
<td>One of the big gaps is</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pre-school education and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>initial education, a 25</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>percent repetition rate in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>first grade (primary school)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tells us that one of every</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>four children enrolled</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>does not move on to the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>following grade.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>So this is already a risk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>because if he does not</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pass, the father, who has</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>scarce resources, will</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>probably think it is</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>better for the child to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>work since he is not doing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>well in his studies.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Well, coverage has been</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>expanded (pre-school)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>but we still are facing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>challenges because</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>approximately 57 percent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of the net schooling rate.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Government Official)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Government Official)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The Government Official refers to expert or official comments regarding the educational barriers and challenges.
The barriers mentioned interact with each other in a scenario of exclusion linked to poverty, as confirmed by the following quote:

*There are signs, according to SESAN, that 75 percent of the children under five years of age suffer from chronic malnutrition, under five, and this is causing deficiencies that will alter the processes of inclusion and performance or their achievements within the education system; but there is also the children coming from eminently indigenous populations who live in very complicated situations of poverty. (Academic)*

In order to complement the previous information, the document analysis of this research (see annex) includes statistics related to the retention rate and promotion of primary and first grade of secondary school. As indicated, most of the students that begin to study, remain in school until the end of the school cycle. The primary school students who finish the school year promote it, something that changes in the basic secondary cycle when less students pass the year. Both at the primary and basic secondary levels, the number of women who pass the school year is larger than the number of men. It is also noted that at the primary level, as students advance from one grade to the other, the rate of promotion grows. On the other hand, evidence reported in the interviews shows that access and permanence barriers for some vulnerable groups, like persons with special education needs linked or not to disabilities, populations in conditions of poverty, and indigenous populations show different degrees in relation to entry into the system and permanence. Persons with SEE linked or not to disabilities face greater difficulties to achieve access. Once this first
challenge is overcome, they experience the same level or risk of school abandonment or irregular attendance as poor segments of the population or those who do not speak the language.

There has been experience of significance to improve access (coverage) such as the National Programme for Self-Management for the Development of Education PRONADE and other governmental programmes like the Gratuity Programme and the Conditioned Transfers Programme, started during the 2008-2012 Administration. There are merits to and positive results in each of them, but also difficulties that have had a negative impact on access to and permanence in school, which leaves important lessons learned on planning and execution.

With respect to access, I believe a lot has been done. PRONADE at some point as a parallel programme to the regular system allowed quick access to many communities, to many children and I think this was a valuable option in its time; that is, it was a temporary resource to open schools quickly, to hire teachers immediately, without having to follow the hiring process, and expand coverage, expand access. (Academic)

In conclusion, access to and permanence in the education programmes offered by Guatemala’s education system faces barriers before entering the school programmes (for example, malnutrition), during the education journey (for example, child work) and after concluding it (for example, lack of work opportunities). The main barrier is explained by difficulties in the capacity of the families who live in conditions of poverty or extreme poverty, to support the entry into and permanence of their children in school, and the barrier placed by the State itself when guaranteeing services for all the population according to their cultural and social characteristics, and their place of residence. Both the families and the State need to take decisions to give access to education to some over others, depending on their priorities. The State tries to achieve coverage and quality in its services, but the financial challenges and the demands exercise a negative pressure because the deadlines do not match the times and processes that the country needs to achieve.

3.2.3.2.2 Meso-Level

The departments included in the study were chosen, taking into account their geographic, cultural, economic, language and social diversity, which are aspects that characterise the country and which could have an impact on inclusive education, understood as access, acceptance and participation. In fact, the chosen departments, i.e. Huehuetenango, Guatemala, Escuintla, and El Quiché, have different environments and particular characteristics which, without being representative, generally reflect the different patterns of Guatemala’s social and demographic configuration, in particular with respect to ethnicity, poverty, proportion of rural and urban areas, and language. Because of that there are management difficulties in the services offered, namely and according to the evidence found: (1) context barriers and (2) barriers for the management of education services.

Consequently, this chapter is organised in two parts to present the results contributed by the meso-level informants concerning these two barriers. The first part introduces barriers that are common to the four departments by taking into account contextual aspects, among which poverty is a common denominator; 2) poverty and place of residence; 3) poverty, internal and external migration; 4) poverty, health conditions and food insecurity; 5) poverty, crime and insecurity; and 6) poverty and inclusive education. The second part introduces barriers related to the management of education services including four aspects: 1) infrastructure problems and limitations; 2) tensions related to resources and positions related to inter-cultural bilingual education; 3) internal coordination within the Ministry of Education and other governmental and non-governmental organizations; and 4)
barriers to quality of education.

As described below, barriers to inclusion are closely related to the context in which students live. If the school population lives in a rural area, they lack food security, their environment is one of violence and insecurity, and they need to work to make a living. As a consequence, they will find it hard to remain in school for the expected number of years and take advantage of the opportunities offered by the education system. When taking into account aspects of diversity and inequality in the target population, education management proves to be a complex task.

First Part: Barriers identified by meso-level stakeholders

Following is a detailed explanation of each one of the six barriers identified with respect to the contexts and living conditions in the departments studied.

1. Poverty, work and child work

Poor or extremely poor families often do not hold formal jobs and frequently work in agriculture and/or the informal economy. Their sons and daughters are an important part of the family’s livelihood and therefore the four departments show different work activities undertaken by children and youth (for example, day workers, mason assistants, tortilla cooks, shepherds, etc.). Child work has an impact on the capacity to learn and the possibility to remain in school. According to the National Employment and Revenue Survey ENEI-2013, at the national level, 9.5 percent of children aged 7 to 14 carry out some kind of economic activity and the highest rate of child work is found in the rural areas. According to the same survey, in relation to the economic activity of the rest of the population, agriculture represents 31.3 percent of the economic activity and has the largest work force, followed by trade and services with 28.6 percent and industry with 11.4 percent.

Somebody was saying, we have a country where everything is upside down, we have two million children working in Guatemala and we also have two million unemployed adults; that is, a country where children work, while adults don’t have a job, so unfortunately you can see children everywhere working, selling, working the fields, washing cars, cleaning shoes, activities usually carried out by children. (Department of Escuintla)

Because I tell you we had a coffee farm in Patzún, and it was decided to install a school inside the farm, paid by the farm and everything. When the day workers arrived, we forced them to send their children to school and to have them study there. The following day they all left, simply because the child represented one day’s pay. (Department of Guatemala)

2. Poverty and place of residence

Poverty is more acute in rural areas, although according to the informants different contexts with marked differences co-exist in one and the same geographic region, i.e. there are micro-contexts in the same territory. For example, when observing any of the departments, there are radical differences between more urban municipalities and more rural ones, such as the Department of Guatemala, where you have the capital city and municipalities with very limited access, as explained in the following quote:

Chuarrancho is a community in which for example, it takes one hour and forty five minutes for the teacher to reach the community, that is what it would take him to get there, then to go back by bus and then walking. (Department of Guatemala)
Furthermore, within one and the same municipality, such as the one where the urban-marginal school and the inclusive school are located, enormous differences can be seen between the municipal capital city and the surrounding areas, villages and hamlets that form the rural areas of the municipality, because there are luxurious residential areas in the urban areas, surrounded by urban-marginal areas, and then the more rural hamlets, where you find unpaved roads, minimum housing, and lack of some basic services. Poverty is present in every space, but it is more acute in rural areas, while in urban areas there is more presence of the State. However, informants reported a perception of increased criminal activity that puts at risk the safety of the population.

The general and extreme poverty indexes developed by SEGEPLAN (2010) show a general poverty index of 24 and an extreme poverty 2.3 in the municipality of Guatemala. INE reports that total urban poverty is 34.97 percent while poverty in rural areas is 71.35 percent (2011).

The following quote evidences this for other department that was considered in this study:

“Our national reality is very diverse, we go to a municipal or departmental capital city and we find a very different social development situation. We walk four kilometres towards the rural areas and things change radically, and I am not saying huge distances, four or three kilometres are enough. For example, here at the municipal capital, if we go three, five blocks in that direction, towards the north, we will find a marginal urban zone where the school has no protection, has no surrounding wall, the patio is dry now but when it rains there is a lot of mud, children take their classes sitting on soda boxes, there is no sewage system there. Sanitary conditions are lacking because there are drainages on the surface and we are talking about four or five blocks in the departmental capital itself, so the situation at the national level is quite diverse, and as I repeat, we understand this well since we were born here and we have grown in Guatemala and we know our context. (Department of El Quiché)"

3. **Poverty, internal migration and external migration**

In the four departments it was mentioned that due to families’ economic conditions, they migrate internally and also to the United States. Internal migration has particular characteristics, depending on the department. Escuintla, for example, is a department that receives migrant families who work during zafra (sugar cane collection time, approximately four to six months every year), and El Quiche and Huehuetenango are the departments of origin of this migration.

Reports indicate that it is mainly adults who leave their families under the care of other relatives. There is evidence of this in the four departments, although it appears to be more frequent in Huehuetenango and El Quiché. This is confirmed by IOM (Organización Internacional para las Migraciones, 2013, p. 100), which indicates that there is a direct relation between ‘departments that eject migrants’ – among which Huehuetenango and El Quiché are mentioned – and the indigenous population.
The husbands leave for the United States and there are no children. That generation of children that fathers leave behind grow up chronologically and they conclude primary school, some continue to basic secondary school while others don’t, but the population stops growing, because there is nobody to procreate. Husbands are abroad, only mothers stay behind, and this brings down the numbers for pre-school, primary school populations, there are no more children. The reason is migration and they leave for the United States, and sometimes communities split, they split by sector and the sector is no longer enough, it doesn’t have enough children to build an establishment and sometimes establishments are created but for the same reason they split, and that means there is no enrolment. (Department of El Quiché)

Different consequences are reported with respect to the wellbeing of children and youth, and which can be attributed to the migration phenomenon. For boys, migrating from a department allows them to contribute to their family’s livelihood. The child learns to earn a living honestly by working, although it must drop out of school. Frequently, this interruption does not allow the child to return to conclude the academic cycle interrupted. It is important to mention that indigenous children frequently migrate to farms located in Ladino areas where there cannot always access bilingual education during the months when they are working, should their work allow them to do so.

Migration presents favourable and unfavourable aspects linked to children and youth according to the informants. Family separation relates to emotional and learning problems. However, the advantage is that if there is more money for the family children who do not work and they can remain in school.

The same in Huehuetenango, I think internal migration has a bigger effect than external. It is true that many in Huehuetenango are outside the borders of Guatemala, but the majority of adults and children stay here. But there is an internal migration process in which families move during harvest from one place to the other, and children receive some kind of education, they get to the farms where they say there are schools, there are schools but they will receive a different type of education, there is no continuity, in a moment’s notice to say, look, imagine harvest time here, at the end and in the beginning of the coffee year, whole families move, most go to work on the coffee harvest, not to study, so migration is a serious problem. (Department of Huehuetenango)

Well look, the truth is because they leave for the United States, on the contrary, this is an advantage, because there is a resource, so sometimes children who are at school but it is for the same reason, because their families have an income so they don’t need the child to work, ok, they at least try to help them get to sixth grade of primary school. (Department of Huehuetenango)

According to the informants, the internal migration problem linked to work and the resulting abandonment of school by the children is not a new issue. However, some informants recognise that there is no policy to address the issue, despite the provisions contained in the educational regulations. In effect, with respect to the school cycle, article 58 of the National Education Law 12-91 stipulates: “the school year will be of ten months of teaching activities, with a minimum of 180 effective days of class. It will be adapted to the geographic and economic and social conditions of the different regions in the country”
No, unfortunately there is no municipal or departmental policy that takes into account this issue, migration is clearly marked here, towards the southern coast, during zafra, during certain months of the year, in municipalities like Joyabaj, Zaculpa and the Ixil area, there is a lot of migration towards the southern coast during the zafra, now there are other municipalities with a marked migration towards the United States. However, speaking of education, as far as I know there is none, there have been efforts undertaken by the municipal authorities to prevent children from migrating, but these have not been well defined policies or there are no specific documents to take as basis, these have been isolated efforts, which in a way have given results but we have no specific information about this. (Department of El Quiché)

4. Poverty, health conditions and food insecurity

The four departments included in this research recognise that malnutrition and food insecurity exist and affect the population of each region. There are reports about the difficulties faced by families to cover the nutritional needs of their children and the consequences this has on their learning processes at school. There are reports about governmental programmes aiming to reverse the conditions of food insecurity and malnutrition affecting the population. However, the efforts made by these governmental programmes need to ensure the permanence of boys and girls in school.

I believe that an overarching issue there is poverty and extreme poverty. There are children who attend school having had no breakfast and who have no means to dress or who might have had a tortilla and this is an enormous obstacle. (Department of Guatemala)

The pact instructs us to work with children, let’s say the window of 1000 Days, the first thousand days in the life of an infant, from his conception to when he is two years old. That is the goal. Then the stage until he reaches the five years of age, I am not talking about school-aged children, because teachers can intervene there, but let’s say what we have to do, where our duties end. If they don’t attend school, if after they reach five they don’t, we don’t intervene, so indirectly it is at school. We focus on the pact during that stage, the window of 1000 days, from their conception until they are two years old. Then to ensure that children are well fed to prevent chronic malnutrition, seasonal hunger, chronic malnutrition or otherwise, what happens with the children we cannot reach, we indirectly reach the school and we can intervene there, we can give talks, or we can intervene by helping the teachers when the children know how to read and write, we go to seminars, they call us all the time to give talks about food security and nutrition, but this as general culture, because look, what happens with a child that is not well fed during this time? Well, he will be malnourished, and, what happens to his brain? Well it won’t get developed, and, what happens if he can’t develop intellectually? He won’t learn, he will turn into a talking vegetable who lives but has no physical or mental capacity to face life differently, but it is sad to recognise it, we don’t give more, maybe one day. (Department of El Quiché)

5. Poverty, crime and general insecurity

The issue of violence and insecurity is present in the four departments chosen for this research. Violence affects education because it affects all the stakeholders of the educational community. Violent surroundings related to criminal activities such as drug trafficking, human trafficking, extortions, are problems not unfamiliar in the regions studied. Violence occurs both in the public and private context, i.e. within the family. These issues undoubtedly represent barriers to access (it is dangerous to go to school), acceptance (children linked to families considered violent), and participation (lack of attendance, fear, isolation or rejection). In this particular aspect, poverty probably increases the vulnerability to these risks, since people have fewer resources to protect their
own and their families’ integrity.

*This is a department where there is a lot of informal economy, there are many commercial activities, so crime goes up and not because of the people who live here directly because many come here, so at a certain time, the environment, if you live in a convoluted context, the possibilities for a child to participate in illegal activities are higher.* (Department of Escuintla)

The same happened this year, teachers argued, that because of security issues, they had been mugged and as long as there were no police agents to escort them while they came or went, they would not come back. (Department of Escuintla)

*What we see more is violence, child violence, violence towards minors, because teenagers are physically or sexually exploited, so these are the most frequent issues, on the other hand, cases of rape, abuse by relatives or other persons.* (Department of Escuintla)

*There is a lot of movement of people involved in drug trafficking, etc., that I believe maybe in certain places of the department is affected, but not in general, there is violence, there is violence but not to say that violence and drug trafficking and this has an impact on the drop in the student population to this moment.* (Department of Huehuetenango)

Reports by informants show one of the causes identified by UNDP with respect to the high levels of violence and insecurity in the country, is related to social exclusion. However, there is no reference in the evidence about the second cause pointed out by UNDP, which relates to the lack law enforcement. According to UNDP, “these dimensions inter-relate and reinforce each other” (PNUD, 2007, p. 10).

6. **Poverty, access and participation in school centres**

It is possible to infer that the complexity of the living conditions described above has an impact on the educational experience of children and youth who enter school and explain the reasons why some cannot make it. There are multiple challenges. According to the informants, many times feelings of insecurity, or a feeling of inadequacy, which cannot be attributed to the cultural or personal characteristics of the pupil. It relates to the inability to satisfy requirements or demands that surpass the possibilities of a person or his family, and this complicates his participation and inclusion in school.

*This thing of the card becomes and obligation which is quite stupid but you have to pay the Q15 and we have five kids and he must pay. Then you have the excursions, extra-school activities that count, they are given points, so it is not optional anymore, so he has to go, you have to do it, so everything builds up, in the course of the year, and prevents many children from continuing with their education, or you stay behind, and I didn’t go because I don’t have this, I had no socks, I had no shoes, I had no food, and there is nothing to eat in the morning.* (Department of Escuintla)

*Well, someone in school must at least speak the language, speak a language that the child can understand, because sometimes he has something to say, but they don’t know who to talk to, and then they will never know, for example the issue of bullying.* (Department of El Quiché)

Offering learning experiences in the classroom for a population that is diverse in age, languages, educational needs, appears to be a task that is taken on by the education system. According to the informants, there has been progress with respect to the participation of girls in school, the attention to people with special education needs with or without disabilities, and also with respect to ethnic
and language diversity (issues addressed in the chapter about opportunities). There is a challenge in the dimension of participation when a teacher needs to communicate using the student’s mother tongue to put in place learning experiences, using bilingual education methodologies pertinent to the group. Another challenge shows in the attention to persons with SEN with or without disabilities because of the trend to offer specialised services outside the context of regular school. The following quote illustrates this.

However, this doesn’t happen in reality, because for example in many schools in the department there are no teachers who speak and understand the language of the child, so this is really a huge barrier for the boys and girls, and some still punish the child if he doesn’t understand, they treat them as animals maybe or stupid people when the truth is, as stated by a famous linguist from the United States ‘that nobody can learn in a language that is not his own’. (Department of El Quiché)

In summary, education inclusion requires taking into consideration the context and the living conditions of each person. When diversity is linked to social inequality, the panorama becomes even more complex, although not impossible to revert, since the individuals and their families face these issues constantly.

Second Part: Barriers in the management of educational services

The opinions of the informants coincide in the recognition of the difficulties faced when managing educational services, which turn into barriers to access and participation. Among the management barriers mentioned are: 1) infrastructure problems and limitations; 2) problems related to inter-cultural bilingual education, a barrier present in two of the six cases where the mother tongue is a Mayan language; 3) coordination problems inside the Ministry and with other governmental and non-governmental organizations; and 4) problems with the quality of education.

1. Infrastructure problems and limitations

The meso-level concurs in stating that infrastructure problems constitute a barrier that limits access and participation by the students. Difficulties reported include lack of maintenance of school buildings, lack of equipment, lack of basic services such as drainage and drinking water, lack of sanitary services, lack of kitchens for the preparation of the meals offered to the students. Some informants point out that, when requesting the construction of a school centre, all the procedures established by the Ministry of Education for the approval of the construction of a school building are followed. However, the informants also indicate that the technical specifications are not respected. It is not possible to discover why these are not complied with, since the informants did not provide further information.

In addition, there are reports about difficulties in the surroundings of the school which affect access. The distance between the school and students’ homes, the location of the school centre, and the proximity to very dangerous roads are some of the examples mentioned.

Infrastructure needs to improve, really, there are schools that shouldn’t be called schools, they are, well, a mess of a building that does not comply with any technical specifications that would allow us to call it a school. (Department of El Quiché)
But I have a 40-year old teacher in a classroom, with a metal sheet ceiling in Meso-3, where there are no trees that would mitigate the heat, we can’t think about what the teacher is saying, we only think about the heat, the thirst, and the teacher wants to end his class soon to be able to leave. So, infrastructure is critical. (Department of Escuintla)

So many looked for schools nearby, but the problem is the change of children, as there is only one school, the one in Palmeras, in our community, then there are others that are relatively close, but they are dangerous because there is one way to go to Puerto San José and that street is really dangerous because there is no crossing bridge or anything. (Department of Escuintla)

2. Tensions related to resources and positions on inter-cultural bilingual education

There are opinions showing that the relation between the teachers and their students still faces a language barrier in the school context. In one geographic region, different languages are spoken, and bilingual teachers are required to serve the whole population. For example, in two departments that are part of this research, and where Mayan is the dominant language, 13 languages are spoken in addition to Spanish.

This is another limitation to education, although work has been done, and two sources of bilingual teachers have graduated from here, there are many obstacles. 100 percent of the education is in Spanish and in Huehuetenango, 85 percent of the population is indigenous and of this percentage, 80 to 90 percent of the students in primary school don’t speak Spanish, the majority only speaks in their mother tongue, which is a limitation to education. (Department of Huehuetenango)

The language barrier, in fact in Meso-2, which is a municipality where several languages are spoken, so we are concerned that the student is not understanding what the teacher is saying because the teacher speaks Spanish and the student is a Mayan speaker, so the ideal would be to have bilingual teachers in the schools and to teach them in their language, following their traditions and customs. (Department of Huehuetenango)

The Ministry of Education works to cover the education demand of the multilingual population with access to the scholarized system. However, this is a complex task given the aspects that need to be met, such as the availability of teachers and educational materials in all languages and their correct location depending on the language region to be served. The opinions given indicate that this is not always achieved, and this translates into the hiring of monolingual teachers for bilingual communities, or having monolingual schools in bilingual communities, to mention just a few examples.

Furthermore, opinions express meso-level stakeholders’ expectations when the issue of bilingual education is addressed. Evidence shows that for some inter-cultural bilingual education is a priority, while for others the prevalence of the Spanish language is a means to gaining access, therefore Spanish must be learned. Although not explicitly mentioned, those who choose the second idea feel that the prevalence of Spanish fosters greater social inclusion. The following quote shows the different aspects of this issue and the considerations that need to be taken into account for an inclusive education system.
The language, there are very few communities that really don’t speak Spanish, but there are some still, although you can count them in one hand. Before it was really complicated. Today Huehuetenango has a large roads network, what I was telling you, it is really easy to get to Todos Santos. You should have come five years ago, getting to Todos Santos was a nightmare, today it is really easy, it is fully paved. This roads network also generates an awakening, communicating with anyone is easier in Spanish, ok, but a few years ago this was a problem, so we talked about the fact that some teachers were not well located. (Department of Guatemala)

In summary, inter-cultural bilingual education continues to be a relevant issue in the context of access, permanence, acceptance and participation of people in educational processes, which presents challenges when it comes to managing pertinent services for a linguistically diverse population.

3. Internal coordination problems within the Ministry and with other governmental and non-governmental organizations

In general terms, the issue of coordination is summarised in two directions. One is internal, i.e. within the national education system at its three levels (macro, meso and micro), and the other occurs between the system and other governmental and non-governmental organizations that work on related issues in their corresponding regions or departments.

With respect to the coordination within the Ministry, evidence shows aspects like the difficulties faced by the Education Departmental Directorates to serve the whole of the population in their jurisdiction. There are also reports about a number of difficulties to ensure that the decisions or policies dictated at the macro-level are successfully implemented in the classroom.

For example here in the Departmental Directorate we are just a few, for example this Sub-Directorate, with everything we need to do, we can only respond to what the Ministry asks, they ask for this and for that and it takes time. But there is a need for field staff supporting out there, exclusively to provide pedagogical guidance, we have our technical and administrative colleagues, they really spend time on administrative issues, ok, they are also technicians but some have time to visit the schools, to provide guidance but really the work is absorbing, they don’t have time to do it every day, ok, in all the schools we also need personnel to support us to ensure that policies are really implemented. (Department of El Quiché)

The Ministry designs curricular instruments, we have a very good National Basic Curriculum, but unfortunately it still needs to reach the classroom, this is the strategy being used now, there is a new CNB. (Department of Guatemala)

Concerning the coordination of the education system with other governmental and non-governmental organizations, different barriers were identified and summarised in the following table, which reflects the opinions of the meso-level stakeholders. An outstanding element is that at the departmental and municipal level there are joint actions that imply the coordinated work of governmental entities, a complex task when considering that each stakeholder responds to the requirements of its own institution and needs to report on institutional results and not on inter-institutional processes.
### Table 28: Barriers at the meso-level

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<th>No.</th>
<th>Barriers identified</th>
<th>Quotes that depict the barrier identified</th>
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| 1   | The sectorial organization of the State and the internal organization of each Ministry make it difficult to put in place inter-institutional programmes or projects.                                               | Well, but these are indicators taken some time ago, let’s look at what is happening today, the alignment we are looking for to help the Ministry of Education to really focus on the budgetary part and the actions contemplated in the zero hunger pact, very difficult with education, to focus on this directly, very difficult because the administrative part, the financial part and the executing part of each action contemplated by the Ministry are difficult to align. (Department of El Quiché)  

Tomorrow I will be meeting with the team working on this, a team of two ministries, education and health, that deal with education, this is hard to get them to accept and help in the execution, now we have achieved this and they are aware, and now comes the money and with what are you going to do it afterwards, who is going to do it? Teachers don’t want to commit, it is more work, they say. (Department of El Quiché) |
| 2   | There are multiple demands on the municipal governments but resources to meet them are scarce. In addition, local stakeholders do not always invest in education.                                                             | The new amendment to the municipal code gives a certain level of responsibility to the Municipality, also a degree of responsibility on the issue of public administration and meeting the needs of the population. We are talking about security, health, education, so the Municipality is a bit more engaged in providing attention to these demands of the population. I would say in addition to the Ministry of Education as governing authority in this area, the Municipality also plays a key role. However, the scarce municipal resources are a limitation. So even if the Municipality wants to and can and has the legal basis or the legal tools to do it, scarce resources make it difficult or limits their actions. (Department of El Quiché) |
| 3   | Programmes or projects are temporary and this results in an unsustainable investment.                                                                                                                                  | They are working on education management at the local level, they have worked with materials for the classrooms, have worked with furniture, have worked to bring training workshops for the parents, leaders, have worked on training workshops for youngsters, their work is hard; however, I regret these are all temporary, ok, because if their scope is large and the public sector and public resources can’t be compared to the resources brought by organizations, and when these are cut or they conclude, the people who were working with them stay, the demand remains. (Department of El Quiché) |
| 4   | Some governmental protection programmes are politicised and this prevents the participation of other stakeholders.                                                                                                   | What happens is that in the system of our country a lot of people have gotten comfortable, politicians basically leave people static, they make sure they are dependent on them. (Department of Escuintla)                                                                                                                                 |
| 5   | The lack of coordination of the different institutions that support education at the departmental level can represent barriers that have an impact on the operations of the school.                   | Let’s see how to integrate actions and not take out the principals or teachers, not to repeat actions, because for example in the past years activities crossed and they would ask, look, where are the teachers going/ with the plans of the Departmental Directorate? (Department of El Quiché) |
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<th>No.</th>
<th>Barriers identified</th>
<th>Quotes that depict the barrier identified</th>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Community participation is seen as a threat for some leaders and organised groups because they see criminal acts and presenting a claim could put them in danger because of a possible retaliation.</td>
<td>There are people who see this as a threat, the fact that there are Community Development Councils in the same community, which now have a voice, a vote and an opinion, to say, look, man, stop throwing your garbage in the middle of the street, that is not right, or we have seen that that person, in that house is where they are taken people who were kidnapped, that is complicated. (department is not mentioned here because of security reasons)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Lack of statistical information to establish criteria for inter-institutional management.</td>
<td>It has been hard to find criteria or standards or statistics at the municipal level. This is going to be a gigantic task and we have started to work with some indexes that we have obtained because they were developed as part of the municipal Development plans. This allows us to reach out to the municipal level. (Department of Escuintla)</td>
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To sum up: coordination on the meso-level finds it difficult to provide attention to the whole population and to ensure that the measures put in place by the senior levels are implemented in the classroom. Moreover, the inter-institutional coordination in place faces the challenge of achieving joint results between institutions whose organization does not favour the articulation of inter-institutional actions. It would seem that increasingly work is being done at the departmental level by different institutions although it is necessary to have coordination mechanisms in favour of a more efficient management.

4. **Barriers to education quality**

Meso-level stakeholders identify the following limitations in the quality of the educational services: 1) compliance of functions by some teachers; 2) methodological aspects used in the classroom; 3) modality of multi-grade schools; 4) methodology of learning assessment; and 5) lack of educational services for the middle level. All of these have an impact on the three dimensions of inclusive education as they limit access, as well as a good management of diversity, which takes into account the individual characteristics of the pupils and offers them learning opportunities.

With respect to the teachers, irregular attendance or reduced hours of work were reported, situations that discourage those who have achieved access to school. This situation relates to the distance teachers need to travel to get to their corresponding schools, which is an access barrier for the teacher himself.

*Maybe, treat the rural teacher a bit better, because there are teachers who have to travel eight hours to get to the communities, for example: Barillas, which is one of the municipalities with the most isolated and faraway villages and I feel, and I have always been of this idea, that it would be good to pay more to the rural teacher than the urban teacher, because the first one travels far away, so this would motivate him to stay from Monday to Friday doing his work. Because we know of some teachers that on Thursday are heading back home, maybe they do not agree with their salary, maybe because the community is too far away, and they need to leave their families, but I feel salaries in the rural areas should be increased, to keep the teachers motivated. And I also feel that if the teacher is motivated, he can work better. (Department of Huehuetenango)*

The issue of the learning methodology is probably a critical point for quality of education. This particularly relates to multi-grade schools, which are possibly the biggest strategy of the education
system for guaranteeing access to the rural population that needs to receive elementary education (42.16 percent of the total number of primary schools in the country are multi-grade schools, DIPLAN, 2013). However, this type of school is put in question, because in one and the same classroom boys and girls are enrolled in different grades, a situation that forces teachers to split their time and adjust the learning activities according to the grade of each sub-group of students. It is maintained that there are significant differences in the quality of education offered in the urban areas, where there is one teacher for each grade and where there are teachers for specific courses like English or computer sciences, while in rural areas teachers look after multi-grade schools for the primary level, with no education services to look after the middle level or the diversified high school level.

"So I saw there were two teachers to look after six grades, they would spend a little bit of time here and a little bit of time there, some time here, they cannot cope and I thought these children are going to pass to first grade of basic secondary school and they won’t have the knowledge that a child from an urban school has, and this is also one of the causes for school drop outs. (Department of Huehuetenango)"

"Something that is also very important is that I feel there shouldn’t be teachers with four and three grades, but one teacher per grade, because it is not possible to look after the children as they should, and this is not quality education. (Department of Huehuetenango)"

In addition, there are comments on the type of learning activity proposed, which are usually passive and/or repetitive, learning by heart, which does not always stimulate active and participative learning in the classroom, although changes have been made in this area. The evaluation practices were also mentioned, since they could be based on criteria of acceptance or rejection of the teacher towards a student and not on the competencies he might have attained.

"I want more participation, for the child to be the protagonist and the teachers find it hard to let the child be the main actor. Because the teacher is used to giving instructions, to ordering, to saying. (Department of Escuintla)"

"I will give you an example: usually in some schools there is a tradition that the teacher has 30 students, but in June or July, he has already condemned five who can’t learn. So he begins to separate them, this group doesn’t do well, then there is the mediocre group, and the group of the good students. So we criticise, what is the strategy to rescue those five? What is the strategy of those who direct to help them achieve what the good students are achieving? So the teacher follows a paradigm of classification and I can get through with these, so the others are not required to finish the year. (Department of El Quiché)"

In summary, to the contextual barriers and living conditions addressed in the first part of this chapter it is necessary to add the barriers of education management. In a context like the one described, IE requires better infrastructure conditions, coordination of services, and the development of methodologies that can take diversity as an advantage and an opportunity to learn based on acceptance and participation.

3.2.3.2.3 Micro-level
This chapter is divided into three parts to present the barriers reported by micro-level informants according to each inclusion dimension analysed in this research. The first part presents access barriers, the second acceptance barriers, and the third participation barriers.
First Part: Access barriers

The access and permanence barriers identified at the micro-level are divided into the following categories: 1) poverty and its relation/reflection in the lives of the school population; 2) characteristics pertaining to the personal and family context of the population; 3) barriers related to school infrastructure and risks linked to the physical space and its surroundings; 4) culturally differentiated academic expectations for men and women; 5) pregnancies of teenage girls; 6) difficulties to begin and continue the academic trajectory; 7) timely and sustainable management of support programmes; 8) Institutional measures that impact access and permanence; and 9) barriers to transition.

Below is a description of each barrier, which confirms that inclusive education at the micro-level faces challenges and barriers of a multi-faceted nature, which have an impact on school performance.

1. Poverty and its relation/reflection in the lives of the school population

An analysis of the evidence confirms that the population of the schools analysed faces barriers that can be attributed to their living conditions, which impact access to and permanence in school. In this respect, some common issues mentioned are: a) migration/emigration; b) work difficulties faced by parents; c) child work; and d) the fact that learners come from ‘large families’ as explained in detail afterwards.

Internal migration and emigration to other countries, namely the United States, is a common issue to the six educational centres. In the case of the school in an agro-industrial context, the micro-level confirms the assertions of the meso-level when they indicated that the department of Escuintla is a destination for internal migrants who go there to work during the ‘zafra’ (sugar cane harvest).

Internal migration happens in different ways. It can take place within the same department, when people move from one area to the other looking for a job during harvest or wanting to solve a family problem, without this bringing a change to the region where the family will reside during the remainder of the year. There is also migration from a department to other, as shown in the following quotes.

What I have seen is that they migrate from one place to another to work during certain seasons. Last year I had the case of two female students who enrolled, they stayed until March and then they were taken out and the principal said, ‘They are taken again these girls’, ‘Yes, they are moving, but I don’t know where’. And in September they show up again when they come back, one came back and the other one didn’t. This year the same thing happened, they always take them in March and they finish the year somewhere else, so I think it is because of their work. (Teacher of Inclusive School)

Some cases in which children drop out for different reasons, family problems, intra-familiar issues. What they do is to migrate but within the same municipality, they go from a hamlet to a village to another village where they feel they can live better or avoid problems. (Local Education Authority in Ladino Enclave)

Migration is an alternative to facing poverty. However, it has a negative impact on the transition from the primary to the secondary cycle, because at a certain age, youth expect to migrate to begin working on commercial activities that will allow them to make a livelihood. In the case 4 of the multi-grade school, this appears to be a shared expectation of the rural population. According to the
reports, no neighbour has been able to study for a career at the middle level, which is confirmed by the quote below. As a result they return to the work to the activities traditionally performed by their families or seek to move to other areas with more work opportunities.

As I was telling you, boys and girls do not continue with their studies because there is no money, there is one here, but he is just in basic secondary level, but he did not finish his studies, because when they enrol, they are asked to buy a uniform and this is very hard because they have no money and to finish a career they need to go to Quiché, they need to travel every day, so they can’t. They prefer to go to Guatemala to work in stores. Here at el Carrizal, there is nobody who has started a career. There is one here who is studying in Muluva [name of a village close to Carrizal], but he doesn’t know if he will be able to finish the year. I believe that he is now in the basic cycle, but just one. (Local Informant at Multi-Grade School)

And if they finish their primary school, what do they do next? They stay at home or go to work to a tortilla shop or a store in Guatemala, Escuintla or other departments. (Focus groups, Education Council of Parents at Multi-Grade School)

According to the informants, migrating to the United States is an option not only for parents, but also for students and even for their teachers, who find it more attractive to travel to that country than to continue with their studies. This is therefore a strategy to find a quick solution to their immediate needs. Informants also indicated that migration of fathers and mothers has negative effects on the aspirations and life projects of students, because their material needs are met while education does not represent an interesting option, as shown in the following quotes.

Many here really don’t do a thing. Since dad sends money from the United States, dollars keep pouring in, and they simply run errands for their mother and the mother spoils them and all. (Municipal Authority of the Ladino Enclave)

So the same thing with studying, regular, the students don’t really like it, don’t really like it, they are not interested, mainly influenced by the fact that in the United States, even a teacher, he stopped studying or what am I going to do with this, I’ll go to the United States to earn some dollars and studies are lost there, it is useless, it serves to nothing and doesn’t work for me. (Focus Group teachers of Monolingual School in Bilingual Context)

In addition, parents have problems finding job opportunities. In the six cases researched, parents’ unemployment is a barrier for children to attend and remain in school. Unemployment limits the access of the population to the different academic levels and affects their participation, since students cannot bring the work materials they are asked to. It also affects the acceptance by other students, because they are considered different since they cannot bring their materials to the classroom, and because they come from families with scarce economic resources and who cannot meet the demands of the school.

Well, here the always think about the money for the school, we also remember to send our children to school, well when they are young expenses are low, when they begin school, well the teachers help, thanks to them, but in order to continue, we sometimes don’t have money, it is true, there are institutes but you need to pay, you need a lot of money, sometimes people, people can because they support them so that they can finish their schooling, but some people don’t have enough, and they find it hard to get the money. This is even worse in the case of widows, they only get to sixth grade of primary school and they can’t continue. (Mothers Focus Group at Monolingual School in Bilingual Context)
Sometimes they also wear their shoes, like my son does when his shoes are ruined and he tells me: I don’t have shoes, my shoes are no good and I am not going to class because my peers will insult me or make fun of me because of my ruined shoes. (Municipal Mayor, Multi-Grade School)

On the other hand, just as reported by the meso-level, the micro-level confirms that boys and girls, as well as youngsters, frequently need to work. Reports indicate that boys study and work, and this puts at risk their permanence in school. With respect to youngsters, some find the possibility of working during the week and studying during the weekend, while others prefer to leave their studies and just work.

I think it is harder for men to study because they put them to work, and that is not all right. (Sixth-Grade Girl, Urban-Marginal School)

Last year a young guy who is no longer studying, he is a shoe-shiner at the market, he dropped out and his sister works at a tortilla shop and his brother is working at the market. (Focus Group-Girls, Inclusive School)

Case 4 (school from the rural area), has a particular situation when compared to the other schools in this study. It was reported that 15-year old youth need to incorporate to mandatory community work and/or migrate to the capital, while 15-year old women migrate to the capital and drop out of school to prepare for founding a family.

Well, parents don’t have that possibility and they cannot enrol, so their children only finish sixth grade and they leave for Guatemala. (Focus Group of Parents, Multi-Grade School)

And girls in rural areas? How? They are also a lost cause, because what they do is go to work in the capital, for example if they are the older sisters who are 13 years old, what parents do is send them so that they can send back money and they are able to survive and sustain the family. And it doesn’t matter if they haven’t finished their primary school? It doesn’t matter. Or maybe can already write their name, they can read and write when they finish third or fourth grade and they leave. And according to the meetings we have had in my network, leaders start talking about the custom here, and they say: ‘Well, my daughter is already 14 years old’ and they seek someone, or also here teenagers, aged 14, 15, get married. They get married, sometimes they are forced to marry. (Other governmental entities, local informant of Multi-Grade School)

Here for example, a boy who is 15 or 16 years old, does he work or not in the community? Here with 15 or 16 year old boys, their obligation is to start working for the community. Afterwards their obligation is to pay a quota, but just like my grandson is working, he works. Until he is 8 years old he begins giving a money quota. It depends on the amount requested, which could be a Q25 quota, the same for every child over 18, now for those who are 15 or 16 years old it is mandatory for them to work, they need to add up to the community list. There is a notebook and work is controlled there. People over 18 years old are required, it is an obligation for them to work and give a quota depending on the amount requested. (Community Mayor, Multi-Grade School)

In summary, the combination of fathers’ and mothers’ unemployment and the job carried out by boys, girls and youth represents a barrier to access to and permanence in school. Community work and a lack of opportunities in the rural area complicate access even more as well as the ability to continue with studies.
The last aspect mentioned by the informants is called ‘large families’, a term that is hard to explain because it implies a value judgment that could be biased by the researchers’ perception. Reviewing the evidence showed that people do not necessarily mention a number of boys or girls, therefore making it possible to establish whether a family is large or not. However, the expression is used when they explain the reasons why one or more children in a family group cannot access or remain in school, as shown in the following quote.

Last year also one of my girls disappeared suddenly. I asked around and a lady said, ‘I had to leave her at home taking care of the girls, the younger ones, because I was getting home too late from work’. So she doesn’t go to school because she needs to take care of her siblings. (Teacher, Inclusive School)

I think that . . . older children in those families, a large family . . . since they need to care for the needs of their families, they are forced to work and support their parents to help their younger brothers. (Mother, Urban Marginal School)

There are still large families here. So the oldest takes care of the youngest . . . and they give them more obligations at home, and they stop caring about their studies. (Teacher of Inclusive School)

In summary, the general conditions of poverty generate barriers that force families to look for options to earn a living, whether by temporarily migrating to other regions in the country or to other countries. When parents do not have a job and the children and youth assume the role of providers, this puts at risk their attendance to and permanence in school. Furthermore, for some informants the number of sons and daughters a family impacts their possibilities to have them all study.

2. Characteristics of personal and familiar context of the population

Evidence at the micro-level shows that possibilities for children to attend school are limited when the community or neighbourhood where the family lives faces difficulties related to violence or insecurity. In the six cases studied, violence is reported to be characteristic of the population’s living environment. However, violent deeds take on different forms. In urban marginal schools and in the inclusive school located in the Department of Guatemala, threats, extortions and the presence of gangs (youth involved in criminal activities) were reported. Reference was also made to the stealing of children in the municipality. In the case of the Ladino enclave, reports were about consumption of marijuana among the youth, and in the monolingual school in a bilingual context, reports were about consumption of alcohol and drugs in areas close to the school.

For example, look, there are a lot of things there, here there are children who are at school and they don’t send them anymore, maybe the parents have . . . money to do it, but they are being threatened by those individuals, so they don’t send them anymore and the security provided by the police, they can kill you now and the police will arrive in two hours to find out what happened and they come five kilometres away ringing their sirens before they leave, there is no security. (Focus Group of Parents, Urban Marginal School)

We also had last year the drop out of a student who was very marked, I remember well, he was in the sports team of the school, he had to leave for security reasons. Because his family had been threatened so they had to leave town. (Interviewee, Urban Marginal School)
Imagine the walk from here to the other neighbourhood . . . right now there are a lot of criminals, so many rapes, precisely that day I punished her and I said: ‘You need to do your homework, you can’t keep like that, and if she had to do a group work, I would go with her.’ Because she is already ten years old and she has stopped being a child, she will become a teenager, so we need to start worrying . . . we can’t let her walk around at night, and in particular play with boys, because nowadays boys are a risk. There are older boys who rape small children. So now the world is upside down. We as parents need to be careful. (Focus Groups, Mothers, School in an agro-industrial context)

Because they can’t even goby because there are a lot of drunks that are or there are gang members there getting organised, they drink a lot . . . one could even think that maybe they are on drugs and it is a bit risky because the children go through that route to get to school say for me I think it is too risky for the boys and girls. (Monolingual School in Bilingual Context)

In summary, in the context where boys and girls develop, violence and insecurity impact on their access to and permanence in school.

3. **Barriers of education infrastructure and current risks of the physical space and its surrounding areas**

The issue of the quality of education infrastructure is very relevant at the micro-level, when considered as a barrier to the access and permanence of the school population. According to the data obtained, five of the six schools in the study do not have the minimum conditions to favour inclusive education for those with special education needs with or without disabilities, or for population in general, due to the lack of sanitary services, games and recreational areas, classrooms of an optimal size and quality.

*What is it that you don’t like from school? The bathroom . . . the smell in the bathroom . . . it is very ugly . . . all the time . . . at any hour.* (Student, School in an agro-industrial context)

*Now the bathrooms are there, even if it is a little bit hard because the bathrooms have now water.* (Local informant, Multi-Grade School)

The observations made as part of the research helped confirm the statements of the different local stakeholders regarding the inadequacy of the education facilities to receive individuals with motor difficulties. There is a ramp in the monolingual school in bilingual context, but it is useless because in order to reach it there are three steps between the recreational patio and the hallway of the buildings where the ramp for access to the second floor is located. This hinders circulation by the people who need to use a resource to get access with crutches or a wheelchair.

*Look on the other hand, the fact that it is located somewhere else, we could say, is because of their special needs . . . not every school has an access ramp, not every school has the necessary conditions to give them the attention they need and deserve.* (Education Supervision of Urban Marginal School and Inclusive School)
Maybe only, well, it is not that serious, but I do feel that since we have children with physical disabilities, for example children with paralysis who do not move and everything. I do feel, I have seen that I as an adult, even for me it is hard to go down to enter the school because everything is dirt with stones and when it rains, more stones. I think that if it is hard for me, it might be even harder for the lady’s son, for those who walk a little, or those who come with their devices, it is hard to go up and to come down. Another problem is the bathroom because here we have bathrooms in the back, so these might not be matters of life or death but they do put at risk their physical integrity. (Teacher of Inclusive School)

Access for a person with motor challenges to the school can really be complicated in the case of the multi-grade school because the infrastructure represents a barrier that is extremely hard to overcome: the access road is a dirt road and the school building lacks the minimum conditions to receive learners with motor challenges. This is probably the reason why a person with motor difficulties cannot study in this school. Access to another education centre in the same municipality would mean that he would have to travel approximately three kilometres on a dirt road, which is complicated when there is no public or private transportation.

Well yes, it is limited for the ordinary population, for the regular population, it would be extremely hard for a person with different needs, special needs. Only the transfer towards the education centre, there is no adequate infrastructure for the children, let alone special access for people who might need it. There is none. I would think possibilities are non-existent, it is already a miracle that there is education for ordinary children. But something special, there is none. There aren’t even teachers trained to provide this type of education. And the infrastructure in the establishments is not adequate either. (Informant Micro-level Multi-Grade School)

The school buildings visited differ with respect to the quality of the classrooms. In the urban-marginal school and in the inclusive school, (both schools work on the same facilities), as well as in the multi-grade school there are serious difficulties in the classrooms due to their size and the type of construction. Some classrooms have walls and metal sheet ceilings, others have wooden walls and metal sheet ceilings, which cause a saturated and hot environment with little ventilation during the summer, while water leaks in during the rainy season. Furthermore, the size of the rooms determines the methodology of work for the children, because mobility and group work organization are difficult. Some schools also have overcrowded classrooms.

Many students, in sixth grade we have 54. (Principal, Agro Industrial School)

The following quotes show the conditions of the school infrastructure:

You would need to build, since there are no more classrooms, some have metal sheet ceilings as well. Imagine the children sometimes could get caught in the corners of the sheets or if there are classrooms with dirt floors, imagine metal sheets when it is hot, it is unbearable, and the children with a vest and sweater. (Mother, Urban Marginal School)

One of the challenges might be, I believe the majority have overcome this since we are used to whatever, but the school facilities, I am in one of the few galleys that are left but it is really hot and we have no lighting. When it rains, a huge water puddle forms and my five year old children need to hop out of the classroom because there is too much water. I think this is one of the reasons why they stop sending their children because they say ‘They get too wet during this season’, in particular in the morning many parents say ‘I didn’t send him because he got too wet and he kept getting sick’. (Teacher, Inclusive School)
Well that is the problem when it rains, children and notebooks get wet, for us it is a problem. That is why the mayor came to see for himself the problem maybe they will authorise us to build a school soon. We would be grateful if this were the case. (Local informant, Multi-Grade School)

In addition to the usual difficulties related to school buildings, we need to add those related to access roads, the distance and the means of transportation available to go to study every day. This aspect represents a barrier for people with SEN with or without disabilities, as well as for large families who live far away from the education centres. Without doubt, difficulties in accessing the municipality due to a lack of roads in good condition are a barrier that limits the transition to other academic levels, besides the ones offered by the local school. In addition, it is an element that damages health, because during the summer there is too much dust, causing allergies among children, and during the winter humidity and mud limit children’s possibilities to play. Also, educational centres lack pedestrian infrastructure, which jeopardises the safety of children when they go into or come out of a school.

Look there even was a family that enrolled about six children of the same family, none has come to school for the same reason, because of the distance this was a bit complicated. (Education Authority, Urban Marginal School)

Researcher: Do you know of some who are not in school, who are not attending school?
Participant: I only know one, he got sick, something in his bones and now he can’t walk so that is why he couldn’t continue studying and since he lives downhill, it is very hard to get him up . . . when he was six years old he was studying in Telar, afterwards he couldn’t keep coming, it was just too hard. (Focus Group Girls, Inclusive School)

There was a family with six children, none of the children had attended school because of the distance, it was a little bit complicated. (Education Authority, Urban Marginal School)

Yes, there is a basic cycle institute here, if they finish and if the father has some possibilities he would send them here, El Carrizal is a bit far away, up there on the hill. The boy or girl would need to come and that would be very risky for the girl, here. So, they finish their basic studies here to go to Quiche to look for an advanced institute or something like that, to get a career, diversified, you can’t, since the father barely makes enough to eat with his harvest, and they save the money, it needs to last the whole year, that is how it works. (Local Informant, Multi-Grade School)

Because during the winter children need to go around to come all the way up here, to be able to cross a bridge we have, because the come from downhill. So we are going to build a bridge so that they can simply cross it and arrive quickly to school, the bridge will not only be for the benefit of the cars, it will also help the students. (Municipal Authority, Ladino Enclave)

In summary, school infrastructure represents access and permanence barriers for the students in general, but in particular for those with special needs. There are no classrooms and basic services that allow the school population to have an adequate environment for their academic activities.

4. Culturally differentiated academic expectations for boys and girls

Another barrier identified in the six study cases relates to the differentiated expectations men and women have in relation to education, both by the parents and the different persons that surround the children and youth. It is important to stress that in the monolingual school in a bilingual context, there have been positive changes with respect to girls’ school attendance. However, in this particular
setting, as in other study cases, there are still different expectations for boys and for girls, and for youth in general, as explained in the following quote.

There is also a bit of macho attitude because I believe that even now, in 2014, I have heard parents and even relatives of mine say ‘No, I am not sending my girl to study, girls need to be maintained by their husbands, when she gets married, she will have someone to look out for her’. Sometimes the girl still feels like she wants to go to school and everything, but there is a macho culture that encourages only boys to study. (Teacher of Inclusive School)

Parents do not support them, what they do is go back in their mentality related to studying because sometimes students go by grade, but the parents don’t let them attend school, I have seen that happen. I have a relative who has a 15 year old girl, and what he did is take her out of school because he thought it was better for her to do house chores, to learn to prepare tortillas, to wash the clothing because she is old enough, she might get married at any time and she needs to be ready for that. (Mother, Multi-Grade School)

The ideas expressed confirm that girls and youth find that some beliefs or pre-established ideas held by social stakeholders with respect to the role of women in society are a barrier that limits their possibilities to study or which present challenges for them when seeking to fulfil their right to an education. There is a general idea that it is necessary to give more opportunities to boys than to girls.

For example in my case, I stopped studying during five years because of my parents, in the first place, my sister, she is 27 years old, she got married. So my mother told me since I was 12 years old: ‘You are not going to study because you need to look after your three brothers’. So it was very hard for me, but she never told me, ‘You won’t study’. When I took the decision to go to study, she said: ‘Why? You are too old’. I enrolled in an institution for adults, she said: ‘Why are you going to study if you are already old, you can’t’. I am still studying because I work, so I organise myself to study. (Focus Group of Mothers, Urban-Marginal School)

The desire of my heart is for my son to find a job, and for him to earn good money because he is my only son, I have four younger daughters. I have thought that my daughters should get to sixth grade, now I would like my son to continue studying. Researcher: Why do you think you should take the decision to leave the girls only with sixth grade education? Participant: I have no money, and money rules. (Focus Group of Mothers, Inclusive School)

5. Pregnancies among teenage girls

In addition to the differentiated expectations for men and women with respect to education, there are reports about pregnant girls and teenagers in the three school centres studied. The issue has variations, depending on the context. For the multi-grade school, located in the rural area, pregnancies are not something that can be considered as a barrier or a problem for women. It is something to be expected because the women have reached the age to get married and form a family, and when they begin a family, it is not common for them to keep attending school. In the Ladino enclave school, these people are left out of school.

I think that in this community there are no 13 or 15 year old girls who are pregnant, at least I haven’t seen any. At least they got married but they finished sixth grade. Or some started primary school but they get married and they drop out from school. (Focus Group of Mothers, Multi-Grade School)

This shows some contrast with the reports coming from the urban-marginal school and the inclusive school where teenage pregnancies are considered a problem that affects the possibilities of a person
to continue in school and causes shame to the family.

It is important to stress that there is evidence that girls and youth are finding support in the school centres themselves and/or from services offered in their communities to help them continue with their studies, despite their pregnancy.

Well I tried to communicate with this student. And well, I spoke to her. She came to me in the clinic in the afternoon and well, I encouraged her to continue with her studies, to at least try to pass the first two bimesters [two month period] and then continue at a distance. Because that is the way we worked last year with a student of second grade of the basic secondary cycle, she only came until the month of April and then we continued with distance education, we would send her homework and she would send everything back. So in this sense, there is no discrimination towards a student facing this problem. And the other two, yes, they study here, I don’t know how long will the principal let them stay but I do know they will be given a chance, we don’t say ‘Well, she is pregnant so she can’t continue studying’, they are given a chance. (Municipal Psychologist, Urban-Marginal School)

The issue becomes even more complex in the case of girls who have been sexually abused, as reported in the context of the school in an agro-industrial context. The case of an 11 year old girl who, thanks to the efforts of different institutions, has been able to remain in school and receive the necessary support to face this situation.

They have a case of an eleven year old girl who was raped and is pregnant. She is helping so that they let her continue in school but she has found a lot of resistance from the parents of the other students who do not want the girl back in school. (Other public servants, School in an agro-industrial context)

However, the other side of the coin is the reaction of different people around these pregnant girls or teenagers who tend to reject them or to think of them as a bad example for the rest, and sometimes blame them or accuse them of being promiscuous.

In summary, pregnancies among girls and teenagers are a barrier to access to and permanence in school.

6. Difficulties related to entering and continuing in the academic trajectory

Access to and permanence in the academic path face three problems related to the capacity of the education system to meet the demands of a very diverse academic population: a) lack of motivation to continue studying; b) lack of capacity of the education system to adapt to diversity; and c) repetition and its consequences in relation to remaining in school.

With respect to the lack of motivation to study, this is attributed to the ideas of parents about the ability of their children to learn and the lack of motivation shown by some children and youth because they do not like to study, they do not understand the language in which they are taught and/or they prefer to work and have money.

I have a boy here who . . . I have told him that the opportunity he is getting to study is really good, he needs to take advantage of it, but what he tells me is ‘oh, I don’t feel like it, that is why I don’t come’ He is really not motivated to come, he says: ‘I don’t want to, I really don’t like it so I don’t come’. (Teacher, Inclusive School)
Low, very low because it is hard to get them to turn in their homework, sometimes they don’t even come to class, they tell their grandma, yes, I am going to school, but they stay out on the streets, they do not come straight to class. (Principal of Monolingual School in Bilingual Context)

With respect to the capacity of the school to respond to the diversity of the academic population, the micro-level linked this issue to the capacity of identifying and attending people with SEN with or without disabilities and the capacity to provide attention to over-aged individuals. The following quote shows the difficulties faced with respect to coordination between the regular school and the special education centre, and the criteria on which decisions are based to accept a child in one place or the other.

Participant: yes, sometimes the schools say, when the child doesn’t learn, he can’t remember things [Participant 2 has learning problems], he can’t speak well, they what they say is: ‘Ok, take him to the special centre’. Last year a woman from a community took her boy when he was old enough for pre-school and the teacher had him that year so when he was supposed to pass to first grade of primary school, the teacher said: ‘No, it is too hard for him, you should take him to the special centre’ without knowing why, simply because he couldn’t learn. She came here and what I did was to send him to the doctor to see what he said, but the doctor said he needed more exams and all and the child stayed here [Special Education Centre]. What I saw is that the child finds it hard to talk, it is hard for him to pronounce the words, but for the rest he acts well, he does his things and everything. This year we told the mother that he couldn’t stay here and that it would be better for her to take him to the regular school, because we want to include him and the child was already adapting to us, to the way in which the other children behave, and that was not good for him, because he does not have a physical disability, like not being able to walk, so thank God the mother understood and took him to the urban school, but we don’t know if he is still there. (Teacher, Special Education Centre, Ladino Enclave)

Participant: For example, there is an 18 year old girl and she was diagnosed with mental retardation, but everything she says, they way she acts, everything is normal. So we don’t really know if she really should be here or not. Why? She can’t learn, but I believe, from what we know of her, that she has some kind of trauma that was not treated in time and therefore the child stayed like this. She hasn’t had any support from her parents, she lives only with her mother and her step father, so it is really different there. The truth is we are way behind, to know more about the children and decide whether or not they should be here.

Researcher: Who gives the diagnostic?

Participant: The psychologist that was here before . . . In addition to that, she has kind of a learning problem, but since the (urban school) feels she is not working, ‘There that and there this’, then parents have no other option but to bring them here. (Teacher, Special Education Centre, Ladino Enclave)

Another issue of great relevance in the country relates to over-aged population attending regular schools. This presents significant challenges to ensure they have access to and permanence in the education system. As reported in the document analysis carried out in the context of this research (see annexes), in 2012 the over-age rate was of 21.78 percent and the majority of these students live in rural areas.

According to micro-level reports, this is a challenge for the educational centres, as it represents a group at risk of abandoning school when they do not have the attention they need in the classroom, since their interests and academic needs are different from those of the rest of the students and
therefore require specific learning strategies for their particular characteristics.

Sometimes children of a certain age, older, do not want to go to school, they feel ashamed and there is one night school but not all parents take them out for the same reason and they send them to work. (Education Supervisor, Urban-Marginal School and Inclusive School)

The majority, maybe they are old enough. When I came here to the school, there were children that were a bit older who did not finish their primary school because of their age, it was an age problem. As I was saying, they were a bit older and they felt a bit ashamed to be with younger children and they were still there, so they dropped out from school. (Teacher, Multi-Grade School)

The third problem that presents a challenge to achieve access to and permanence throughout the academic trajectory is repetition together with the lack of motivation by the student and his family, which sometimes results in dropping out from school.

Other children who have repeated many times the same grade, and there comes a time when they find they are too old for their group and they feel bad and they think it is better to quit because they are too old for that year. (Principal of Ladino Enclave)

A girl by the name of [name] she lost the year and she never came back (D: and I wonder where she is). She is around with a bunch of kids, smoking marijuana. (Sixth grade boy, primary school, Urban Marginal School)

In summary, micro-level informants coincide in remarking that the lack of motivation to learn, over-age, and repetition accentuated by the lack of strategies for an adequate management of individual differences in the classroom and the school are barriers that hinder permanence in school.

7. Timely and sustainable management of support programmes

Finally, at the micro-level there are problems related to support programmes, which represent an opportunity but, in view of some management difficulties, sometimes do not fulfil their purpose. Issues mentioned include the late delivery of school supplies, which causes problems in the development of academic activities. Another issue mentioned was scholarships, which are given to some students, but are thought to be assigned on the basis of certain privileges.

But here there is a little blame from the part of the Ministry of Education, because it does not develop the schools thinking of the materials they really need. You see, they give us Q200.00 for a didactic bag (programme materials and teaching resources) and those Q200.00 are just enough to put some signs in our classroom, but not to work directly with the children. (Teacher, Monolingual School in Bilingual Context)

We have talked to the people here. Will the parents committee have the authority to speak to the teachers? Because sometimes there are scholarships but the principal only gives an opportunity to the smart ones and those who do not understand, don’t get anything, because I have asked the principal, ‘Why don’t you give me a scholarship?’, ‘No’, he says. ‘You have money’, so they believe there is money, they only gave 17 but they don’t give this to those who need it, but if the committee says something, the teachers get mad, the principal gets mad, it is hard to reach agreements in the establishment. (Monolingual School in Bilingual Context)
Another issue related to the support programmes pertains to Conditioned Transfers, something which has varied from government to government. This has had an impact on the attention given to the beneficiaries, as reported by micro-level informants.

It is unfortunate because there are children who drop out from school because when the former first lady came into office she provided a subsidy of Q300 per month to all the children, this was carried on until 2011, almost three years, the problem is that when the aid stopped coming, more than half of the children dropped out, just a few stayed or not everyone comes. (Teacher Special Education Centre Ladino Enclave)

In summary, the programmes created to contribute to access and permanence could become barriers if they are not managed in a timely fashion or if they are not sustainable.

8. **Institutional measures that impact access and permanence**

A barrier identified based on information provided by micro-level informants relates to some stipulations of the Ministry of Education, considered barriers to access and permanence in school. Among them are the requirement of documents for enrolment, the requirement of a school uniform and the arbitrary compliance with education guidelines or laws (ad hoc measures) by educational authorities, which limits compliance with the right to an education by some people, as shown in the following quotes.

This year I had the opportunity of having a special child. I noticed that the mother lived in Jutiapa. Due to the discrimination her child suffered, because they wouldn’t accept him anywhere, she had to come here. (Teacher Inclusive School)

Sometimes they make them work, because they don’t have enough money for the uniform and the school requires it, because for example they say here ‘if they don’t have a uniform they can’t come.’ So that is what parents do, take their children out. (Mother Inclusive School)

In summary, there are institutional requirements that limit access for all in school. There are also actions by the educational authorities that go against the law, for instance when they deny access to an education centre.

9. **Transition barriers**

Finally, micro-level informants indicated that there are barriers for some students to enter and move on through the academic path. Among them, the perception that pre-school is not indispensable and is costly because of the materials required. Another one is the diminished offer of educational services at the basic secondary and diversified high school levels, and the investment parents have to make to send their children to these levels when they finish their primary education, as mentioned by informants below.

In our case, a kindergarten . . . what the parents say is: ‘They only go to play.’ No, you will be asking for crayons, for paper, and I have no money to give you this. And maybe parents have said ‘Yes, here are all the papers, but I have no way of giving you the materials or whatever’ they are afraid of sending them because this means they have to spend money. (Teacher, Inclusive School)
Many youngsters in the rural area . . . and their dream is to continue with their studies, because they finished the sixth grade and they want to continue on the middle level, diversified high school let’s say. And the situation gets complicated, access, not everywhere they can find a place to study, a place that is close, and be able to study at least high school, they need to go to the municipal capital city or directly to the departmental capital city, so it becomes an economic issue and that is more complicated. (Municipal Authority, School in an agro-industrial context)

In addition to this, as reported by micro-level informants, those who are able to finish their studies find it hard to get a job, which can be frustrating after all the efforts made, and it forces people to work in areas different from what they trained for.

In Guatemala thousands graduate but they have nowhere to work, they have been taught to earn a salary, they can’t produce, our education does not teach them to produce, to sell their ideas or projects, they simply receive something that used to be called the pedagogy of the oppressed. Guatemala has a lot of professionals but they don’t know what to do. (Local Leader of Ladino Enclave)

They ask for five years of experience and I have the case of my boyfriend who has almost graduated, he has a little bit to go to finish and graduate as a graphic designer...but he goes somewhere and they tell him ‘We don’t want someone with university studies, we want someone with a high school diploma’, ‘Well, give me the job with that salary’, ‘No, you are overqualified’, ‘It doesn’t matter’. We need to have five years of experience, how can I get that if no one will hire me now? So they end up working on things that have nothing to do and which do not require of so much study. They end up working on other occupations that they learn and they think ‘Why did I study so much?’ (Teacher of Inclusive School)

In summary, the transition of the population within the education system is limited due to the reduced offer of services at other academic levels in comparison to the offer at the primary school level, and the insufficient economy of the families to maintain their children in the system. The problem becomes more acute if access and permanence in school do not guarantee an inclusion in the labour and social market at the end of the process.

Second Part: Acceptance barriers

According to micro-level informants, there are two large categories of barriers that limit or affect acceptance in the school context. The first category includes the behaviour of students, which creates acceptance barriers and is sub-divided in two categories: 1) aggressive behaviour between students; 2) discrimination between students because of socio-economic, ethnic, gender reasons or in the case of persons with SEN with or without disability. The second category includes regulatory aspects of the micro-level education system, and includes barriers related to what the school or the community context are not doing or have no knowledge about to promote harmony and respect. This leads to the further three sub-categories: 3) management of co-education for acceptance; 4) lack of knowledge about the protection laws and compliance of standards that govern these relations; and 5) lack of pedagogical strategies to address acceptance.

Following is an explanation of the two sub-categories that relate to behaviours among students. Aggressiveness and discrimination against the others are outstanding characteristics that negatively affect inter-personal relations in the schools studied.
1. **Aggressive behaviour among the students**

The six cases included in the study reported expressions of aggressiveness among the students, with different levels of intensity in the classroom and the school.

A first case relates to aggression by over-aged youth towards younger children. Another form of aggression is by school patrols towards girls. A third type of aggression relates to harassment at school towards students with special education needs with or without disability. A fourth type of aggression identified is more general and affects any person within the group of students, such as bad treatment shown by boys towards girls. The following quotes explain this.

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**What I don’t like is how boys treat girls. When we tell the teacher, they hit them with the ruler and we feel sorry for them, and they say, ‘Why did you tell the teacher?’**

*(Sixth Grade Boy, Primary School, Monolingual School in Bilingual Context)*

**Once I saw a boy who was part of the patrol, there was a woman there in Section B, where the principal’s office is located, there in the corner, he pulled her hair and he wanted to take her to the second floor.** *(Third Grade Boy, Primary, Inclusive School)*

**And why were they hitting [name of a student with motor disability]? Because [name] was standing all the time and since he’s never on his place, they get mad and they hit him. Researcher: Yes? And what else do they do to [name]? Tell me. Participant 2: They push them. Participant 3: They scold him.** *(Focus Group Boys)*

**Not yet, but when he would get home, he would arrive with his backpack broken, his pencil broken, so I went to the teacher to show them. I don’t know why the parents can’t see what is happening to their children. Afterwards I bought him another pencil and he came again; but what they did is punch him in the eye with the pencil. Now he doesn’t want to go to school.** *(Focus Group, Mothers Multi-grade School)*
2. Discriminative behaviour among students

This category shows different expressions of discriminatory behaviour towards other people based on ethnic decent, age, socio-economic situation and other causes.

In summary, the cases studied show aggressive behaviour and discriminative behaviour among the students resulting from their living conditions, ethnic and cultural characteristics, or socio-economic conditions.

The following category relates to the governing functions of the education system to create harmony within the school. Some barriers are reported; namely, the administration of co-education for acceptance, as explained below.

3. Management of co-education for acceptance

With respect to this issue, the data obtained in the two rural schools, in the inclusive school and the monolingual school in bilingual context show that the relation between men and women is characterised by a lack of respect of boys towards girls, and difficulties faced by teachers to manage the relations between boys and girls in the classroom, which is a challenge to achieve equal participation in the learning processes.

With respect to the first, it relates to situations where boys insult girls by touching them in inappropriate places, as shown by the following quotes:

That boy, what can I tell you, he put his hand on the butt. (Focus Group-Girls School in an agro-industrial context)
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Researcher: Who touches girls here?
Participant: Boys.
Researcher: Boys in your classroom, older ones, younger ones? Who harasses you?
Participant: All of them (Focus Group-Girls School in an agro-industrial context)

There was a girl and I was in my classroom and I saw how a boy grabbed her and kissed her by force. That is not fair. (Focus Group, third grade boy, primary school, Urban-Marginal School)

With respect to managing relations between boys and girls, it is interesting to note the experience reported by the multi-grade school. Teacher observations are that it is hard to get both groups to work together, because parents have questioned the fact that boys and girls interact in school.

One of the characteristics of these children is that it is hard to get them to co-habit, boys and girls, that is what I have seen, this might come from the families. There are parents who have approached me to ask me, why are the boys playing with the girls? (Multi-Grade School Principal)

In summary, the issue of acceptance shows difficulties with respect to management of relations between boys, girls and youth beyond basic respect, as a life competency in a society that demands knowledge of how to relate as equals with no gender discrimination.

4. Lack of clarity with respect to the scope of the laws for protection and compliance with guidelines that govern relations in school

According to what was reported in some of the education centres visited, there is some confusion that generates tension and fear within the teachers with respect to the laws for the protection of children and compliance with the rights of the child, and the scope of action they have as school authorities in a context of respect and discipline. Some teachers feel threatened if they correct their students, and this generates a permissive environment at school.

Nowadays you can’t reprimand children because parents (say) I will accuse you, I will do this to you, so how are we going to teach the children, I feel we need to be tolerant but sometimes I think it is necessary to give love but also discipline, if we want this we need to be strict. (Focus Group Teachers Ladino Enclave)

Now we are scared of talking in front of the children. My teacher yelled at me, the other day some mothers came because they also know about the rights of their children, these are public all around, they know their rights and their children know them too, they have been given rights and all parents come and say: Miss, take the ruler, imagine if I take a ruler and hit them, I would end up in jail the next day. (Teacher Monolingual School in Bilingual Context)

The lack of clarity about respecting the rights of children, and teaching them in a clear context that would guide their behaviour, is an issue that transcends the school context and it seems to be a concern of mothers, as explained below.
We go back and I repeat there are very small children who sneak into houses to steal, and she says that the law will back the child. It is true, you need to protect the child but not too much because these children are feeling too important. So there are a lot of children in our neighbourhood who are wrong. They steal, they smoke, and they drink. They create havoc. I believe a child who has reached these extremes needs to study or if he does not want to study, he should be working in the fields to keep his mind busy, mainly busy, because nowadays they go out on the streets and they find older kids, who get them into bad things and they get home and yell at you, because of the people they meet out on the street. They ruin them. (Focus Group, Mothers, School in an agro-industrial context)

In summary, there is little clarity between the responsible adults about how to guide the behaviour of children and youth when they are considered as subjects of a right and at the same time individuals in training. This issue requires more attention.

5. **Lack of pedagogical strategies to address acceptance**

At the micro-level there are reports of different experience related to inter-personal relations in the classroom. There are situations that seem to escape the capacity of the team of teachers to manage them as opportunities to teach a collective life lesson. In addition to what was mentioned in the previous section regarding the fear of establishing a framework of discipline and applying it without violating the rights of the children, there are situations that encompass different challenges, like the difficulty to guide and educate boys or girls that show difficult behaviour and who are disrespectful, or how to manage acceptance towards people with SEN with or without disabilities, or the work of students who are repeating or are over-aged, who require a treatment that will meet their needs. As shown by the following quotes, teachers are faced with complex challenges to get the attention of an over-aged person in a group where the majority of the children have a lower age average. They also have difficulties to promote acceptance of a person with SEN with or without disabilities, and to coordinate efforts with the parents to help them get accepted. A group that is particularly difficult is the one of boys or girls coming from families in conflict with law. There are also reports about children who take drugs in school and/or who are linked to criminal groups, which forces teachers and the Directorate team to face a contextual reality in which the school encounters barriers that transcend their ability to act in isolation in favour of protecting children and youth.
Third Part: Participation barriers

The third dimension corresponds to participation, defined in this research as actions oriented to promoting learning opportunities, taking into account the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders involved as well as the implicit or explicit rules that guide what happens in school.

According to the information gathered, participation barriers in the classroom are divided in five categories: 1) conditions of living context; 2) conditions of the family and their environment; 3) learning conditions; 4) pedagogical strategies to favour learning opportunities in the classroom; and 5) lack of support systems for students and teachers. Below is a description of each barrier in this dimension.
1. **Barriers of context of life**

The previous chapters mentioned different situations faced by children and youth in the study cases, such as insecurity and violence in their environment and how these affect access to and permanence in school, as well as acceptance in the classroom. This issue appears again when analysing learning opportunities that the school can promote with the students. Among the situations reported there are cases of children who take drugs. There are also cases of working children who are unable to meet the demands of school because they are tired from working and studying at the same time.

2. **Barriers that relate to the conditions of the family and their environment**

Another issue that has been mentioned previously relates to the conditions of the families, in particular with respect to the poverty they live in. When these conditions are analysed in relation to learning opportunities, the roles taken by the fathers, mothers, sons and daughters stand out. If only the mother is in charge of the family, the children and youth are more prone to working, i.e. to assume the role of providers for the home and students. This has an impact on their possibilities to take advantage of school, as mentioned in the previous section, something which is confirmed by the following quotes.
There is a boy who is always with me at 11:00, ‘Miss, I want to leave’ but he yells, ‘Miss, I already want to go’, ‘I am very hungry, I want to leave’ Sometimes he says ‘but I want to leave’, and I sometimes call him and ask him to tell me what’s going on ‘What did you have for breakfast?’, ‘Nothing’, ‘And have you had your snack?’, ‘No’, ‘And did you bring money?’, ‘She didn’t have any’, ‘Ok, we are leaving now, you will have lunch’, ‘No, because at home we don’t eat lunch, just breakfast and dinner’, he says. (Teacher School in an agro-industrial context)

The miss practice because they have to take care of tasks that their parents have given them, they need to look after many things, many needs, in fact this morning I was visiting some schools and I found him on the way. I went to visit 3 schools and I travelled about 15 kilometres and in those 15 kilometres I found, I could count approximately 20 children working on their corn fields, the first community I visited is close by and I told the principal, I saw three children, and they told me they attend the urban school, that they are enrolled, but the probably missed school today because they are working with their father. The same case on this side, ok, another community Paquix, where the principal says, look, there are like 7 children missing today, but they didn’t come because they are helping their fathers to plant, the same story in the other community I visited. (Education Supervisor, local informant Multi-Grade School)

Because at times since the parents don’t have any money, they put their children to shine shoes, to do work, and what I have seen more in this town is that they work shining shoes. (Third Grade Boy, Primary School, Urban-Marginal School)

On the other hand, in the different schools studied, there is little participation from the fathers and mothers when they both work, or when economic conditions force them to migrate, situations that limit their possibilities of getting involved in the school life of their children.

The other situation is that the majority of the parents work and as my colleague was saying, ‘They are single mothers’, so they always ask someone to come. Very few enjoy the presence of their mother every day at home. So this has an impact on the academic performance of the student, sometimes the mother doesn’t get home until late at night. (Teacher Inclusive School)

There are children whose parents are in the United States and for example in my classroom, the majority, grandparents don’t pay any attention to them, they are lacking a bit in their performance, with respect to knowledge. (Teacher Monolingual School in Bilingual Context)

The most frequent reason to come is well, one of them is academic performance. Students who have flunked four, five, six, eight, even ten classes, for example, in a bimester [two month period]. Something is happening there. Possible family problems, low self-esteem. (Municipal Psychologist, Urban-Marginal School and Inclusive School)

When it is the mother of boys or girls with SEN with or without disabilities, the usual behaviour relates to over-protection, as reported by the teachers of the inclusive school, which affects participation in school activities.

And she likes to dance, she sometimes participates in dances, but she cannot do that, I say ‘This, you can do’, I tell her. But there are other activities in which she does participate. (Mother of student with motor SEN)
The girl doesn’t speak anyway, and the lady gets furious sometimes because the girl tells her they are teasing her. One day she came yelling ‘Look, they took her pen case and because she can’t talk they do whatever they want with her’, ‘No, madam, they did not take it, she forgot it and I have it’, ‘Sorry’ she said. Sometimes I think that since she knows the mother pays too much attention to her, she makes up certain situations. So it has been a bit hard with her. (Teacher Inclusive School)

Another aspect about the families relates to the treatment that children receive in their own family and community context. Problems were reported in this area when the children are cared for by other relatives and not their parents. Ill treatment may vary in intensity, and the most serious case is a child that was sexually abused. According to the informants, family problems have a negative impact on learning. The following quotes show the relations of so-called ‘dysfunctional families’ in the interviews.

We have had cases of sexually abused children, so at school, their bodies are here, but their thoughts are faraway, so these children, they are easy to spot, there are children who are really hyperactive and when something happens to them, you notice quickly, they are quiet, they don’t work, they don’t do their homework, nothing. (Principal School in an agro-industrial context)

The child is focused on the problem happening at home and even if we explain on the board, the child doesn’t pay attention . . . the last thing they are doing is pay attention to what one is explaining. (Teacher at School in an agro-industrial context)

I was talking about dysfunctional or disintegrated families. How badly is the student’s performance damaged in the educational system? Believe me, a lot. A lot. What I see here I also see at the municipal clinic. I could tell you it is almost 80, 85 percent, since the majority of problems are linked to the family. It happens right there, at their home, it relates to an inadequate relation, this dynamic happens, it raises problems, as I was telling you. Separations, the death of one of the parents which also affects them. And if we would add alcoholism to this mixture, intra-familiar violence which also happens. So definitely, it affects the academic performance of the student. He is completely immersed in that, it might be that he is in the classroom, physically present, but his mind is thinking: ‘What is going to happen now when I get home, at night, will my parents fight, will they hit me?’. (Municipal Psychologist Urban-Marginal School and Inclusive School)

In summary, the adverse conditions in which some families live have a direct impact on the capacity of the child or youth to learn, to participate and to take advantage of the school.

3. Barriers related to the conditions to learn

According to micro-level informants, there are certain conditions in the school that have an impact on the possibilities to offer significant learning experiences to the students. The lack of educational resources for learning, the number of students per classroom, the infrastructure conditions of the school, and in some cases the lack of teachers to help the children were mentioned. All this has an effect on the quality of the learning opportunities that the teachers are able to offer their students.
To summarise, there are conditions at school, such as the lack of teachers, classrooms in bad condition, the number of students per classroom, scarce learning resources which affect the quality of the education services that boys and girls can access.

### 4. Pedagogical strategies to favour learning opportunities in the classroom

The information provided in the schools shows that the management of participation in the classroom to favour learning opportunities of groups with very diverse characteristics represents a complex challenge, mainly as a result of the need to use pedagogical tools to be able to provide attention to said diversity.

According to the reports, some teachers find it difficult to promote everyone’s inclusion in daily activities, in some cases because of the learning rhythm of each student, as evidenced by the following quotes.

*Participant 1: We do, a boy called x and a girl called x are not interested in class.*
*Researcher: They are not interested? Why is that?*
*Participant 1: Who knows, but both her and him are quite behind in the Sembrador book, that is why the Miss doesn’t let them go out at recreation, she punishes them.*
*Researcher: Tell us more about that thing of not allowing them to go out during recreation.*
*Participant 1: Because they don’t do their homework. We are already in lesson 11, cursive, and they are still in block letters. He is already in cursive, but his cousin isn’t.*
*Researcher: So, what do they do to the cousin?*
Participant 1: She stays punished. Researcher: Every day?
Participant 1: If she works to get up to date, they will let her go out for recreation. (Focus Group-Boys School in an agro-industrial context)

Participants 1: Some children are not paying attention, they talk all the time and the teacher asks them and they don’t know what to answer because they are not paying attention. Researcher: And who are the ones who are somewhat distracted and don’t pay attention and the Miss needs to ask them?
Participant 2: Most of the time those seating in the back rows, the ones who misbehave, the boys.
Researcher: And why do they seat them in the back?
Participant 3: Maybe because they are big. (Focus Groups-Boys Inclusive School)

For those who work in the multi-grade methodology it is hard to adapt their job as facilitators of learning opportunities when they have to simultaneously look after students of three grades.

So having several groups of students of different grades is complicated, because what I did was to unify grades 5th, 6th and 4th, because I couldn’t have a group here and another little group there, when I would leave them, I explained a bit, I have them work and everything, I would go to the other group and the other group had finished the assignment and they were fooling around. It is a bit hard. (Teacher Multi-Grade School)

A group that presents serious challenges for the teachers when taking into consideration activities to learn in the classroom is the group of over-aged students. As shown in the following quote, teachers have a classroom with students of a very wide range of ages, a situation that needs to be managed based on achieving learning objectives for each of them, according to their possibilities. As mentioned in the following quote, the youth are expected to be in the classroom, to assume the role of caregivers for their younger peers, assuming that this task belongs to them. This situation leaves the question about the possibilities these persons have of taking advantage and learning in school when it is organised by ages and groups with development characteristics very different to the characteristics of the over-aged persons.

Yes, last year we had several, we had one that was almost 18 years old, others who were going to be 19 years old, one that was going to be 20 years old, but last year. And these children were older, some instead of taking care of the younger ones are abusive. They have different habits, so it is a bit hard with the younger students. (Principal School in an agro-industrial context)

Another important challenge to promote learning opportunities is the use of Spanish when there are children in the classroom who have another mother tongue. A very clear example of what it means for a teacher to know how to teach children who speak different languages, is what was reported by the Ladino enclave school when talking about another school in the same municipality:
We have an establishment [in the municipality] where there are three different cultures, the same one we have here at the Ladino Enclave, the Joyabaj culture and the Cubulco culture. The principal was telling me that to help them [the students] understand a little bit, they have been mixing these two languages K’iche’ and Achi, so a new language is being born, to help them understand a bit more, but this has been quite an obstacle for the teachers, to teach them in their own language. Now we look at it differently, if the teacher is responsible as is the case in other municipalities, they have had to adapt themselves to the K’iche’ culture or whatever the indigenous culture is where they reside, because I have seen some Spanish-speaking or Ladino teachers who have learned the language spoken in these places, to help the children understand better what they are being taught. (Local Education Authority Ladino Enclave)

The implications of using a language that is different to the language spoken by the students in the classrooms are self-explanatory in the following quote about an experience reported by the children of the multi-grade school during a focus group carried out in their mother tongue.

Do you understand what the teacher is saying? No, I don’t.
What do you do when the child doesn’t understand what the teacher is saying? He won’t learn.
Are you learning or not? A little bit.
Why are you learning a little bit? I don’t really understand what the teacher is saying.
Why don’t you understand what the teacher is saying? I don’t understand because he speaks Spanish and our language is K’iche. (Focus Group of Boys of Multi-Grade School)

About this, the school principal confirms the difficulties faced by the students for their participation in the classroom when they are faced with a class that is developed in a language that is different from their mother tongue. The difficulties experienced by the students to express themselves fluently in the language used in class are shown in the following contribution.

Well I would say no, they don’t really participate in class, because one of the things I have noticed is that they do understand, but they don’t know how to express themselves. How am I going to respond to that? But the language is a bit hard for them and they are fearful to participate because they need to talk, because they are scared of making a mistake, they are afraid about someone making fun of them. (Principal of Multi-Grade School)

The possibility of offering bilingual education is limited by the competencies of teachers and the expectations of some parents, according to the information provided by two participants in this research.

Participant 1: At home I have worked at a village, but I gave my classes in my language [Spanish] because parents would ask me to do this, to teach in Spanish, it is a bit hard to teach them because they want to be taught in Spanish, which is their second language.
Participant 2: yes, as [name of participant 1] was saying, we are bilingual but we only have one title. We do not speak the language, we teach in our language [Spanish]. (Teachers of Ladino Enclave)

It would be good to teach them English, since my other three kids left for the United States, so they need to know English and it would be great if they would teach them, because they won’t stay here, and the other thing that is important is Spanish and since they are two, it would be good if they also taught the youngest one, to teach them a bit of English. (Parent, Monolingual School in Bilingual Context)

In addition to a different topic, evidence reported and observations made as part of the field work indicate that there are difficulties in organizing learning activities in the classroom, which is evident
in the management of the time in the classroom and the time for recreation, the lack of class rules, as well as the control of the group, the privileged treatment of some and the negligence of others, the lack of compliance with routines and the use of activities that do not promote collaborative learning.

With respect to time management, there are teachers who are late and leave early, as they frequently need to participate in meetings related to their work during class hours. It was also mentioned that recreation periods are longer for some groups of children.

There were also children who sold things during class, because they carried in their backpacks frozen juices and they sold them to their peers. Both the child that was selling and the children who were buying did it while hiding from the teacher who was teaching class. The teacher leaves the children working on an assignment and goes out for about ten minutes. While she goes out, the children begin to talk and they don’t do their work. (Observation in Urban-Marginal School)

With respect to group management and learning experience, there are some difficulties, namely that a teacher leaves the classroom frequently and leaves his students working without supervision (observations made during field work).

[The teacher] leaves the classroom for ten minutes and then returns and asks if everyone finished the assignment. And then he says, this is the way you should do it and he folds the sign and cuts it. He asked no questions about whether everyone understood or if anyone needs help. (Classroom Observation, Multi-grade School)

There are also examples of situations in which the activities and time management do not correspond with what is expected by the children and their parents, so the quality of what they are learning is questioned by those who have access to school.

The Miss [teacher] flunked me, she just, she left and asked some of the students to dictate, she would give us the exams first, she hadn’t even taught us the content. (Boy, sixth grade, Primary, Ladino Enclave)

I have two grandchildren in Guatemala and I would ask them this or that and they know nothing and the teachers in the capital city ask them. Those teaching, are they teachers or are they private persons? They answer that they are indeed teachers, so why don’t they teach them that, and I have spoken to the teachers and they didn’t really like what I told them, I said: I know you are in charge of training the children, I demanded that they taught them more things, you are the teachers, teach them what is important so that these children do not suffer when they go to other places. (Focus Group, parents, Multi-Grade School)

As part of the analysis of pedagogical strategies, some patterns were identified in the strategies applied by the teachers in the classrooms observed. After a systematization of the activities developed and after calculating the average time dedicated to each one in the learning areas observed, the patterns found are the following: i) most teachers dedicate more time to the class for communication and language in comparison to mathematics; ii) more activities related to communications and language are organised in comparison to mathematics, which was the case of an observation carried out in a third grade of primary school of the urban-marginal case during the math class, where three activities were organised, while in the communication and language class, eight activities were carried out in the same amount of time; and iii) in most of the classes there was no introduction, recap or closure of the subjects discussed.
Finally, there is evidence that indicates that the teachers giving assistance to students with SEN with or without disabilities, have difficulties for providing this assistance in the way they need it while taking care of numerous students.

"I have four special children in my class, so I have to have, I am not saying it is a burden, but I need to provide different attention to these children, so this situation in the classroom gets complicated and also the children are restless because you necessarily need to keep them busy." (Teacher Inclusive School)

"He had multiple special needs and it was harder, with him everything was a bit more complicated because you needed to work right next to him, something else is that because of his age he should have been in sixth grade, but he was in second grade and he was in sixth grade but his age was not for that grade either. So it was a bit complicated because he needed a lot of attention." (Teacher Inclusive School)

In summary, the quality of the learning opportunities is measured by the competencies of the teachers to promote significant learning experiences for all the students in the classroom, mainly when it is necessary to work with students with different characteristics and needs. There is evidence questioning the management of time, the quality of learning, the commitment of teachers and the organization of the school to offer quality education.

5. Lack of support systems for the students and the teachers

The previous issue mentioned a number of challenges and difficulties faced by teachers when they need to care for students whose demands require the use of pedagogical strategies that favour their individual needs. According to this, it is complex to coordinate the different learning rhythms, with issues of over-age, problems related to family situations and/or the attention of people with SEN with or without disabilities. This task undoubtedly requires a teacher and a school with support systems to respond adequately to the challenges mentioned.

Informants stated that there is some support from governmental and non-governmental organizations. However, they feel that these are insufficient, taking into account the complexity of the challenges to be tackled. This was confirmed by informants of the multi-grade school and the Ladino enclave.

"From the municipalities of Quiche, which are in the priority list because of its tremendous needs, as it is one of the poorest, not only in the department, but also in the country, and being a municipality of these characteristics, it has no support or coverage from entities that could help the children, we have nothing. The only entity that is willing to help us is Child Fund, the only one that is working with the children so that we can, working on issues, and education matters and many situations that are focus directly on children. They are the only ones, we have no other entity present, no other one that is there, at some point we had presence in the municipality of Colgate-Palmolive, Colgate came to help, in fact ten or twelve days ago, to be more precise on May 8, they came to contribute a hygiene kit for pre-school children, first, second and third grade children in all the schools of the municipality. (Other governmental entities, Multi-Grade School)

Not only the children need help, we also need more support and sometimes to get help because there is no institution helping us." (Teacher Ladino Enclave School)
We have been here for about three years with this year, coming to see what we can do for the children. Sometimes we help a bit, but we don’t know if we are doing good or not. Sometimes children adopt attitudes that we don’t know if we should remain quiet or not, because it is a two edged sword, if you reprimand them it is a problem, and if you don’t it is a problem. These situations need to be dealt with care, because they are special and because of the parents too, so for example now: support from the mayor has been little, and we go with the CTA or somebody like that and he doesn’t know what to do either. We know we have to repeat things with them, because it can’t happen any other way because we know that they won’t suddenly, but if we could get advice on how to work with them. (Teacher Special Education Centre Ladino Enclave School)

In summary, attention to inclusion in the classroom is a matter that requires greater support for the teacher and the school in general, an issue that needs reinforcement and organization to be present at all times and in each education centre in the country.

3.2.3.3 Opportunities

3.2.3.3.1 Macro-level

The purpose of this research is to identify opportunities for inclusive education. This is understood as having access to education services and remaining in them until successfully concluding them. Learning opportunities are also experiences that favour inter-personal relations that promote acceptance of diversity within human groups and, in the end, experiences that help learn and develop competencies that will foster the social inclusion of each pupil.

According to stakeholders at the macro-level, the Ministry of Education undertakes a number of actions to offer learning opportunities following two modalities: scholarized education in schools at different levels which comprise the whole education career, and non-scholarized and mixed modalities education through a range of programmes for populations outside the scholarized system. These services were not conceived under the notion of IE. However, evidence gathered shows that different stakeholders within the three levels of the education system find options to favour access, acceptance and participation. Following is an example of this.

Last year a project to systematise successful experiences related to education was launched. The case that obtained the first place was a rural school in San Marcos, where a teacher in a very isolated place, almost in the mountains, with no support from the Ministry or training, is applying inclusive education. (Specialist in the attention of vulnerable groups)

This proves that at the national level there are cases that could guide future efforts on inclusive education. Some of these are general, i.e. are targeted to the population as a whole, while others are focused on specific groups or issues.

Below is a description of the opportunities identified, grouped in three categories: investment, laws/policies and practices.

First category: Investment. Education is an issue that calls for and fosters investment in the country. This commitment is evidenced, in principle, by the efforts made by the families themselves when investing in their children and then by the efforts of the different governmental and non-governmental organizations in support of education, which confirms their recognition of its importance as a determinant factor for development. At public sector level it is evident that, in addition to the investment made by the Ministry of Education, which is the governing body for educational policy, there is a growing trend of investment in public education by municipal
corporations and the Development Councils System SDUR (mainly on infrastructure and hiring of teachers). According to the Ministry of Public Finances, in 2013, 6.1 percent of municipal expenditures were for education, while in the case of the SDUR, investments in education reached 14.78 percent that same year, in addition to offering other basic services under their responsibility (electricity, drinking water, roads, health services, among others), which make it easier to access schools and attend to other basic needs of the population. For greater detail, see the document analysis in the annexes of this report.

This increased investment also resulted in an additional advantage, as it helped foster space for citizen participation, as confirmed in the following quote.

> I believe change is happening. You can see it at the level of communities, where there is more participation and leadership by youngsters and women. However, when working in the development of municipal education plans and forming municipal education commissions, the percentage of women is still fifty percent at most. (Specialist in the attention of vulnerable groups)

In summary, there is evidence that shows the level of interest by different State entities in investing in public education. This investment is defined in a participative manner, which strengthens social organization in decision-making processes.

**Second category:** laws and public policies. This category relates to the legal framework and education policies that make it possible to have discussions about an inclusive education system. With respect to laws, a document analysis (see annex) confirmed that the country has a legal framework that is favourable to inclusive education. On the other hand, the informants report two issues related to public policies. The first relates to an inclusion policy and the second to the larger framework of the country’s education policies and a number of advances that show the work being done.

First, the inclusive education approach is not alien in Guatemala’s education context, which can be confirmed from at least two sources: the existence of an inclusive education policy and the national, international and institutional legal framework that makes it possible to aspire to an inclusive education system.

> This Ministry has an added value, a Directorate that oversees inclusive education and special education needs, the DIGEESP. (Officer of the Directorate General of Education)

The fact that the country has an Inclusive Education Policy for Population with Special Education Needs linked or not to disabilities (Government Agreement 118-2005) is considered positive, since it specifically targets this group, which had been marginalised from public services until 2008, when the State adopted the policy mentioned before as an explicit commitment to providing attention to this segment of the population.

In the second place, the education policies in effect represent the foundation for inclusion. According to the National Education Council (2010) there are eight education policies. According to the stakeholders interviewed, there is evidence that shows how the Ministry of Education is working to meet them. These actions are aimed to creating opportunities for access, acceptance and participation.
### Table 29: Education Policy and reported action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EDUCATION POLICY</th>
<th>REPORTED ACTIONS THAT EXPAND THE RANGE OF OPPORTUNITIES</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coverage:</td>
<td>Last year a new scholarships programme was put in place, specifically in 196 municipalities prioritised. These are 6,233 scholarships for youngsters in first grade of secondary school living in extreme poverty. In addition, in these 196 municipalities families were given an additional contribution to help the students continue with their secondary education and the families within the education community who participated in the programme were able to get organised to help other youngsters who were not taken into account due to capacity to receive a scholarship to help them continue with their secondary education. (Officer of the Directorate General of Education)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality:</td>
<td>From the point of view of the DIGECADE I could mention two factors, an external one and an internal one. An external factor for success is the cooperation of national and international organization. This is a factor of success, the support of these international organizations helps in the execution and helps us reach more children, providing easier access, acceptance and participation among these children. And within the DIGECADE I believe that all the sub-Directorates have successful programmes and projects that help us have an impact on the student population. We have the quality strategy that offers degrees to help update teachers, we have the teacher professionalization programme, which is the PADEP programme, and we have an induction to new teachers, the implementation of the National Basic Curriculum, and the provision of text books for boys and girls at the national level. (Officer of the Directorate General of Education)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part of our work is to gather information to help in decision making, specifically with respect to what the children learn in the classrooms and processes, as well as in education research. We do this in general for the whole population without making distinctions, and for the middle-level in the case of children with some kind of disability, we do modify and adapt the assessment instruments. (Officer of the Directorate General of Education)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I believe that another factor for success is the National Basic Curriculum adopted to serve different segments of the population. (Officer of the Directorate General of Education)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administration model:</td>
<td>I believe a factor for success relates to statistics. The Ministry of Education has statistical information about the population with special education needs. (Officer of the Directorate General of Education)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Human resources:</td>
<td>We are currently developing a new strategy for learning communities with the teachers. So we are facing the challenge of finding a way to reach out to them, and of course we need materials, and it would be better to have them in each one of the languages. (Officer of the Directorate General of Education)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual, multi-cultural and inter-cultural education: strengthening of bilingual, multi-Cultural and inter-cultural education.</td>
<td>As DIGEBI we have developed a work plan that allows us to serve the population in general, in the context of bilingual education and inter-culturalism, offering lines of work in the classroom, curricular subjects, training, accompaniment in the classroom, education materials, and research and assessment processes and support to the parents. (Officer of the Directorate General of Education)</td>
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</table>
### EDUCATION POLICY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REPORTED ACTIONS THAT EXPAND THE RANGE OF OPPORTUNITIES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase in education investment: increase in the budgetary allocation to education, up to the limit established in Article 102 of the National Education Law, (7 percent of the national gross product)</td>
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<tr>
<td>According to data gathered through the document analysis undertaken as part of this research (see annex) from 1992 to 2013 there has been a considerable increase in education investment although by 2012, 80 percent of said Budget was used for payroll (salaries of teachers).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity: Guarantee quality of education as requested by the persons that form the four main groups of the population, in particular the vulnerable groups, with recognition of their context and the current world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We work with teachers, for example in the municipality of Joyabaj, we have multi-cultural teachers and when they teach their class they do so in their mother tongue. The Ministry of Education has helped a lot to this element, to teach the child in his/her mother tongue all the classes, the teachers have adapted the information available to teach in their mother tongue. (Specialist in attention to vulnerable groups)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional strengthening and decentralization: strengthening the institutions of the national education system and participation at the local level to guarantee the quality, coverage and social, cultural and language pertinence at all levels, with equity, transparency and long-term vision.</td>
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<tr>
<td>So each Departmental Directorate also prioritises its budgets. Before, the Directorate General used to provide technicians, but now the Departmental Directorate has its own budget to go down and get to the classroom, so this is under implementation this year and it is a first experience that I consider successful. (Officer of the Directorate General of Education)</td>
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With respect to education policies, their continuity and the sustainability of their purposes, there are different points of view among the informants. Some believe policies are short-termed, closely linked to the plans of each government, whose term is four years. For others, there are policies that have been built throughout the years with different focuses and orientations, but with similar purposes. According to what the document analysis showed (see annex), from 1986 to the current government, some policies have been maintained and continue to be part of the education agenda, albeit with different approaches and strategies. One is, for example, the coverage policy that has aimed to expand access to education, in the beginning for primary school (1986-1995 Administration), later on for all levels (2004-2007 Administration), and then adding the recognition of the need to incorporate boys and girls living in extreme poverty and coming from vulnerable segments of the population, with focus on the coverage policy (2008-2011 Administration). The question is: in what other way can policies be oriented to achieve goals like the ones proposed in the matter of coverage, in the least time possible and with sustainability?

To summarise, through educational policies the country has established objectives that could be considered agreeable with what would be expected of an inclusive education system. This is a strength that fosters opportunities to promote future actions in the context of inclusive education.

**Third category**: practices. Evidence shows that the Ministry of Education and a number of governmental and non-governmental organizations are undertaking both independent and joint actions in favour of education. All of these correspond to the following aspects: a) citizen...
participation in favour of education linked to investment and institutional support to the school population; b) institutional and technical strengthening; and c) management of pedagogical services. These practices are considered opportunities to promote inclusive education and represent paths already taken on which it is possible to advance towards new horizons of inclusion.

Citizen participation in education service management has been growing thanks, among other things, to the participation in the education field of local governments, development councils and non-governmental organizations that support the prioritization of the population’s needs at the local and regional levels, as mentioned before. Of particular significance is the participation of those parents in the educational processes that are responsible for the school, an area that needs improvement in some cases.

In addition to the above, there are signs indicating that when faced with extreme situations that could affect the school population, the education system has institutional support agents who monitor and work for the children’s integral wellbeing, such as the Human Rights Ombudsman or the Secretary for Food Security, to mention a few.

There are also specialised bodies like the National Council for Mayan Education and/or the National Council on Disability (CONADI) which promote actions in favour of attention to the school population.

Also the results achieved by CONADI, the laws approved and more recently de disabilities commission. I believe this is an achievement that is changing the obstacles we have found that result on exclusion. (Specialist on attention to vulnerable groups)

In summary, the participation of different stakeholders in decisions that define the investment on education, on child and youth protection and on attention to particularly vulnerable groups allows to foresee increased actions for those decisions being put in place, which theoretically should be correlated to the demands and needs at the local or regional level. That is why citizen participation is considered an opportunity, as long as education is understood as a priority and services as such at the regional and local levels.

In relation to institutional strengthening, it is important to emphasise the technical capacity of the Ministry of Education to attend to children with special education needs linked or not to disabilities, task that on occasion have been performed jointly with other specialised organizations. Another field that shows important progress with respect to management capacity and strategy is attention to bilingual inter-cultural education. Furthermore, education of girls is recognised as an area with significant progress, as reported by stakeholders at the macro-level.

Finally, in the category of actions a number of opportunities for the management of education services have been identified within different areas reported by stakeholders at the macro-level, in which significant progress has been made to make it possible to consider future opportunities for inclusion. The first relates to scholarized or school education that shows significant results like the following: a) improvement in transfer, and transition, to the following years and less repetition (opinion of an academic); b) availability of a National Basic Curriculum that has been adapted to provide service to different populations, for example the over-aged population and adult persons, and to provide bilingual education (opinion of an officer of the Directorate General of Education); and c) increased attention to children with special education needs linked or not to disabilities (in 2008 a total of 4,000 children received attention, while in 2013 a total of 20,000 students received
attention according to an officer of the Directorate General of Education). Departmental Education Directorates have their own budgets, which helps them to plan and coordinate a timely delivery of support programmes (school supplies and scholarships) with schools under their jurisdiction, and to implement specific projects tailored to the needs of the particular context (opinion of an officer of the Directorate General of Education).

The second dimension refers to the non-scholarized education offer under the Directorate General of Non-scholarized and Mixed Modalities Educational Programmes (DIGEEX) as explained in the following quote.

*From, DIGEEX, all of the rural area is serviced; that is, through flexible mechanisms put in place by the Ministry of Education it is possible to service all the population who suffer from educational delays. These persons are able to finish their primary education through an accelerated process, and then their secondary education, so I think, the Ministry of Education through DIGEEX gives this opportunity so that everyone joins, all those who did not get a chance to study, who are over-aged. That is one of the best examples that show that everyone can come, even from very, very distant places from the municipal capitals, to the departmental capitals, education reaches faraway places. (Director General of Education)*

An element that is remarkable in the non-scholarized and mixed modalities educational programmes is that they are based on the competencies promoted by the National Basis Curriculum, with an orientation towards the labour market, towards entrepreneurship.

*Despite the fact they have no resources, they have learned to do things, like in this case to produce, for example, in Retalhuleu, they produce fishing nets, which they are able to place on the market at Q1,500 each net because those are expensive. But they know how to weave, these are good quality nets and fishermen buy them. So for me this is something very successful, while they make progress with Mathematics and Communication and Language. They have that value added, that they are learning an activity that allows them to make a living. (Sub-Director General of Education)*

*The part that relates to entrepreneurship, the fact that the young man finishes the medium basic cycle of studies under this programme, and has the necessary competencies and a more direct participation of an association of parents that is very active, they participate actively at the local level, even in the development councils, the COCODEs. (Sub-Director General of Education)*

In addition, the Ministry of Education, in coordination with other governmental and non-governmental organizations, is putting in place strategies and programmes created to respond to specific problems that demand specific action. In addition, there are initiatives promoted by other actors involved, which are looking to expanding the opportunities of more vulnerable groups. The topics are manifold, as shown in the following two quotes.
The cases [pregnant girls] have already been identified by the Secretary against Sexual Violence, Exploitation and Human Trafficking SVET and the SVET receives these cases from the Health Ministry and when they transfer them to us they ask us to use the inter-institutional route created, to enrol the girls in the establishment, so first we need to locate the girls, a high percentage never turns up, they disappear from the system, cannot be located, and others are living in their houses, right, so, each one has, each case is different and we are doing this with support from UNICEF now, to be able to see how the Ministry of Education with the tools available can generate a specific programme to provide attention to these girls. So what we are doing is a registry of cases and these cases are sent back to the SVET, to provide information of whether we found them or not and the situation they were in. (Director General of Education)

An agreement with the Ministry for Social Development MIDES which covers three aspects, three important elements. One, labour inclusion of disabled populations within the Ministry for Social Development to help disabled populations living in extreme poverty to have access to the ‘bolsa segura’ and the ‘bono seguro’ [government social assistance programmes]. Now we are in the process of signing an agreement with the Food Security Secretary SESAN, also to achieve labour inclusion. They also have structure at the national level and can identify disabled individuals to provide attention to them and raise awareness. (Specialist in the attention of vulnerable groups)

The two quotes above show that the national education system works together with other entities to address different challenges faced by the population served. These networks present invaluable opportunities to promote actions towards inclusive education.

As previously reported in the section related to perspectives of the stakeholders at the macro-level, in contexts like the Guatemalan one, the road to inclusion begins before reaching the doors of the school and concludes with different windows of opportunity that might be offered by society to its citizens to achieve social inclusion. This is why any opportunity that the education system is able to promote needs to be supported by other governmental instances and the society in general, even before the person reaches the age of attending school. Joint work can help counter the negative pressure caused by different social problems that appear and that affect the national education system, which go beyond its mandate and capacity of response. This negative pressure, generated by multiple demands, may cause a perception among stakeholders that despite all the efforts being made, what the country does in the area of education ‘is never enough’ and/or that there is a trend to pay attention only to the things lacking, instead of recognizing the advances made by Guatemalan society in the field of education.

3.2.3.3.2 Meso-level
The intermediate level of the national education system, represented by the Directorates General of Education, provides a platform of opportunities in favour of inclusive education, resulting from two of its main aspects: a) its articulation or intermediation functions, within and without the system, as it interacts with other entities in the region, as described in the following pages; and b) previous experience in the promotion of education for all. The research provides evidence for progress in a number of aspects, among them the recognition of greater gender equity in school participation and greater access to education programmes for persons with SEN linked or not to disabilities.
The same happens here, I think there are more girls than boys here at school, so in this sense we have achieved this, I think there has been progress. With respect to women’s issues, there is more participation, something that was very important, that helped further women’s participation a bit more, was the creation of new social programmes, in these, everything relates to the woman, they are the ones who represent the household in order to receive benefit from these programmes, and they are the ones who help the government deliver these social programmes. (Department of Escuintla)

With respect to child disabilities, there are many disabled children, some are blind, others deaf, some have a certain degree of retardation, I don’t know, but they do have difficulties to learn. So what was done in some areas is was build special schools, schools for boys and girls with really serious disabilities, for example in Uspantan, in Chicamán, Nebaj, in Pachalum, Joyabaj and here in Santa Cruz, there are establishments dedicated to providing attention to these boys and girls who suffer from some type of disability or that help identify children with eye problems, for example, and what kind of attention they need. (Department of El Quiché)

With respect to the mediating function of Directorates General of Education, it was remarked that they work with other governmental and non-governmental entities, in joint actions to address matters that relate to the wellbeing of children and youth. Furthermore, the Departmental Directorates work as the gear between the education centres and the macro-level of the Ministry of Education by providing a close look to the direct work carried out at the micro-level.

Background information shows how joint work favours access and participation by the population in scholarized education. At the level of the departments taken into account in this research, there are different stakeholders involved within and without the national education system, for which education is a matter of common interest.

Therefore, the meso-level represents a strategic space to bring education policies closer to the regional context and the particular needs of each. Knowledge about the surroundings is critical to guiding decisions at this level.

Challenges, there are many really, there are many, we want to take education to the last community in the department and thank God I, and my team, know the 32 municipalities, we know the villages, the hamlets, and we know which areas are more vulnerable, where there is more need, where there is no education and where we need to provide support. So we ask the Ministry of Education and its departmental office if they can cover these gaps. (Department of Huehuetenango)

The similarities in the contexts of the different education communities is an opportunity to analyse the education offers and the work opportunities provided in the region, as well as the potential areas for other innovative programmes, taking into account the particular needs of each context.

To offer careers that in one way or the other are needed in the region, and required, for example, Law, Business Administration, we are talking about careers that are on demand in a certain region, but this is not 100 percent what the region needs. But we have other careers, like Social Work, Middle School Teacher Education, Pedagogy and Psychology, criminal research and forensic sciences, which we consider are new careers that are needed in the department. (Department of Huehuetenango)

In 1992 there were 14 centres installed to teach over-aged groups, mainly women. These centres were mainly focused on teaching to read and write and training on skills. (El Quiché and Huehuetenango by area of attention of the informant)
Evidence shows that there are different opportunities to contribute to access to and participation by the school population, supported from the meso-level. These are divided as follows: a) support to education by different governmental entities; and 2) support to education by non-governmental organizations with presence in the region. Below is a description of each of these categories of opportunities.

1. **Support to education by different governmental entities**

The Departmental Directorates of Education, together with other governmental entities with presence in each department, have promoted joint work to address issues resulting from different factors and which demand joint answers from the State. Among them, issues of child protection such as food security, to mention an example, which has an impact on the wellbeing of the person and favours learning opportunities. Programmes such as ‘Zero Hunger’ and the ‘Window of 1000 Days’ represent opportunities to support the development of the child during critical periods of his/her development. There are programmes that are directly executed in coordination with the Ministry of Education, such as the school meals programme which motivates some parents to take the decision to send their children to school, since this represents one meal a day.

In summary, according to the informants, there are two governmental actions that support access and the possibility to remain in school. The first action relates to programmes to promote better conditions for the development of children and their access to school. These are part of the plans of the current government, and are therefore implemented in coordination with different state entities. The second one relates to public investment in education by the Development Councils Systems and the municipalities, mainly directed to school infrastructure. In the departments targeted by this research, the role played by municipal governments in favour of education through a number of efforts like hiring and training of teachers, service personnel and attention to school infrastructure was continuously mentioned. The following table shows examples of the actions mentioned.
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**Governmental programmes that favour a person’s development before entry to school**

We have the window of 1000 days which is a tool that allows us to reduce chronic malnutrition and acute malnutrition; work is being done through actions and interventions with the different institutions coordinated by the Zero Hunger pact. (Department of Huehuetenango)

**Investment in education through the Development Councils System**

As I was saying, as Governor I head the CONASAN, and I am also president of the CODEDE. And in each we have a commitment to bring development to our communities. As development council we have promoted projects to improve education, projects to foster, support and eliminate malnutrition. In addition to these projects that we have put in place through the development council at CODESAN, we formed the team that works in CODESAN, and it is the different government institutions that are committed to ensuring that each institution contributes its two cents, more than its two cents, to contribute what they are supposed to. We are committed to this pact, and it is giving results every week, every day. (Due to reasons of confidentiality the case to which this quote relates is not reported)

**Governmental programmes that favour access to and permanence in school**

There is the possibility to offer free services in view of the challenges that many families face, many children who no longer go to school or stop studying because they need to help to the economic revenues of the family. (Department of Escuintla)

**Participation of organized groups from the communities in the Development Councils System**

Through the departmental development council, to ensure projects that can help us to raise, to build, and to put in place schools where there are none and to build schools where there is really nothing. So we carry out the assessment, we analyse everything, we submit it to the decision of the council, to approve these projects and we make them operational as we had said. Well we need to bring development to these communities and this is how it has been done and how it is being done.

**Coordination of governmental entities for attention to relevant education issues in the context of the country**

The Human Rights Ombudsman works with some organizations at the departmental level. Could you mention some? Yes, we work for example with the departmental Directorate of education, we are working on a human rights technical degree, we are working with the Defence Ministry to raise awareness within the population that enlists in the military bases, we are working with civil society, with the different NGOs that work here, and we also work in the area of education production.

(Department of Escuintla)

**Work of the Municipalities in favour of education**

The municipalities are a very important factor because they help in some cases by providing teachers, in other cases with refurbishing of education centres and yet in other cases with the COCODEs themselves, asking them to work with the community to bring them to school. The private sector helps by setting an example.

(Department of Guatemala)
These actions are made possible, according to some persons interviewed, thanks to the organization of the community and planning processes enabled by the State’s support institutions (for example, SEGEPLAN) and the participation of the community’s organizations (COCODEs) in the definition of priorities and the presentation of proposals for public investments.

What is important is for people to get organised and that is an advantage we have here, that people have learned to get organised because if you go to any village or hamlet, there are COCODEs everywhere, so this is a benefit because people try to fight to get services, build infrastructure in their communities, they usually fight to get a community centre, drinking water, sometimes drainage systems or depending on the area, school buildings as well or extensions, because not everything is bad, in some communities the COCODEs have been great project managers, there are very good leaders as well who have fought for, you can even see very poor schools in some areas, some schools with a second floor, even a terrace, classrooms in the second floor, courts, so a very nice environment, but it also depends on the management of the COCODEs. (Department of El Quiché)

It is important to mention that in some of the efforts reported, the division between governmental and non-governmental is unclear. In one of the departments, for example, there is an education network that carries out efforts to build alliances between governmental and non-governmental organizations:

The education network is formed by NGO representatives who work on education in the department, from the pre-school level to the diversified high school level, and it is headed by the Departmental Directorate by a representative appointed, he is the one promoting it, but it is a network that since I have been here since 2012, hasn’t been able to build concrete foundations, I even remember that last year they presented a strategic plan, but the process began and we are already in April and I at least haven’t received any call for meetings, we are again holding small meetings, putting everything on paper, but no concrete actions ever take place. (El Quiché)

It is also important to stress that there have been efforts supported by the private sector:

Tigo helps us set computer labs in some communities, which is a great hook to attract children, so there are several institutions with which we have worked and we have had the opportunity to coordinate. (Guatemala)

Below is a detail of the information provided in relation to non-governmental organizations at the meso-level.

2. **Inter-institutional support by non-governmental organizations with presence in the regions**

The non-governmental organizations that work at the meso-level support different actions in favour of access and participation of the population in general. Organizations in charge of development programmes and academic organizations (for example the public university and private universities), foundations or organizations that provide attention within or outside the school are included in this category. The group of non-governmental organizations addresses different issues and segments of the population and, although there are no figures to prove it, reports show that these efforts contribute to improve access to and participation in education programmes in school and/or out of school by the population, and with a focus that could correspond to non-scholarized and mixed modalities education and not only through the programmes offered by the schools.
The types of services offered include different aspects and there are changes between departments:

### Training for School Principals

*What we do to implement concrete actions with respect to education policies is to team up with the education network in the department. All the institutions that work here, we jointly prepare the areas in which the principals need training. For example this year we provided training to all the principals in January on malnutrition, prompting them to do house calls, to invite those children who are not enrolled, to contribute to their enrolment them.*

*(Department of El Quiché)*

### Awareness campaigns in favour of access to education, directed to the parents and the students

*Well, we have carried out two actions, one with the parents. With the education network and the principals we asked that in July or August, they begin advocating with the parents to enrol their children in the following school year, ok. We have done punctual advocacy campaigns, always with the parents, and the teachers and principals to help children who finished sixth grade of primary school to continue into the diversified cycle, and those who finish the diversified cycle, to continue with university.*

*(Department of El Quiché)*

### Education offer oriented towards employment

*We give opportunities to these youngsters, to finish a career and work in a company at an operational level, but we also can, these centres work like this, give them a career, to develop as small businesses, as young businessmen.*

*(Department of Escuintla)*

### Education offer for women

*Better Families is a programme for women in reproductive age. This programme intends to create a certain level of responsibility in the women about raising her children, and not only the women but also the family for the benefit of the community, the municipality and the country.*

*(Department of Escuintla)*

### Different education programmes with measures that favour access and permanence, run by foundations with regional reach

1. *Nursing School in San Juan Ostuncalco. Each student has a monthly cost of Q600.00 but if someone can’t pay the whole amount, he can pay only Q200.00*

2. *Among the girls who were given scholarships there is less desertion than the national average. Teachers notify if the girls attend school or not. El Quiché and Huehuetenango by area of attention of the informing organization*
The efforts made by non-governmental organizations show their commitment towards education at the departmental level. Some of these efforts are carried out in direct coordination with the Ministry of Education. Others, like universities, expand access after the middle level and contribute to research in matters of interest.

The reports presented by the persons consulted led to the conclusion that there are two enormous opportunities for inclusion resulting from the work being done promoted from the meso-level. First, different isolated or coordinated efforts by governmental and non-governmental entities which are establishing themselves as a potential support system for the wellbeing of children and youth which prioritises education in every action undertaken. The existing platform can be promoted in different ways to strengthen the education system in its inclusive education approach. As indicated by informants at the meso-level, inclusive education means ‘access to knowledge’, and ‘equality in knowledge’, with equal opportunities to learn.

Access with quality for every student in the country focused on the competencies and skills needed by every citizen to live well (El Quiché and Huehuetenango by area of attention of the informant organization).

Second, the recovery of the community organization and its participation at the meso-and micro-community levels, which is taking place in the country, is a sign of change in favour of actions at these levels, with the mentioned advantage of the contextual knowledge of these persons and the possibility to work with integral strategies as mentioned below.

As part of education quality, work has been done in the following areas: a) early stimulation school (Access); awareness raising campaigns (Access), training of teachers (acceptance and participation), provision of sanitary services for schools (Access and permanence), promotion of treated water consumption (Access, permanence and participation). (El Quiché and Huehuetenango by area of attention of the informing organization)

3.2.3.3 Micro-level
This chapter reports on the opportunities for inclusive education from a micro-perspective. The chapter is organised in three parts. The first introduces opportunities for the access dimension. The second part the opportunities for the acceptance dimension, and the third part the opportunities for the participation dimension.

First part: Access opportunities

In the context of the educational communities taken into consideration as cases for this research, opportunities for access and permanence were reported in the following fields: 1) public investment by municipalities and the Development Councils System; 2) management of educational services with two visions: decentralization and inter-institutional coordination; 3) favourable attitude of parents and children towards education; 4) offer of educational services; 5) advances in the inclusion of persons with SEN with or without disabilities and other vulnerable groups; and 6) support programmes for the school population.

Jointly, the opportunities mentioned allow us to assert that education, as seen by the micro-level stakeholders, is an issue that is under the responsibility of different stakeholders in the immediate surroundings and in which parents take a certain degree of leadership, as explained further on. Below is an explanation of each reported opportunity for access and permanence.
1. Public investment in education by municipalities and the Development Councils System

A first critical finding among the micro-level stakeholders was the recognition of the public investment made by the State through the municipalities and the Development Councils System. Below is a description of the results obtained. Municipal aspects are reported first and then aspects of the Development Councils System.

The municipalities are autonomous entities in charge of the local administration of the municipalities in the Republic and its authorities are the public servants that are closer to the citizens in the communities under their jurisdiction. In the six cases studies there is evidence that shows that micro-level stakeholders recognise the investment made in education by local governments. Municipalities invest in different lines of action, some reported by all the centres in the study, while others only by some schools.

Investment in infrastructure is common in the cases studied. With no exception, all of them reported that municipalities build school buildings for the three academic levels and contribute to their maintenance. Among the cases studied, it is worth mentioning the Ladino enclave that has a school building, furniture and educational equipment that surpasses the conditions of most schools in the country.

*Thanks to the municipality we now have a very nice building and the teachers are decided to care for it and maintain it in the best condition possible and I believe it is one of the best at the national level and this encourages us to work better every day.* (Principal of Ladino Enclave)

*Researcher: What do you like about school?*

*Students: the courts, the door, the cafeteria, the stairs, the hallways, the computer lab, the computers, the games, the gardens, the fact that it has a library where we can read books.* (Focus Groups, third and sixth grade students, primary, Ladino Enclave)

It is important to stress that the infrastructure conditions in the three schools are quite different from one another. In the same department, the multi-grade school has a building lacking basic services such as electric power, washrooms with running water and drainages. One of the classrooms is built with wooden boards and metal sheet ceiling, it has no windows, so the use of the room is limited during the rainy season because of the leaks and the cold weather in that region. When writing this report, the community was planning to expand the school building.

Another issue that is common to the six cases is the investment made by the municipalities in the hiring of service staff, teachers, professionals to provide support at the pre-school, primary and middle levels (for example, psychologists) and secretarial staff to help with supervision. The issue of hiring teachers is not exempt from tensions, as a number of informants pointed out that it affects the budget of the municipalities when this is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. Nevertheless, the do it, because the municipal authorities are the ones that are closer to the population.
Here they pay the janitor, they pay the guards, they pay the teachers, they pay a secretary to help with the supervision, so the problem we have is that the Ministry of Education is not covering positions that it should have, because this responsibility falls under the Ministry of Education. However, people from the community approach us and say: ‘Look, we have no teacher’, the supervisor comes and says: ‘Look, the school population has almost one teacher for every 70 students’, so as municipal authorities, we hire them, but this poses a problem related to budgets and it is discouraging because logically people take advantage of this and say: ‘Look, son, if there really is no teacher, what are you going to do in school? It is better for you to work and earn money and contribute to the household and you will have money to buy your clothing’, so the youngster, in view of the lack of any kind of orientation, which is another factor that is very important. (Municipal Authority, case of School in an Agro-Industrial Context)

In the cases of the multi-grade school and the monolingual school in a bilingual context, there are reports about the hiring of teachers, while in the Ladino enclave, the hiring of support professionals and university professors was reported.

Municipalities have to look after this and if you go around the country, we are the ones paying the teachers, not only do we cover infrastructure costs, we also pay the teachers. According to a new agreement made with the Ministry of Education, we are no longer paying regular teachers, that is primary and secondary level teachers, but only teachers for specific areas and pre-school teachers. (Municipal Authority, Urban-Marginal School and Inclusive School)

We are opening a centre where we have placed two new teachers for the group in the hamlet we have there, to give them access to education. (Municipal Authority, Urban-Marginal School and Inclusive School)

In addition, there are reports about different support programmes for the school population put in place by municipalities. For example, a scholarship programme for middle school students (Ladino enclave) or the delivery of school materials at the urban-marginal school.

We gave a backpack to all the primary and pre-school children, with two 80-page notebooks, two pens, one pencil, one eraser, and one sharpener. In the whole municipality, about two thousand backpacks. We went to the school and using the teacher’s lists. (Municipal Authority, Case of Ladino Enclave School)

In the Ladino enclave, municipal support was reported for a special education centre operating in the municipality. In the multi-grade school, the municipality has created a municipal office for children and a coordinator for the child and youth protection network. In the context of the inclusive school, the municipality reports support for the transportation of students in some communities.

We are helping the children with a free school bus paid by the municipality, to help them overcome that barrier, we could say the barrier of distance. Transportation is also part of what we were considering as a barrier, we provide free transportation in the morning, at noon and in the afternoon for those who study in the afternoons. (Municipal Authority, Case of Inclusive School)

In some cases, awareness-raising actions are undertaken to promote equal education opportunities for men and women, and to inform the parents and the students, in particular girls, about the importance of studying and/or continuing with their studies.
Now we are training our people to change their mind-set which says, only boys get opportunities, women don’t. (Municipal Authority, Case of Monolingual School in Bilingual Context)

Another area in which municipal support to education is given is the area of extra-school education programmes for adults focused on entrepreneurship, as reported for the cases of the urban-marginal school and inclusive school.

So we want for people who are over the school age to also have access to education and we are about to build next year a basic and diversified high school institute, it will mainly be technical, where we will build workshops, computer labs. (Municipal Authority, Cases of Urban-Marginal School and Inclusive School)

Finally, there are reports that indicate that local governments aspire to expanding their actions in favour of education in their municipalities. The municipality where the multi-grade school is located reports plans to create a technical education centre, an issue that creates tensions among the different informants, because some reported that the municipality itself has become a barrier for the achievement of this project.

To bring about timely changes for the population, it mainly relates to the creation of what I was telling you, our proposal was to create an Experimental Training Institute for the majority of the students, those with means to continue, to give them this opportunity. Let’s remember that these are changes that will be fostered, and let’s remember that the main column of our country is education and health, but one of the priorities, the core priority I would say, is education. (Other governmental entities at Multi-Grade School)

On the other hand, in three cases, the monolingual school in a bilingual context, the urban-marginal school and inclusive school, support plans are being considered for the population with access to university education, as done in the municipality of the Ladino enclave school.

So we also want them to come here, in the future we will be looking to build a university, where any private or public university can have the necessary space to install a university. (Municipal Authority Urban-Marginal School and Inclusive School)

With respect to the Development Councils System, the informants of the six education communities consulted recognise the investment on education done by this system in education infrastructure. This investment is defined thanks to the participation of local leaders as confirmed by this quote from the Ladino enclave school. In addition, it was possible to verify that the building of the monolingual school in a bilingual context was built with funds from the said system.

In some communities they have made contributions, they have built schools, which are the needs that the COCODEs present. (Local Leader)

In summary, according to reports by micro-level stakeholders, municipalities are supporting investment in education to create infrastructure conditions, miscellaneous services and support programmes for access and permanence of the students. Furthermore, efforts are being made to raise awareness among the education community about the importance of education and in some cases they have extra-school education programmes. Of the six cases studied, there is one major difference with respect to the agro-industrial school, which reported less areas of municipal support to education in comparison to the other cases researched. According to the reports, work is oriented towards the development of the education infrastructure. The Development Councils System also participates in providing attention in matters of infrastructure, as reported in the different
departments visited in the context of this research.

2. **Management of education services with two visions: decentralization and inter-institutional coordination**

Micro-level informants are looking for options for the management of the education services under the Ministry of Education. In the four contexts where the study cases are located, decentralization was mentioned as an option for the management of the services, because it is recognised that the municipality could be the means to achieve this, since, as indicated in the cases of the Ladino enclave school and the monolingual school in a bilingual context, they have close knowledge of the needs of the population that are not being met by the central government.

> The central government is focused on a number of functions; however, true decentralization can come through the municipalities. (Municipal Authority, case of Urban-Marginal School and Inclusive School)

There are other opinions given by micro-level stakeholders that confirm that there is experience of inter-institutional coordination at this level which have contributed to the joint management of education services, encompassing both the school population and the population outside the school system. An example is the work carried out by the municipality of the urban-marginal school and the inclusive school, which is putting in place education programmes with a focus on entrepreneurship.

> We are focusing on education for adults and hence the agreement reached with CEMUCAF, which is part of the Ministry of Education, who is helping us when they finish, because a few adults have graduated. CEMUCAF is an institution under the Ministry of Education that provides training on handiwork, handicrafts, baking, dessert baking, cooking, jewellery making, so we have been working with them for two years, every six months they receive a diploma from the Ministry of Education and the Municipality, so this is a base to be able to get around in the social environment, they produce bracelets, necklaces, earrings, cakes, flower arrangements and they can get around better. (Municipal Authority, case Urban-Marginal School and Inclusive School)

Another issue related to education is that at the MAGA we have reached an agreement with respect to family orchards, which help the families with nutrition, they are given improved seeds and mainly seeds to produce vegetables, for example, peppers, carrots, coriander, beets, so we also give them this as alternative education. (Municipal Authority, case Urban-Marginal School and Inclusive School)

There is also evidence of inter-institutional work between municipalities, education centres, churches and international organizations like UNICEF, as shown in the following experience in the municipality of the multi-grade school.

> This office is part of the municipality, but we have an advisor and support from the Pastoral de Movilidad Humana [church entity] always in coordination with UNICEF. (Micro-level Informant at Multi-Grade School)

Finally, as mentioned by the participants of the education communities of the urban-marginal school and the inclusive school, in their opinion it would be advisable if the International cooperation offered could be channelled through the municipalities.
Yes, something I see in relation to international cooperation, they should simply focus, not on reaching agreements at the level of the central government. They should go one step ahead and jump that barrier and seek the local governments, because this is true decentralization, to have a republican government like the one we do. So where we are, if they only reach out to the central government, to the Ministry of Education, they will be dependent on one person or a unit, but they will not have the same coverage, than if they were to reach out to ANAM for example. (Municipal Authority, case Urban-Marginal School and Inclusive School)

In summary, for the urban schools considered as part of this research, decentralization is an opportunity to improve the management of education services. Inter-institutional coordination with public entities, international organization, religious groups and non-governmental organizations proves that this is possible and that it represents an opportunity to serve the population using schooling and non-schooling alternatives both in urban and rural areas.

3. Favourable attitude of the parents and children towards education

Another area of opportunities identified by micro-level stakeholders corresponds to the collective behaviour towards education according to the vision of the community. In the six cases of this research, there is an outstanding favourable attitude about attendance to school and support by the parents, an issue that is sometimes countered by other stakeholders in the education system who consider that there is a certain lack of interest from the parents about sending their children to study. It is evident that both the parents and the children consulted as part of this research show interest towards education and a proactive attitude to find options to combine work that is indispensable for self-sustainability and/or to sustain a family, with studies. This was emphatically expressed at the inclusive school since the teachers, the parents and the children reported actions that show how, in order to prioritise education, it is necessary to give attention taking advantage of available opportunities.

I have a brother and he is studying in the lower education secondary cycle on the weekends and he helps my uncle, he helps him with the tools, since he is an electrician. But he is still studying the basic cycle. (Girl, student of Inclusive School Case)

He got sick, a bone disease, and he can’t walk now so that is why he is not coming to school, his father, pays a teacher who is my cousin to go and teach him. (Girl, student of Inclusive School)

The experience of mothers and fathers who did not have a chance to study is also noteworthy, which explains the aspirations they have for their children to achieve something that was not possible for them, as shown in the following quote of a mother of the multi-grade school.

We shouldn’t let them stay at home, otherwise they get to be too old and they won’t want to come, so it is necessary to try to send them every day. Classes are for them, we suffer because we can’t write, we can’t speak Spanish, sometimes people approach us and we don’t understand what they are saying, but our children come every day to school and they understand and that helps us, if they know. (Focus Group, Mother of Multi-Grade School)

The informant stated on the one hand that she is committed to sending her kids to school despite the limitations of her everyday life, and on the other hand, expressed her expectation that her children’s competencies will be improved to help them achieve greater social inclusion.

The readiness to support education can also be seen in the existence of parent organizations to support the school. There are two modalities of support reported. The Education Councils at schools,
responsible for the administration of the gratuity fund and the parent committees that can be in charge of different functions depending on the issues at hand. An example of the work done by the parents can be found in the municipality where the Ladino enclave is located.

_The centre started in 2008 when a parent had the idea, he is disabled, so he spoke to the mayor. Those who were interested met and when they saw the number of kids, the mayor supported with teachers and with the building. That went up to the board until 2010, when every month, we would go out and collect funds, half was paid by the municipality to this person [a therapist] and half by the parents. It was a bit hard because we needed to request funding every month, we would organise fairs, or other activities to be able to pay, but little by little everyone got discouraged because the support people gave wasn’t much, because it wasn’t known, because almost everyone comes from the rural area. The board disintegrated and the teachers began to work to make this an official centre supported by the Ministry of Education, but anyway, the initiative started with the parents, it wasn’t like they came and said there is a need for a special education centre here, let’s work to get it running, no, I am the mother of one of the children, so I was in the board._ (Teacher, Special Education Centre, Ladino Enclave)

In summary, the issue of the attitudes and aspirations is a motor to promote education at the local level and something to deepen the understanding of it by the different stakeholders within the education system. The following quote summarises what has been presented on the matter and enables to connect with another opportunity presented in relation to the offer of services at the reach of the population, as expressed at the agro-industrial school.

_Because I have spoken to many youngsters in the rural area and their dream is to keep on studying, because they finished the sixth grade and they want to continue to middle school._ (Municipal Authority, School in an Agro-Industrial Context)

### 4. Offer of education services

The information gathered on this issue is an opportunity that is not detached from the context of the country’s inequalities. According to the informants of the six study cases, the State offers opportunities to study in each department and municipality where the education centres studied are located. However, the offer is unequal with respect to an accessible education offer for ones and for the others, as can be seen in the cases studied, in particular in the two cases of rural schools. For the urban-marginal school, the inclusive school and the Ladino enclave school, the education offer encompasses the pre-school, primary school and middle school levels at the public and private level, and there is presence from the public university and some private universities. On the other hand, two of the schools studied, the monolingual school in a bilingual context and the agro-industrial school, have presence of services at the pre-school, primary and middle level, while at the multi-grade school, there is only access at the pre-school and primary levels. The education offer has been expanding as shown by statements made at the Ladino enclave school.

_The urban school was built as well as the pre-school annex that is there, on the back, as the school population kept growing, more people were interested in basic secondary studies, before basic secondary studies were taught in the same building, but in view of the need and the fact that the institute kept growing, part of the land was given to build a basic studies institute that has grown incredibly. There is also one career, accountant, this year they opened another career, child teacher._ (Principal of Ladino Enclave School)

In addition, there is evidence confirming that access to education services is progressively growing in the most remote places and at levels that had received no attention, using different education
modalities such as tele-secondary institutes, as shown in an experience reported by the urban-marginal school and inclusive school.

_We are now trying to expand the coverage of basic studies, but we believe it is ok, that we have basic secondary schools almost in every village, in the majority, where there is no institute, there is tele-secondary, so tele-secondary is helping us a lot, and with respect to preschool, there is coverage at every school._ (Municipal Authority)

In summary, the offer of education services is progressively expanding according to the informants of the regions studied, thanks to the growing demand when a new service arrives, and modalities of attention proposed by the Ministry to reach rural areas with alternative services. However, access is sometimes restricted by economic factors or by a lack of accessible services, as indicated by a mother of the agro-industrial school.

_On Sundays they are also teaching adults and minors who have not finished their primary school, they are doing it here, and basic secondary studies as well, they graduate here, on Sundays. We have almost everything close, what we don’t have is money._ (Mother)

5. **Advances on inclusive education for persons with SEN with or without disabilities**

This research included an inclusive school as one of the study cases, i.e. a school centre officially registered and recognised as one that receives and provides attention to a population with special education needs. The work of this school is undoubtedly an opportunity to provide access to persons with special needs, as confirmed by the following quote:

_Mine is on third grade, the boy has brain paralysis but thank God here I found the support of the principal and the teachers. My boy is here since he was five years old. My boy is happy when he is here at school because both the principal and the teachers support him and support me._ (Mother Inclusive School)

However, a finding of particular interest is the fact that in three school centres studied, in addition to the inclusive school, there is a great diversity of students who, based on their characteristics and conditions, are considered vulnerable groups.

_He is already seventeen years old and he is still at school, this is one of the examples, I always use this example, and a girl who is eighteen years old, they, for example, when I speak with my children I mention them as an example, although they are old, they are still in school, they want to learn, at least finish the sixth grade, so maybe it is all about whether or not you want to._ (Teacher Focus Group)

According to the education authority of the urban-marginal school, accepting children with special education needs is not an isolated decision made by education centres, given the needs of the population and the will of the teachers to help them in class.

_Well, look, generally in the case of the Urban Marginal school there are no acceptance problems because there is no discrimination, to put it that way, a danger that these children will not be accepted, even in several schools there are children with special education needs, so this is not a limitation, the truth is that yes, and we have the support of the teachers, their readiness to support these children, because that requires of patience, time, ok, it is, it is a calling, but in general there are no limitations with respect to the acceptance of children._ (Education Authority)

An issue of great interest in this research is the way in which the team of teachers led by a committed principal looking to favour inclusive education works as a facilitator of opportunities for the vulnerable population of their school centres. This role of the teacher is called an institutional
agent, and it refers to a kind of behaviour that goes beyond the expected duties, to become a lever capable of moving the wills and facing adversities in favour of inclusive education. The following quote shows the experience of the inclusive school on this matter, which is described in more detail in the second part of this chapter.

When we started this boy was really happy. A time came when he stopped coming, he didn’t come for almost 15 days, the mother would come and tell me ‘he is sick, he is sick’ but I would see him out on the streets and he was doing well, so I asked her, ‘Look, what is the problem with [name]? Really, bring a medical certificate because it has been too long’. ‘Ok, she said, I will tell you the truth. Since his mother was coming in this month and since they did not give her permission to come, he doesn’t want to study and now he gets out, he meets ugly kids and they take drugs’. So I had to talk to them, the father would say: ‘Look, if you want I can take him out’. ‘No’, I said, ‘that is not a solution’. He is really smart and one day we started talking and the boy made a commitment to come, I hope we can continue like this. Teachers have to walk the extra mile to keep this children, to help them finish, they might make it, it could be that by the end of the year they end up dropping out, right, but the thing is trying and make them commit to motivate them. I am working on the affective side because he is obviously depressed because of his mother and then there is the issue of being constant. When he doesn’t come, I have to look for him to ask him why he didn’t come and there he is, ‘no I will send him now’. Even if it is the middle of the afternoon, but there we are. (Teacher)

In summary, both the inclusive school and the regular education centres have had experience in the attention of people with special education needs in regular classrooms. This is undoubtedly an opportunity for vulnerable people who are getting accepted in school, but also an opportunity to analyse how an education centre that lacks many possibilities related to financing, is opening spaces of opportunity with the resources available, namely their human resources formed by committed teachers who are institutional agents working in favour of their students.

6. Support programmes for the school population

To conclude: in the six study cases, the support programmes put in place by the Ministry of Education are recognised as an opportunity for access and permanence. Among these programmes, the gratuity programme was mentioned, which relates to the interdiction of kind of charges to enrol a child in school, to the development of school activities and to the payments made by the Ministry of Education to basic secondary schools (for example, paying for electric power, water services, telephone, remodelling). Other support programmes include school meals, delivery of books and school supplies for each student and a didactic package for teachers.

Now with the programme there is gratuity, they provide a meal, they give them school supplies and this helps a lot, because those who have no money to buy supplies, get them, everyone gets them, so this has helped a lot of people with scarce resources. (Education Supervisor of Urban-Marginal School and Inclusive School)

The government even now has a programme that gives money to the parents if they have four children in school, they give them a monthly quota to the parents. (Informant)

Because precisely now the government ensures the gratuity of education, they provide food in schools to help students get to the establishments. (Education Authority, Agro-Industrial School)

In summary, the institutional measures carried out by the Ministry of Education in support of access to and permanence in education centres by the population is highly valued in the six cases included
in this study as something that contributes to the inclusion of boys and girls with limited economic resources to attend and remain in school.

**Second part: Acceptance opportunities**

The acceptance dimension was operatively defined in this research as the interpersonal relations that take place in the school environment and it encompasses relations between teachers and students, between students, and between members of the education community. Favourable and unfavourable attitudes expressed through the behaviour of the persons during their interactions in the classroom were studied. In addition actions that could give explanations about the way in which acceptance relations were expressed between individuals with special challenges or personal attributes that set them apart from the majority of the group were also identified and analysed.

According to the results obtained at the micro-level, the inter-personal relations seen as opportunities cover two dimensions: 1) those that relate to inter-personal relations in the school environment; and 2) relations between institutions in favour of inclusive education.

1. **Acceptance in inter-personal relations in the school environment**

The issue of accepting others and showing a favourable disposition to acknowledge the person for who he or she is, depends on a person’s attitudes and values. According to the results obtained, teachers show attitudes that are considered opportunities because they promote acceptance among their pupils and respect for everyone’s individuality. The reported teacher’s behaviour is characterised by an affective expression towards his or her students and a commitment that transcends what could be considered teacher’s vocation for his or her job. The closest term in the literature consulted is ‘institutional agent’, which according to the Centre of Urban Education (Stanton-Salazar, 2010) means the power people have to generate change through their attitudes and their actions. The combination of a desire to act and knowing how to act effectively turns these people into institutional agents.

The favourable disposition of teachers to promote inclusion in the regular classroom was reported by the inclusive school and the urban-marginal school when discussing persons with SEN with or without disabilities. The behaviour of teachers has an effect in two other aspects. The first is the adaptation of the learning opportunities to the possibilities of the student. The second is the promotion of respect and acceptance, mainly through an example given to the students to help them accept others and be respectful and show solidarity in the face of special challenges.

*Asking him to do the same things others do. Not treating him like a different person who can’t do everything. It was like: ‘Love, you will take the crayon and you will grab it any way you can, you might not colour inside the lines but it doesn’t matter, you just use the crayon, the important thing is that you pass the crayon over the drawing’ Sometimes when he’d say ‘I can’t’, I would answer, ‘that word doesn’t exist, you can, you try’ Sometimes he stayed in his wheelchair, and I would say: ‘let’s get you out’, I would untie him,[name of student], come here, let’s play, here with everyone, but you need to get down’, so he got out as best he could and he tried to do the exercises. (Teacher at Inclusive School)*

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They would look at him like asking: ‘why can’t he talk?’, so I told them: ‘Look, he is just like you in many ways, but he doesn’t have the same capacities because unfortunately he can’t talk or move like you do, but he is just like you’. So what we need to do is help him. They would stimulate him, play with him, they would include him in everything, during snack time, they would bring him his food, I remember that we needed to feed him in the mouth then. Sometimes when I turned around they were feeding him, they would see how I carried him holding his hand or whatever and they kept asking: ‘Can I hold him, can I help?’ He had many friends during that time who would play with him, take care of him, who helped me take care of him. (Teacher, Inclusive Classroom)

In the monolingual school in a bilingual context and in the multi-grade, the behaviour called ‘institutional agent’ could be seen in the different treatment of boys and girls promoted by their teachers in favour of a pleasant environment in the classroom, in particular for the girls, because in their context, girls usually participate little and do not speak much in the presence of boys. According to the reports, the teachers have received training to provide attention to these aspects of the relations between boys and girls.

Let’s say that girls receive better treatment than boys, teachers treat girls nicely while boys, are always fooling around, and they (teachers) do not hit them. They give boys more work, to keep them tranquil. (Principal, Case of Monolingual School in Bilingual Context)

Practically that is thanks to the workshops we have received, how to include boys to co-exist, as equals, with their teachers. We have had training on that and on how to eliminate abuses against the opposite sex. (Principal of Multi-Grade School)

Finally, the Ladino enclave school is making an effort to promote attitudes of tolerance and to prevent rejection or exclusion based on the individual characteristics of each, students with SEN, mother tongue, clothing, over-aged population, socio-economic condition.

Living with the rest without worrying about their clothing or their race, without being exposed to mockery and being accepted as they are. There are many Ladinos, many indigenous and others here. (Focus Group, sixth grade boys, Ladino Enclave)

I have tried teaching certain values to them and they start to adopt to what we have, to the environment in the classroom, regardless of social status, because the son of a congressman and the son of the woman who sells tortillas need to relate, so there is no discrimination. That is what I have taught them. (Focus Group, Ladino Enclave)

Evidence shows different examples of strategies used by teachers to promote a climate of acceptance in the classroom, in the face of the special challenges of some students. The simplicity of the strategies used is noteworthy, as are the positive results reported by the informants.

I have a boy who hits everyone. He can’t be close to anyone because he starts pinching him or they are walking and he trips them, he has started to feel the rejection of the other boys. So what I did is I told him: ‘Look, son, come here, you are going to stay right next to me because I want to have you close to me’, I tell him, ‘I love you very much and I know you are going to stay here’, I feel that you need to make the child feel important, give him more attention so that he can see that we feel he is important, tell him ‘Look, son, don’t do that because your friends or, would you like it if somebody did this to you, if somebody hit you every day?’ I feel that by having him close to me every day he is changing, because he can’t hit me all the time, can he? (Teacher of School in an Agro-Industrial Context)

In summary, the different cases studied show teacher behaviour that promotes a climate of
acceptance in view of the diversity of the group of students in the classroom. The attitude of these teachers turns into an opportunity for the students, who learn by example and strengthen their values and their capacity to relate to people that differ from their group of reference.

2. Relations between institutions in favour of inclusive education

The work carried out by the education centres is strengthened by the support of institutions present in the surroundings of the educational community. There are reports about the different measures adopted by institutions which, in addition to favouring access by individuals with special challenges, favour their acceptance in the school environment and contribute to creating a climate of protection of children and youth, in particular when they live in a context of insecurity and violence like the one reported in the context of the urban-marginal school and inclusive school.

Once in the principal’s office, in the presence of the Disciplinary Commission, a child said ‘My father has many weapons. I can send someone to kill all of you.’ He was seven years old . . . (we think) that we can’t blame him, his threat didn’t scare us, because we knew he was not going to do it or he couldn’t do it. We were sad to see the degree of violence in him. He watched violent [television] shows. He wanted to replicate what he saw and in addition he was suffering from violence at home, all that was inside of him and he wanted to take it on others, his friends, we spoke to the mother of the child and we recommended psychological treatment to help him get out of that. We found she was really scared, she didn’t know what to do. It was hard, the child protection office is visiting him, but yes, there was a lot of violence around the child, the Child Protection Office [Procuraduría de la Niñez y de la Adolescencia] comes here constantly because they have several cases, they come to interview the children, the teacher, and the parents of those children. (Principal of Inclusive School)

Stakeholders in the system itself, such as educational supervisors, play a key role to ensure inclusion and acceptance of boys and girls in the school. In some cases they can be considered as ‘institutional agents’ because of their commitment which translates into actions in favour of the children under their responsibility. In addition there are other local stakeholders, and their joint actions favour inclusive education and child protection. Children face adverse conditions of vulnerability, as shown in the following quotes.

Seven kilometres these people would need to walk, children would need to walk seven kilometres, we are talking about approximately three hours, to get to school, which is the closes one, and I think this was a kindness that we were able to extend to them thank God with the support, as I repeat, of the Municipality because through the Ministry the same, what limits the actions of the Ministry is any audits that could be undertaken to ensure compliance with regulations and procedures, if we have no code we get no benefits and if we have no teachers we wouldn’t have schools or anything, so we are helping them that way. (Education Supervisor, Multi-Grade School)

With respect to a 10-year old student who was pregnant, he commented: ‘We have reduced the stigma that said that because she was pregnant she couldn’t keep studying. We can’t turn our backs on her, we need to support her. The girl has kept on studying’. (Supervisor of School in an Agro-Industrial Context)

In summary, at the micro-level different institutional efforts in favour of relations of acceptance in the context of education centres were identified. There are also reports about efforts from outside the school that promote the protection of children and youth and cause actions in favour of inclusive education for vulnerable boys and girls.
Chapter 3.2 – Country Study Guatemala

Third part: Participation opportunities

With respect to the participation dimension, micro-level informants identified opportunities to promote learning experiences divided in the following categories: 1) institutional agents; 2) support programmes offered by the Ministry of Education and the government; 3) modality and type of school; 4) conditions and activities to foster participation in the classroom; 5) inter-institutional management and support systems for the school; and 6) role of the student and leadership management by education authorities.

Below is a description of the opportunities identified

1. Institutional agents

In the different study cases there are situations that confirm that at the micro-level there are people who act as institutional agents, i.e. people who with their attitudes and knowledge solve complex situations and show commitment towards students and their learning.

I found this small girl with a hearing problem. We noticed that if we spoke to her face to face, she would understand the instruction, but when we have a general instruction, she would get lost. I spoke to her mom, she now has a hearing device, we started working with her in grade X, she knows all her classmates by name, she can even identify who didn’t come today, she gives their names, and I tell her: ‘Please hand this notebook to such and such’ and she goes and gives it to him. She picks up the assignment sheets and she comes and says: ‘Such and such didn’t give it to me’. So she learned to relate with others, to identify herself with the group in a very nice way, she has certain ability to understand instructions, to understand the difference between good and bad by talking about it. We are now working on her motor skills, because she has had from the beginning of the year a small work box, we have worked with what we have found to develop her fine and gross motor skills. We handle the bathroom issue because she used to look for her sister who studies with another teacher, and she always wanted to go looking for her sister, she had a dependency. We have put her in charge of her classmates, when a girl goes to the bathroom she says: ‘I bathroom’, you go take care of her, so that she doesn’t get lost. She thinks she is taking others to the bathroom: ‘Miss, I brought her back, I took her’. So we changed the problem around to create in her a sense of responsibility, of taking care of others and we are doing alright.

(Teacher Inclusive School)

Observations allowed the identification of more than 18 formal classrooms and 8 provisional classrooms which according to the Principal have been the result of actions taken by the teachers, the Principal and the parents.

(Observer, Urban Marginal School)

Parents don’t spend money on school supplies, in situations like this we look after them. If when they get to school they say, teacher, I don’t have a notebook any more, I finished it, and my father says he has no money. One looks for a way to buy him a notebook, to help him advance.

(Principal, Multi-Grade School)

My colleagues and I are known because we find a way to bring clips to the children. Sometimes we make an extra effort, because if we ask them to bring them from home, some bring them and others don’t, so we find a way to get them and help the children and to ensure that the fact that they don’t have economic resources won’t mean that they can’t learn.

(Teacher, School in an Agro-Industrial Context)
These actions are carried out by teachers, principals, parents and even some children who try to mobilise personal or economic resources to achieve a common goal. Actions can be oriented towards the satisfaction of different needs, as shown in the following quotes. Some actions are of a personal nature and others are of a collective one.

In summary, at the micro-level there are institutional agents whose acts promote learning opportunities.

2. **Support programmes offered by the Ministry of Education and the government**

According to micro-level informants, education support programmes such as the gratuity programme and the school supplies programme help children come to school and have the necessary materials to work in the classroom. In addition to the assistance received from the government, there are NGOs that help. The Ministry of Education is providing didactic materials for children with SEN with or without disabilities, which promotes the learning process of these children in the classroom.

*Right now with the gratuity programme, which provides a school meal to them, school materials, well that helps a lot . . . because those who don’t have enough money to buy school supplies get them, so everyone is covered, so this has helped those with scarce resources. (Education Supervisor Urban-Marginal School and Inclusive School)*

*Well, the Ministry of Education has complied with everything it has given, school supplies, school meals, gratuity. (Principal of Multi-Grade School)*

*This year I have a boy who came from the special school who is deaf and mute, I have been getting materials from Save the Children, they brought some books but there are numbers, letters, and greetings. (Teacher, Ladino Enclave)*

In summary, the support programmes that offer daily food (meals) and those who deliver school supplies represent opportunities for learning in the classroom.

3. **Modality and type of school**

The cases in the research are of two types of education centres, both reporting positive characteristics for learning. In the case of the multi-grade school, the fact that there are several grades in the same classroom favours closer inter-personal relations among the students than when they are divided by grades.

*The good thing, a positive factor, of this type of multi-grade school is that children don’t, how would I say this, they don’t discriminate based on grades, because they relate with children from fourth, fifth, and sixth grade, and they consider them one only section, as if it were one grade. They don’t say: ‘You can’t play with us because you are in fourth grade’ or ‘You don’t know because you are in fifth grade’. They do the work together and they don’t discriminate based on knowledge. (Teacher, Multi-Grade School)*

Teachers have different opinions when analysing their experience working in two types of schools. Teachers who worked before in schools where there are several sections of one same grade and each section is taught by a teacher and, teachers who have worked with several grades in the same classroom. The first type of school is a better option for teachers because they can pay more attention to the individual students.
Here we work with one grade only, while there we used to work with two or three and I have really liked it because, you feel like you have more time with them, because working with three grades is very different, you can’t do everything. (Teacher, Case of Ladino Enclave)

In summary, the modality and type of school have an influence on the learning process.

4. **Conditions and activities that foster participation in the classroom**

According to the evidence gathered, there are different activities in the classroom and some extra-curricular activities that favour learning opportunities at the micro-level. In the first place there is access to bilingual education and the possibility to have teachers who know the languages and have resources to work. Some places in the country have trilingual education because the children speak their mother tongue and Spanish, and they are learning English.

And about the language thing, I don’t think it is a barrier, because language is a wealth, and fortunately here, this urban school looks like a trilingual school. What I mean is that for me language is not a barrier. Language is not a barrier but a source of wealth. (Teacher, Monolingual School in Bilingual Context)

This opportunity is identified by the number of students per teacher and based on the experience of the teachers themselves. In urban schools the number of students per classroom is usually lower than in rural schools.

I have worked the six grades when I started in the village I had to work with four grades, 88 students because we were only two teachers, afterwards other colleagues got there and here I have only one grade, I have had large groups, the largest here was of 42 children, nowadays my group is of 26 children and I feel very well, because for now I always have patience for them. (Teacher, Urban school in Ladino Enclave)

Access to didactic resources to learn in the classroom is recognised as an opportunity. In some schools the availability of text books per child was mentioned, as was access to computers or tablets.

All the students had the Communications and Language book. (Observer in a 3rd grade classroom)

The school has tablets, but the teachers keep them at home, because they are responsible and if they get lost, teachers are responsible for replacing them. This has happened in other schools in the municipality. (Teacher, Ladino Enclave School)

Another opportunity reported relates to extra-curricular activities. These contribute to the training of students in aspects of citizenship. That is the case of civic days. Special dates are also celebrated, such as Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, the school anniversary, Independence Day. All of these promote participation and a stronger relation between the parents and their children’s school, and they are opportunities for participation for children with SEN with or without disabilities who attend the regular school.

The only thing that has been kept are civic Mondays or maybe an activity to teach values, that is something else that is getting lost, activities to keep the child alive, and not let them stuck in books and that’s it. There is space, there is time, we are here from 7:30 until 12:30, that is a long time to have the children seating, writing, dictating to them, if the child can also do activities outside, but teachers don’t do this anymore. (Mother, Ladino Enclave Case)
Yes, it looks like they let them participate when there are events, fairs, they send them a note so that they can participate, yes we have gone to a number of parades, I go with them, we went for the independence light during Independence Day celebrations on September 15 and they were really happy. (Therapist, Ladino Enclave Case)

Extra-curricular activities in charge of the school are strengthened by the courses offered by local organizations that provide training spaces on relevant topics in the life of the students.

We now have the teenager programme, we are working with groups in institutes, at schools, at private schools, providing information. The plan also includes the organization of community groups – youngsters who are not studying. That is the goal this year. (Other State Organizations, Ladino Enclave Case)

Right now we have just started, we have been giving training on prevention of violence against children and youth, and we have also given training on health education and early pregnancies. (Municipal Authority, Case of Monolingual School in Bilingual Context)

In summary, from the perspective of micro-level stakeholders, there are different conditions which, when met, favour learning opportunities, among which are access to bilingual programmes, number of students per classroom, school modality, access to didactic resources, development of activities to foster values and promote participation of parents, and development of training programmes related to relevant issues, namely violence prevention.

5. Inter-institutional management and support systems

Another issue mentioned by micro-level informants as a learning opportunity relates to inter-institutional management in support of school activities and to meet specific needs of students. In this sense, micro-level stakeholders identified the stakeholders involved in the local context, such as municipal authorities, other government dependencies like the Ministry of Health, parents, and the joint requests of the education community as opportunities in favour of learning by children at school. Below are two quotes. The first one illustrates the assertion related to attention of a person with SEN with or without disabilities. The second one shows the support provided by the municipalities to public schools in their jurisdiction.

They gave him a walker that belonged to the departmental unit. Now the mother is taking him to FUNDABIEN, he has improved a lot, he has special shoes and everything, and he gives a few steps by himself, with work, everything verbally, simply writing everything on the children’s book, the children who finish faster help him and I give him homework and the mother helps him a lot. (Teacher of Inclusive School)

We are paying a teacher for the diversified cycle and we are paying some teachers, as a municipality we have provided support, sometimes by paying the teachers. (Municipal Authority, Monolingual School in Bilingual Context)

According to some reports, there are examples about the way in which parents get involved in the education of their children and how they make an effort to help them with school activities. Their participation could be considered as support towards school and sometimes both teachers and parents find other resources that are available in the community, such as professional services by psychologists, to take care of special situations referred to them by the school.

One can see if a child has a deficiency or a different behaviour or something, we see it and we try to get the parents involved. (Principal of School in an Agro-Industrial Context)
Children are like that, those who share their opinions, who participate, have mothers who are constantly here asking if their child is doing well, if he brought his homework. (Principal of School in an Agro-Industrial Context)

I have a child who suffers from Down’s syndrome. I have had him since last year. I have made some progress with him, with the help of a lady, who is specialist in psychology, we have changed the behaviour he presented in the beginning because he was a bit aggressive. He is very negative, very insecure, and in the beginning he was very dependent. He wanted us to do everything for him, for us to take out the trash, and with the help of some books provided by the Ministry of Education, I have been working with him, he is more independent, he does his own thing. I have taught him to put on his belt, he can’t tie his shoes yet, but these are details he couldn’t do before, so there is hope that he can continue advancing. (Teacher)

In summary, at the micro-level there are inter-institutional management efforts in which the education community stakeholders play a leading role. There are also some professional support services to help students that require it.

6. Role of the student in leadership management by education authorities

Finally, another opportunity identified in the micro-level evidence relates to the behaviour of students towards their studies and their academic preparation. According to the reports presented, there are students who are interested in learning, who make an effort to take advantage of the opportunities offered and keep in touch with their parents with respect to their academic activities.

I like learning everything, like mathematics, communication and everything, I like exams. (Student in an Agro-Industrial Context)

Sometimes he comes back saying: ‘I didn’t understand mathematics today, I have a huge X, I didn’t understand the teacher, but I will ask her tomorrow’. So sometimes I say: ‘Why didn’t you ask her right then?’, ‘No, because she was explaining’, he says. So he leaves everything for tomorrow. ‘No, don’t, do it right then, you have to raise your hand and ask if you didn’t understand, and she will go back where you got lost’. (Mother, Urban-Marginal School)

There is also behaviour that shows solidarity, protection and/or support between classmates. They recognise the capacities of other children to learn.

Once I was at school and a girl told me to give her my money or she would hit me and a boy came and stood up for me, he went to call the teachers so that they could help me because she wanted to take my money. (Focus Group-Girls, Inclusive School)

So I have always taken one of the kids as language teacher, so what I explain to him in Spanish, the child translates, but by then the child doesn’t need for me to teach him, he understands. (Teacher of Monolingual School in Bilingual Context)

There is information that stands out about the importance of the leadership of teachers, in particular the figure of the Principal as facilitator for a climate of harmony in school.

I tell them that this helps co-exist and when to ask the children to stop fighting, to try to live with them but to this date nobody has said anything, because of what I have told them, what I have taught the parents. (Principal, Multi-Grade School)
I have years of administrative experience and in my five years I have fought for this group, there are no more groups, so let’s say a group there, a group here, now there aren’t any. Now we have teamwork. That is my small contribution in five years. (Principal, Case of Monolingual School in Bilingual Context)

In summary, learning opportunities in the classroom are promoted when the students show an attitude of interest to learn, parents pay attention to their children and teachers get involved in creating a favourable and structured climate that fosters learning.

3.2.2 Discussion, conclusions and recommendations

This chapter presents a discussion about the emerging concepts or ideas based on the results obtained by the Guatemala research. The first part analyses the construction of the inclusive education concept from the perspective of the different stakeholders involved in the research. Evidence suggests that inclusive education is a notion that for some macro-level stakeholders is changing into a wider vision of the concept, which transcends disabled people to include any person in the education system. In contrast, inclusive education is a notion that is not used by actors at the meso- and micro-levels, although their perspectives on education coincide with the ideas presented by this notion. The second part of the chapter presents a description and analysis of Guatemala’s education system based on the barriers and opportunities already presented in the results chapter. Based on these two subjects, the implications and possible actions are analysed, based on the findings of this study, to find a way to achieve an inclusive education system in Guatemala. The current route and potential alternate routes are discussed, in order to develop general recommendations based on the research.

The results of this research are based on the points of view expressed by the different participants and the analysis of other sources of evidence (for example, observations, documents) in the contexts chosen, to respond to the questions of the research and present ideas to advance the matter. Although the results of the study are not generalizable for all the education stakeholders in the country, we believe their scope is significant enough to guide future discussions and to design interventions aimed to advancing the inclusive education agenda.

The notion and meaning of inclusive education is an issue open for debate in different countries, as asserted by Ainscow and Miles (2009). One of the concepts that guide the debate is the one proposed by UNESCO (2009) which indicates that inclusive education “is a process to strengthen the capacities of the education system so that it can reach all of the students” (p. 8). It adds that an inclusive education system can only be established if “ordinary schools become more inclusive; that is, if they are able to teach all the children in their communities” (p. 8). It is mentioned that the fundamental purpose of inclusive education is an efficient participation of a person in society so that said person can take full advantage of his potential (p. 6). Finally, UNESCO indicates that the challenge is “how to achieve an equitable, high quality education for all the students” (p. 7). Moreover, it has been mentioned that inclusive education is a concept created and studied in developed countries, and that a limitation related to this historical reality is that the inclusive education concepts and practices do not necessarily take into account the complexities and challenges of developing societies (Singal & Muthukrishna, 2014). Therefore, this study offers very necessary evidence about inclusive education in the context of a developing country. This line of research promises a contribution to refining the concept and the practice of inclusive education applied to contexts in which inequalities and development challenges are qualitatively different from
those observed in Northern America, Europe, and Australia. Based on a broad concept, we proposed that inclusive education in Guatemala be articulated with objectives that connect with other development agendas in different sectors (e.g. health, social, economic), and which are aimed to alleviating poverty, which is a factor that brings about exclusion.

(1) Inclusive education in Guatemala: a notion in construction

The proposal resulting from this research links to the general debate about the notion of inclusive education taking place in developed countries. The ideas expressed by the participants of the three levels addressed in this research, allowed the formulation of a particular notion (emic) aimed to building on the dialogue about what inclusive education can be and how an inclusive system can be put in place in developing countries and, as a second idea, how to build a pedagogical framework for inclusion based on the characteristics of these countries.

Before analysing the inclusive education notion as proposed, it is important to keep in mind that in countries like Guatemala, there is a strong tension between two different realities that should not be confused: inequality brought about by poverty and reflected in the living conditions of the population, and diversity, which is a human trait. Inclusion aims to revert the first, respecting and welcoming the latter.

Based on this, evidence shows that in order to achieve the inclusion of any citizen in society, which is the ultimate goal of any education process, it is necessary to consider the individual throughout his development. This means that inclusive education cannot begin when a boy or a girl living in poverty, comes to school to begin his/her schooling. Exclusion related to poverty conditions generates insurmountable gaps for the education system and therefore, the integral protection of the child during his first years of life should happen before his entry to school. This requires approaches that go beyond the competencies of the education system, since interventions with these age groups require coordinated efforts by health, labour, social welfare and other sectors.

Below we discuss the two main aspects of the findings of this study: 1) what is understood by inclusive education, what is its approach and what are the three core ideas that explain it: personal, community and country development; and 2) how to conceive a route towards an inclusive education system that addresses three aspects: a) inclusion strategies; b) education policies; and c) development policies.

It is important to begin by asserting that all the stakeholders involved recognise the value of education in the life of persons and its relevance as a factor for development and social mobility. Education is seen as something to which everyone aspires and something that is good for a person and his/her community.

(1.1) What is the understanding of inclusive education at the different levels of the education system?

Given its approach, inclusive education is considered as a paradigm in transformation which, taking into account the historical and social context, recognises education as a right and a vehicle to promote wellbeing among the individuals and the country’s development. To achieve the country’s development, the articulated work of the three core ideas identified is required (i.e., personal, community, national development) to ensure that education, along with other development policies, achieves results that will have an impact on social exclusion.
By integrating the perspectives of the three levels of the system addressed in this research (macro, meso, micro), we concluded that inclusive education must be located at the intersection of the three inter-related axes: a) personal; b) community; and c) national development. The personal axis understands inclusive education as a means to bring dignity to the individual, making it possible for him/her to incorporate into society and helping him/her face the demands of life with autonomy and freedom. Inclusive education aims to helping the individual reach his/her full potential, which means the capacity to learn and advance towards personal goals, the capability to take decisions and set an example for the rest.

The community axis means the shared recognition that education can bring change to everyone’s living conditions, because it expands the work options and is thus considered a motor for development. The contribution of each person to the development of his community is recognised, understanding that it does not only mean economic progress, but also interpersonal relations based on respect and acceptance, generating a sense of belonging and commitment towards others. It is also recognised that in order to achieve inclusive education, all stakeholders involved in the community play a key and irreplaceable role, and that their failure to comply brings barriers to inclusion.

The national development axis means that the final goal of inclusive education is the common wellbeing. The educational trajectory leads towards social inclusion of each citizen in a society that is expected to accept and value diversity, and which propagates equal opportunities for all its citizens. Inclusive education aspires to help everyone find options for a dignified life and to be capable of building their own knowledge to place the country within the category of knowledge societies.

Beginning with the three axes proposed, discussions lead to a way to transit towards an inclusive education system that favours access, acceptance, participation and a successful academic performance for each person, dimensions that lead to the practice of education, as explained below.

In summary, addressing inclusion in a developing country like Guatemala must include a broader spectrum and become an integral effort in which education contributes one of the main means to achieve it, but which needs other means to work. Therefore, it is necessary to place it at the intersection of three axes: personal, community and social.

1.2 How to conceive the route towards an inclusive education system

As stated by Ainscow and Miles (2009), inclusive education is a process focused on education i.e. with respect to its concepts, policies, structures, and practice. Based on this idea, this research considers that in order to achieve an inclusive system, there are three aspects to consider: a) the strategy; b) the education policy; and c) the development policies, i.e. aspects to develop them, how to address them from an education perspective, and how to articulate them with the country’s development policies.

As a strategy, it is expected that inclusive education will close the gaps created by the inequalities that prevail in Guatemala’s society and which have an impact on the development of children before they enter the education system, to ensure that each person has the same possibilities to take advantage of his/her schooling. It also intends to promote acceptance and participation in the classroom to achieve significant learning based on the school experience of each person depending on his needs. Finally, inclusive education needs to build bridges to help those who conclude their education to achieve inclusion into society.
The results of the research clearly show that the strategy previously described is a task that must be undertaken by the State as a whole, because the conditions for a good development of a pre-school child demand services that transcend the mandate of the Ministry of Education. Furthermore, education services should be designed in a way that they facilitate multi-sectorial attention to ensure they agree with the country’s development plans and other policies, such as health and work policies, among others.

With respect to the education policies to achieve an inclusive education system, the latter would need to have the necessary conditions to ensure that each school in the country can offer the same opportunities for quality learning, allowing each person to leave the system, having the necessary competencies to achieve social and work inclusion. This is an education system that takes advantage of the diversity of the population to promote values of respect of differences and rejection of inequalities.

Finally, as a development policy, an inclusive education system is one that is articulated to the country’s development plans and up-to-date with scientific advances to train competent citizens who are free to take their own decisions, and who are capable to generate new knowledge, and not just learn it.

Below are the most relevant issues identified through an analysis of the evidence in this research.

(2) Guatemala’s education system in the light of the findings of this research

The results presented in the previous pages show in detail the points of view of the stakeholders, depending on their links to the national education system. The analysis made offers information about how the system is perceived, its tensions and concepts, all of which explain how it currently works and what can be done to guide it towards inclusive education.

The research aimed to finding barriers and opportunities, as the literature on this subject recognises that in order to achieve an inclusive system it is necessary to eliminate anything that will hinder inclusion and to take full advantage of the resources in the system. From the very beginning, the pattern that emerged from this research was that, in the context of developing countries like Guatemala, there is no clear division between opportunities and barriers. Depending on the circumstances or points of view of the person making the assessment, factors can be a barrier or an opportunity. For example, the support programmes offered by the Ministry of Education favour access to school, as long as they are managed in a timely manner and reach all boys and girls equally. A programme that was frequently mentioned in this sense relates to scholarships for students with scarce economic resources, which are frequently given to students that are doing well academically. This is an opportunity to support the education of students with a low income. However, it can turn into a barrier when it leaves out boys and girls who could need economic support to finish their studies, but who do not comply with the requirement of being academically advantaged, even if they live in rural or urban marginal areas. Thus, the criteria used for the selection and granting of scholarships, an important opportunity in the lives of the students, becomes a barrier. In this sense, the characteristics mentioned below can be seen both as barriers and opportunities, depending on the circumstances.
(2.1) Tension observed between the recognition of the right to education and the definition of target group

According to the statistical evidence of the Ministry of Education and the findings of this research, Guatemala has advanced with respect to education coverage at the primary level, access and permanence of girls in school, mainly in urban areas, reduction of illiteracy, construction of a national basic curriculum, and promotion of inclusion of persons with SEN with or without disabilities, to mention just a few examples (see document analysis in annexes). Nevertheless, as indicated in the results, there are boys, girls, youth and adults whose right to an education is not being met and who are therefore considered persons at risk, marginalised or vulnerable and, thus, priority groups from an inclusive education perspective.

However, the notion of vulnerable groups in the context of a developing country becomes unclear and loses meaning when more than 50 percent of the population lives in poverty (see document analysis in annexes). The use of actions targeted to ‘vulnerable’ groups is a thorny issue when they are a majority of the population. This generalised condition of poverty coincides with other needs or conditions of vulnerability for inclusive education, as those faced by persons with SEN with or without disabilities, or persons who speak a language that is not Spanish, which is the prevailing language at school, or the condition of being a woman and its implications with respect to access and permanence in school, among others.

As can be seen in the evidence gathered, the definition of vulnerable groups that can be included in one and the same school is a questioned matter that can perpetuate practices of exclusion in the education system, when one of the groups is not visible or cannot position itself in the public agenda. Some examples include boys and girls who migrate to work, and rural boys with fewer options to obtain scholarships. The problem is that the social investment of the State has privileged the Ladino group, in particular middle-class men who speak Spanish and have no disabilities (Casaús, Dávila, Romero, & Sáenz, 2007). In contrast, other groups that do not fit this privileged profile have been invisible in the national scene for social investment, and have had to fight for their legal and cultural recognition, that would give them access to rights and basic resources. In this context, inclusive education presents a challenge to this traditional practices and institutional logic, because it requires that all the groups be incorporated into the national education system, and in this utopic inclusive scenario, the identity of the different groups is not clear, and the resources assigned to them would ‘disappear’ under the new slogan education for all. This would imply that in inclusive models, both the dominant group and the invisible groups would lose the privileges or identities and resources for which they have fought for generations. This scenario could create resistance towards inclusive education.

The current education model is based on a fragmented vision of the individual, for whom resources and services are assigned, based on the different groups recognised by the system (for example, bilingual education, special education, etc.). In this sense, a stakeholder involved at the macro-level explained that work has been done as if this were Noah’s Ark, each one advocating for his group. This internal organization of the system results in competition for the scarce financial resources available for all, and to a work that intends to be coordinated, but that does not achieve an integral vision of the individual and the education policies with other development policies, as shown in the analysis of networks presented in the introduction. The different Directorates General that form the Ministry of Education report relations of cooperation, although it is uncertain whether these joint actions lead to
inclusion. A close analysis of the logic behind the groups that need to be included in a system that has excluded some, provides evidence that the paradigm is still how to adjust children to a school conceived by categories or segments and a system that continues to operate in the same way. This might be one of the explanations allowing understanding why it is so hard to make changes that reach the classroom where categories lose meaning. This became evident, for example, upon the recognition of the existence of a national agenda for bilingual education, when there are still difficulties to put it into practice for different reasons (for example, lack of teachers prepared in all languages, difficulties to hire teachers to work in areas according to their language, the challenge to have academic materials in all languages). In the case of the Ladino enclave, one and the same school hosts students from three different language groups, and there are no teachers prepared to provide them with special attention, so teacher needs to find a solution to this problem within what their personal possibilities allow.

In some cases, the specialised focus that is applied at the macro-level is very distant from the context of the education centres. This is the case of the multi-grade school, where the teachers recognise the needs of their students, but they do not have support from the different specialised areas of the system, and therefore the trend is to homogenise the services without looking for alternatives for attending to individual needs, e.g. when there are no pedagogical advisors to help make modifications to the curriculum for a student with SEN with or without disabilities, or when a teacher is not familiar with the National Basic Curriculum and therefore uses traditional methodologies that lead towards homogeneous learning activities. In these cases, we can see the mimetic nature of the notion of a right to an education, since it takes different meanings and is implemented in an idiosyncratic way, depending on the unique conditions of each context.

It is also necessary to remember that the current education system is divided into two subsystems (scholarized, and non-scholarized and mixed modalities educational programmes), which could be seen as the two containers in which the population that needs attention must be classified. The tension is even more acute when the classification categories intersect, for example, an indigenous girl with a physical disability living in a rural area. This research did not make a deep analysis of the non-scholarized and mixed modalities education subsystem institutions like the Directorate General of Non-scholarized and Mixed Modalities Educational Programmes, DIGEEX. However, evidence obtained shows that it represents a niche of opportunities to expand the possibilities of the system leading towards inclusive education for those who were not able to access or conclude their scholarized education. Evidence shows that DIGEEX currently offers different programmes to provide attention to persons left outside the scholarized education system, and it has been able to give these programmes an education approach oriented towards entrepreneurship, as reported in this research. The challenge for this subsystem is the creation of particular modalities that will help it achieve its purposes, which are different from those used by the scholarized educational programmes.

In summary, the notion of a right to an education and its application in the education system needs to take into account the socio-historic status of the different groups represented in the system, the possible tensions and contradictions that inclusive education could create in contexts with a fragmented vision of the student, and take into account the local realities where the right to an education will be applied.
(2.2) Tension between homogeneous education policies and the possibility of their contextualization

An important advance in the country is the availability of education policies approved by the National Education Council, which means that there is a clearly defined direction for the education system. The source of tension emerges precisely when these policies need to be implemented in very different socio-cultural and economic contexts, and their contextualization becomes imperative. As shown by the evidence, one geographic area has multiple micro-contexts that make it difficult to implement the education policies. As an example, one of the cases included in this research is a monolingual school (Spanish language) located in a bilingual zone (Mayan-Spanish languages), which is a contradiction to the services established according to administrative matters, since this is an urban school and is therefore not expected to be bilingual, since bilingual schools are located in rural areas, not urban ones. This means that children whose mother tongue is not Spanish receive classes in this language. On the other hand, at a rural school were the mother tongue and predominant language of the population is a Mayan language, the students and their families believe it is necessary to learn Spanish, as the means to achieve work and social inclusion, and since they live in an environment that privileges the homogeneity defined by the Ladino population. Learning only in their mother tongue is seen as a way to maintain their exclusion, even if they recognise the importance of learning and using their mother tongue at school during the first years of primary education. It is interesting to observe, how the demands of the population and their immediate socio-economic needs challenge the national education system to achieve a model of bilingual education in the country.

This illustrates the challenges ahead to achieve an ample perspective of inclusion as defined before.

(2.3) Education system with no clearly established entries and exits for the scholarized education subsystem. What about the non-scholarized and mixed modalities education subsystem?

The education system does not consider mandatory the enrolment of pre-school aged boys and girls, so missing school is an option for the father or mother, who on many occasions believe pre-school is unnecessary and expensive for the family’s economy, and inaccessible given the distance where services are located. In addition, there is a critical break between the academic offer at the diversified secondary level and the work possibilities for those who finish the system, which frustrates expectations and puts in question the effort made. This confirms that the system lacks a common platform for entry and a social inclusion bridge at the end, and this can foster the inequality of opportunities at entry level and the risks of exclusion at the end.

With respect to the non-scholarized and mixed modalities education subsystem, its non-school modality makes entry and delivery of services more flexible, but as indicated, there is a trend to see it and expect that it uses the same criteria and work modalities as the scholarized system. Currently, the subsystem lacks methodologies and criteria that match the characteristics of the population and that adapt to their academic modalities, and it acts as a semi-scholarized education system with limited resources, seen from a scholarized education logic.

(2.4) System organization: does it favour inclusion or perpetuate exclusion?

The inclusive education approach is not new in the national education context and in the last years it has gained momentum with the creation of the Directorate General for Special Education (DIGEESP).
This suggests that the predominant vision is focused on the inclusion of persons with SEN with or without disabilities. However, an extended notion of inclusion proposed by different institutions like UNESCO, as well as international agreements, is well accepted and understood, in particular by macro-level stakeholders, as an opportunity in favour of education for all. However, the idea of inclusion questions the present organization of the education system, because it finds definite realities that are exclusive ones from the others, as mentioned before. In this sense, it is difficult to define the scopes and limitations between a scholarized academic offer and a non-scholarized one, more oriented towards a combination of academic and labour programs (entrepreneurship). This tension is also seen in the organization and classification of education centres as urban or rural, to mention another source of inflexibility. Two examples of cases related to this research can be given: one of the schools classified as rural was absorbed by expanding city limits, while another school is located in an urban-marginal area, which is a category that is not recognised by the system and does not fit into any of the official categories. This situation leads to a lack of knowledge about the characteristics of the population and an absence of education and social indicators for programmes linked to their needs and context. If the administrative challenges are complex, those that relate to pedagogical aspects are even more so, such as the idea of bilingual education. As mentioned before, bilingual education is an opportunity, because it proposes that the first cycle of primary education should be offered in the mother tongue of the student. However, the training of bilingual teachers, the difficulty of serving in all the languages in the country and having academic materials for all the children, complicates its implementation and is a source of disappointment for the population. In addition, there is the historic hierarchy of languages in the daily life of the common citizen, which privileges Spanish and stigmatises other languages. This explains partly why some parents think that their children need to learn languages that will give them access to better living conditions, i.e. Spanish and even English according to the opportunities parents hope their children will have growing up, as is the case at the Ladino enclave and the monolingual school in bilingual context.

(2.5) Ad-Hoc measures and mediation attitudes

An important finding is the way in which stakeholders at the different levels of the education system (macro, meso, micro) interpret and comply with the regulations that govern them with respect to inclusive education matters. In general, it can be said that the system has established a framework of reference to organise their operations. However, this framework can be interpreted and complied with in an ad hoc manner, i.e. influenced by the will of the decision-maker, which permeates the norm and determines the final actions.

Positive or negative attitudes towards a specific situation determine, for example, if a person is admitted or not in school or whether or not this person will benefit from something he/she is entitled to. In this particular matter, it represents one of the biggest challenges on the road towards the consolidation of an inclusive system.

(2.6) Negative pressure and country commitment

Education is an international priority and a subject in continuous development. For developing countries like Guatemala, international cooperation has played a key role in supporting policies and education actions for its advancement. The work of these cooperation agencies is based on the plans of each country and on international agreements ratified by governments and assumed as state commitments. However, the starting point is different for each, and despite the multiple efforts
carried out by developing countries, the impression left is that it never seems enough to achieve the goals proposed. The constant questioning about the advances and achievements versus the population’s unsatisfied demands generates what in Fullan’s terms (2006) is known as a negative pressure within the education system, which punishes it with the loss of credibility in its governing capacity, as well as its possibilities to offer quality services, elements that seem to result in the fact that efforts carried out, instead of getting articulated and strengthened, become dispersed and depart from the country’s common agenda. According to reports from different stakeholders in the six study cases, the role of the Ministry of Education is strongly questioned with respect to three main aspects: 1) lack of attention to education infrastructure; 2) insufficient hiring of teachers; and 3) lack of effective attention to school centres through an education supervision that contributes ideas or resources to improve work in the classrooms. In the face of this situation, there are ‘spontaneous solutions’ or autonomous answers that emerge from stakeholders in the community environment, some of which relate to the following chapter under actions by ‘institutional agents’.

(2.7) Institutional agents and human resource management

The findings of this research strongly assert that even though the education system lacks sufficient financial resources to satisfy the needs of the entire population, it is a valuable system, because of the existence of ‘institutional agents’ who promote actions in favour of inclusive education. The notion of institutional agents proposed by Stanton-Salazar (2011) (as cited in Dowd, Pak, & Bensimon, 2013), corresponds to the role of protector and support assumed by some individuals who have a formal role within institutions, and therefore know about the procedures, and have the cultural capital to ensure that students have the opportunity to obtain access to learning and are successful, in particular those in need of differentiated attention. This favourable attitude towards diversity in the school environment, and more specifically in the classroom, is not matched with professional development policies based on merits, because there is no system to evaluate the performance of teachers. The system tries to offer support to its teaching staff and parents, and although these try to favour inclusive education, they are very few and insufficient in view of the multiple needs of the educational population. This is why institutional agents are undoubtedly a fundamental pillar to ensure that many people have a possibility of being included. There are different examples that illustrate the actions of institutional agents such as: 1) teachers who develop their own sign language to work with students with hearing needs; 2) principals who have achieved to build classrooms and expand the coverage through increased capacity of the school; and 3) a teacher accompanying an absent student who is at risk of abandoning the school to become a street child. These are all examples of how the stakeholders respond to the demands of their education community.

(2.8) The system and articulation between levels

The macro-level of the education system governs its policies and regulations. The meso-level acts as mediator between the system’s education policies and their interpretation and execution in school centres. The micro-level works to harmonise learning opportunities that allow delivering the National Basic Curriculum and ensuring that the student gets a significant learning experience.

Evidence found through this research indicates that it is necessary to strengthen the system in two directions. First, within the system, i.e. between its three levels, to help the latter operate in a coordinated and efficient manner. Second, the strengthening of the system, mainly at the meso- or
mediation-level, to serve as platform to articulate other initiatives oriented to favouring regional development. According to this, many of the actions for education and social inclusion will be effective when they are served in an integral and sustained manner by the State as a whole and according to the characteristics of the different contexts in the country, a task carried out at the meso-and micro-levels mainly. This therefore requires that the first be able to articulate the governing policies of the macro-level with the particular contextual characteristics at the micro-level.

It is very important to reflect, how an inclusive system can be supported from the local level, without losing sight of the government in charge of the central level of the system. It is also urgent to reflect about how the macro-and meso-levels recognise and further the work of education communities in favour of inclusive education.

(3) Implications of the findings for the international cooperation and for the national agenda in favour of inclusive education

The main premise proposed by this research is that, for developing countries, it is necessary to recreate the concept of inclusion conceived mainly in the context of the work of education centres. In developing countries, challenges transcend the school environment, because many times these lack the minimum conditions to function. This is when parents, teachers, principals and other community stakeholders assume roles as institutional agents who work to achieve basic conditions that will enable them to deliver inclusive education processes towards acceptance and participation in the classroom or education community. This means that in order to advance towards inclusive education, it is necessary to have minimum conditions for a quality education, and this is not always the case in countries like Guatemala. For this reason, the proposal is to develop a definition of inclusion that transcends the traditional one, but which agrees with the UNESCO (2009) proposal, which recognises the need for an integral attention to achieve development in favour of the fight against exclusion and its consequences. The notion of the three pillars: 1) personal; 2) community; and 3) national development, and the three aspects to implement it: 1) strategy; 2) education policy; and 3) development policies offer another perspective of inclusion, which together with the pedagogical work expressed in the dimensions of inclusive education of access, acceptance, participation and academic performance, can achieve better results in developing countries.

Below are some idea which, based on the results obtained, propose lines of action for international cooperation and for the country. These reflections are divided into two categories. The first one is focused on the implications of the notion of inclusive education to guide the proposals for action. The second one includes reflections about changes, adjustments or transformations that can be foreseen to achieve an inclusive education system.

The notion proposed as a result of this research establishes a definition of three pillars or axes for inclusion: 1) personal; 2) community; and 3) national development. This notion seeks to guide the articulation between inclusion and development anticipated by UNESCO (2009) as a strategy to mitigate poverty. This tri-dimensional vision of inclusive education supposes that it has pedagogical tools to promote learning, which by taking into account diversity, achieves the development of the potential of the individual. In addition, an education that promotes communities that learn from their experience to propose solutions and manage actions for the benefit of all and finally, an education that impacts the lives of the citizens to promote the country’s development.

This does not mean that the four dimensions previously established to define inclusive education
(access, participation, acceptance and performance in learning) are no longer valid. On the contrary, they have more meaning when linked to a notion of ‘pedagogy for inclusive education’. The pillars of the proposal developed in this research approach the education system as a motor for change and articulation of the life context of the target population, without which it is impossible to aspire to social inclusion or development. The dimensions previously used to define inclusive education; that is, access, acceptance, participation and performance in learning, are now considered pillars to promote a pedagogy for inclusive education, where access means: creating conditions for inclusive education, acceptance means: valuing and respecting each person’s individuality and the possibility of relating with others, based on respect towards people’s dignity, participation related to how learning in the classroom is promoted to help each person develop capacities and acquire life competencies and finally performance in learning, measured by the success of the system to achieve the above. Based on the results of this research, it is necessary to reflect on the last dimension mentioned, to consider the alternative of understanding it as focused not only on performance, but on learning for life.

Based on this, two possible lines of action are suggested. The first line of action is the development and implementation of management tools to help the education system contribute more to the development of integral policies for the protection of children before their entry into the system; policies for economic and social development, as a bridge when they finish school, and also policies oriented to a cultural development that favours identity and the positive value of national cultures, without it taking anything from the governing function of the corresponding education policies. The second line of action takes the opportunity of promoting development of what is called here ‘pedagogy for inclusive education’, directed to the three levels of the education system. The first relates to the micro-level starting from local experience, to formulate strategies to build inclusive schools. The notion of inclusive school is a pending task, but it is close to the idea proposed by Senge (2002), who talks about ‘schools that learn’, when referring to education centres capable of reforming, revitalizing and renewing themselves continuously, not as a result of guidelines or decisions taken at the level of the central authorities, but through changes coming from within and based on its own needs. Schools with programmes capable of promoting acceptance and participation in environments capable of building knowledge.

With respect to the meso-level, it is anticipated that there will be a need for tools to manage education services in heterogeneous contexts, so as to turn inclusion into a contextualised practice. Furthermore, there seems to be a need for methodologies and tools to manage education services as part of the social development policies that are gaining force in regional spaces, and finally, the development of leadership capacities (institutional agents observed as well at the micro-level), capable of contributing to the vision and implementing an administration geared towards a pedagogy for inclusive education in each region.

Finally, at the macro-level, it is necessary to make the organization more flexible or able to adjust, without taking away its technical capacity as demanded by education issues, promoting a management based on the integral vision of the individual. An education services management with budgetary allocations that include incentives for the work with different vulnerable groups presented from integral perspectives; for example, proposals that require collaboration and/or financial or technical coordination to satisfy education needs linked to gender, second language, and poverty, which could receive more support and resources.
With respect to the dimensions of inclusive education, it is necessary to build pedagogy for inclusive education capable of encouraging schools that learn and that share their success with other education centres around them, so that good practices are disseminated horizontally and systematised to abandon learning evaluation processes and to review the education policies. This is therefore not about an execution bottom-up exclusively, it is also horizontal, in which the Departmental Education Directorates play a fundamental role to support education centres in the process of learning to learn and learning to share what they have learned through collaboration networks within groups of schools.

In developing countries, the perspective towards inclusion has a double vision, as proposed in this research, based on its results to achieve the goal of ensuring that education becomes a motor for the development of the country. One is a task for the education services and the other one is a task for the development of the country, in which education is a means to achieve it. The following graph offers an explanation of this double perspective for inclusion, as explained in the previous paragraph.

As seen in the graph, there are tasks that belong to the State as a whole, to ensure that boys and girls can attend school in equal conditions to learn. This work, when articulated with other sectors, can start at the micro-level and articulate with the meso-level for its feasibility, i.e. a bottom-up and horizontal expansion strategy at the meso-level.

Inclusive education has defined dimensions that correspond to education practice at school. This aims at ensuring that all boys and girls who get there, can remain in the system, are accepted and develop their competencies to become citizens capable of integrating into society. Achieving this is knowing how to manage human diversity in the classroom, in the school and in the management of education policies within an inclusive system.
In summary, developing countries aspire to a first-class education in which investments in education are not questioned but prioritised and represent an issue that pertains to the State as a whole, since it is a motor for change and development. Two levels of action are required. The first, a joint effort towards inclusion which considers the individual, its community and its country. The other one, pedagogy for inclusive education that serves as a pretext for education centres to develop horizontally and generate contextualised and documented education practices for review and evaluation.

The results of this research suggest two ways to promote inclusive education:

**Way 1**  
A pedagogy of inclusion for implementing inclusive education in scholarized and non-scholarized and mixed modalities educational programmes and how to achieve it:

- strengthening the skills and capabilities of those responsible for education (capacity building) to ‘learning to learn’ of their educational practice, and promote the development of their schools, the educational communities and the regions or departments where they work (strategy from micro to meso to macro); in addition, promote the initial and continuous professional training of teachers as well as professional training of principals for the implementation of a flexible and creative pedagogy of inclusion in the classroom and schools;
- create the tools for implementing inclusion, which transforms ‘the regular classrooms in inclusive classrooms’ and that institutional measures are applied in favour of access, retention, acceptance, and participation of the population in any of the two modalities offered by the education system: scholarized and non-scholarized and mixed modalities educational programmes;
- promote pedagogical accompaniment/support for teachers and principals to implement the pedagogy of inclusion and leadership for the management of the inclusion at the local level. It seeks to develop local networks between schools that share experiences and build joint efforts that are replicable in similar sociocultural contexts; and

**Way 2**  
Strengthen the internal management of the education system among its three levels (macro, meso, micro), as well as their coordination with other governmental and non-governmental stakeholders, and international development agencies involved in education, to:

- improve inter-sectorial coordination of the meso- and the micro-level. This seeks to identify and align the actions that are being carried out in favour of the access, permanence, acceptance, and participation in scholarized and in non-scholarized and mixed modalities educational programmes;
- inter-sectorial management: it seeks to promote strategies and develop tools in order to link scholarized and non-scholarized and mixed modalities educational programmes with the country’s development policies in the meso- and micro-level for the protection of children and the youth to beginning school, during the development of their educational trajectory until achieving their full incorporation into society;
- capacity building: Develop technical skills and build tools for the management of intersectoral public policies and intersectoral work, and with horizontal networks at the micro, meso, and macro-levels of the education system.
The purpose of implementing actions based on results is to fulfil several expectations: 1) to analyse more deeply some relevant topics on inclusion that were identified as opportunities in the refie study, but that were not part of the research project (e.g. extra-scholar programmes, inclusive education practices in private schools); 2) to develop tools for establishing a baseline and for monitoring advances toward an inclusive education system in Guatemala; 3) to promote a holistic, systemic and integrated model for the management and the implementation of educative practices in an inter-sectorial approach, capable of reaching target populations (in both formal and non-formal education). This model needs to be built and implemented by local and regional networks and in participatory research processes; and 4) to develop a sensitisation strategy in order to promote an inclusive education system and its linkage to other actions oriented toward promoting social inclusion.

As the first step it is recommended to establish a leading group with the participation of authorities from the Ministry of Education at its three levels (macro, meso and micro), international donor representatives, members of the National Board of Education and representatives of other sectors working for child protection. Their main duties would be: a) to guide the process and to plan preliminary proposals for common discussions based on the general guidelines explained below; b) to ensure that the work to be done is articulated to educational policies and other public policies or developmental plans in order to ensure sustainability.

In the following pages the objectives and guidelines for future actions toward an inclusive education system are presented. These guidelines attempt to contribute to the goal of education for all.

Expected objective: To strengthen the national education system through the development and implementation of a management model and through the practice of education strategies oriented to give attention to the two challenges identified in the refie research.

The two challenges are the following:

**Challenge 1:** The need to strengthen internal management and coordination of the education system at its three levels (macro, meso and micro) as well as the inter-sectorial management that is in the remit of governmental and non-governmental organisations working for education;

**Challenge 2:** To promote changes or adjustments in order to achieve an inclusive education system through a ‘pedagogy for inclusion’ comprising: a) methodologies for the practice of inclusive education in the classroom and also in school; b) strategies for the development of schools toward reaching inclusive education; and c) building capacities in the education system toward inclusive education.

(4) Recommended modalities for work, expected products and guidelines for action

Work modalities include: 1) participatory action research as a way for building knowledge from practice, and for developing tools for the didactic management of diversity in the classroom; 2) a cycle of informed dialogues with stakeholders of the education sector as a consciousness and knowledge building strategy; and 3) implementation, monitoring and piloting a model for a functioning education system oriented toward inclusion.

The expected products are: 1) sensitisation strategy for stakeholders; 2) validated management model and tools for inclusive education practices in schools and the classroom; 3) monitoring and evaluation indicators; 4) a tool kit for the inter-sectorial management of educative, social and labour
inclusion and availability of human resources capable for its future use (sustainability).

The following guidelines for future action are presented in detail.

(4.1) Development of a sensitization strategy in favour of inclusive education as an evolutionary and inter-sectorial approach with emphasis on the notion of human rights

As one of the first actions, it is proposed to implement a sensitisation process oriented toward stakeholders. The purpose is to facilitate discussions and to promote the appropriation of the findings of the research project as well as their implications for national education and for future research topics. The target group would be: members of the National Board of Education, Ministry of Education authorities, Teacher Union leaders, Education Department Directorates, Congress Education Commission, mayors, and others.

The sensitisation strategy will be supported by other entities with the idea of generating posts and radio spots for a wider audience, with the content focusing on protection and human rights.

It is also recommended to produce educative resources adapted to specific audiences (e.g. teachers), presenting research findings that could be used to show what challenges this topic involves and the mechanisms necessary to achieve attitudinal changes for handling diversity in different scopes of action (e.g. educational policy, social policy, educational practices).

It was also proposed to create a blog or a webpage in a social network with the idea of promoting a public debate about inclusion and inclusive education.

(4.2) Development of a vocabulary: terminology and indicators for the measurement of advances toward an inclusive educational system

It is expected to build indicators through an active participatory research process that will provide meaningful concepts for the country and also tools for the evaluation of results toward a model for the management and implementation of actions toward an inclusive educational system.

It is proposed to involve stakeholders from the national education system as well as stakeholders who belong to the three levels of the system in a participatory research process. The idea is to build a notion of inclusion (educative/social) that takes into consideration the country’s/population’s characteristics, and to establish a baseline and indicators for orienting the work done by the national educational system to strengthen inclusive education and also social and labour inclusion of the target population in both sub-systems: scholar and non-scholar sub-systems. The stakeholders would be:

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<th>Macro-level</th>
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<td>Ministry de Education:</td>
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<td>Ministry of Education:</td>
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<td>- Minister’s Office</td>
<td>- Education Department</td>
<td>- School principals</td>
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<td>- Vice-Ministers</td>
<td>- Directorates</td>
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<td>- Directorates General of Education</td>
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The final product of this participatory process would to have concepts and vocabulary available for application in the country (emic concepts) that will take into consideration the perspectives explained in the refie study. These perspectives propose an evolutionary view, linked to local, regional or national development plans with inter-sectorial approaches. In addition, another product would be to have indicators for establishing a base-line and a monitoring system for the advances of the work done toward an inclusive system in concordance with the way in which inclusion is understood in the country.

Based on that information, further empirical research projects could be carried out as well as the evaluation of the processes and advances for achieving an inclusive education system.

(4.3) Development of a holistic/systemic model for the management and implementation of strategies oriented to social protection, inclusive educational practices and social and labour inclusion of the population

The following activities are being considered:

- One activity proposed is to pilot strategies for the management of actions taken in favour of inclusive education. This would entail developing an inter-sectorial strategy with coordination mechanisms between the regional (meso) and the local (micro) level, with the idea of articulating actions for common education goals on those levels. Moreover, this strategy would include mechanisms for the systematisation of educational inclusive practices in the educative community in one or more regions in the country. The systematised knowledge would provide inputs for training processes for teachers, school principals and local leaders coming from cultural or geographical regions and who are part of training networks in their areas. Connections are expected to be established and strengthened between the Education Department Directorates and these networks. The unit of analysis would be the educative community and its relationships at the local and the regional level.
• The strategy will be developed with a participatory research approach in order to identify existing inter-sectorial initiatives at the regional and the micro-level. It is also expected to strengthen the intermediate entity for the inter-sectorial management present in the regions of interest (i.e. CODEDEEs). The participatory research process will allow the elaboration of tools for the management of educational services with an inter-sectorial orientation, for both scholar and extra-scholar educational services, and also for the social protection of children before they come to school, and policies oriented to favour job opportunities and social participation.

• The approach to the school community proposes an action research method with the purpose of acquiring knowledge and promoting action at the micro-level in three aspects: early stimulation, initial education and integral child protection. All three support protect children’s development before they come to pre-school or primary school. One of the expected results is to minimise over-age in the school system. The participatory research process will also enhance parental competences as local actors working for inclusive education.

(4.4) **Strategy for the development of schools and the practice of inclusive education**

The purpose of this strategy will be the development of schools by training teachers in their daily practice, so that training activities will begin at the micro-level and then spread out at the meso- or regional level as a way to do training processes socially and culturally pertinent way. The activities for doing that are:

• To develop a participatory research plan and a kit with instruments or tools that teachers could use for collecting information in their regular activities at school when they teach their students (naturalistic approach). This means that teachers will have tools for the identification of aspects in their students that need pedagogical differentiated attention (methodologies, teaching strategies, resources, and more). These differentiated actions would take into consideration that in a regular classroom it is common to have children with the following characteristics: a) over-age, b) bilingual; c) special educational needs associated or not to disabilities; d) behaviour issues; e) learning difficulties; f) working or migration background children; and others. It is important to emphasise that these tools are intended to be used only to favour learning opportunities according to particular needs but never as a way ‘of making a diagnosis’, something that would exceed teachers’ competences and would not necessarily be linked to better learning opportunities.

• The kit for teachers will include instruments for the systematization of learning activities used in the different areas of the curriculum (e.g. mathematics, communication and language). These tools will require common criteria defined by teachers so their effectiveness could be evaluated.

• It is recommended to develop an accompanying process and systematise this process with resources like videos, audios, observations, and so on. This process will involve the participation of external experts that will help teachers to ‘learn to learn’ when analysing information and inferring good practices to handle diversity in the classroom and in the educative community.

• Based on the collected information some focus groups could be organised as part of the training processes. The participating teachers would be part of local networks as well of departmental or regional networks that have similar purposes for their participation (training and learning objectives). In this way practices oriented to promote learning activities that favour inclusion in the classroom, the school and the school community could be shared among teachers. Technical support is recommended as an accompaniment in the process and to create learning resources,
 manuals and systematisation of practices of inclusion.

- A similar process is recommended for training school principals to perform a double role: a) in the school and b) in his or her role as a local leader in the educative community, as an agent that could favour the articulation of social policies to protect children and to promote social and labour inclusion.

- It is recommended that accumulated knowledge at the local level be articulated to initial training teacher’s process.

**(4.5) Definition of parameters for a pedagogical model for extra-scholar programmes as an opportunity for inclusive education**

It is suggested that through a participatory research process, an inventory of current extra-school programmes will be done as well as a profile of the population that was targeted. An analysis of this information would be done to define who is being left out from these services and the quality of the services offered by the Ministry of Education. Once this process is finished, an informed dialogue is recommended in order to get feedback from stakeholders from the educational system and from other organisations in the extra-scholar programmes. The final product would be to have a model to orient extra-school programmes and its articulation with social and labour policies.
Chapter 4 – Discussion, Conclusions and Outlook

4 Discussion, Conclusions and Outlook

Before an overarching discussion of the results, we see the need to reflect on the terminology ‘development’ respectively ‘developing’/‘developed’ countries, as these terms are widely used in this research report. By using the terminology a certain perspective is implied which we want to reflect on.

This discussion of the research findings in both Guatemala and Malawi therefore begins with brief notes on the use of terminology in the research report, with specific reference to the terms ‘developed’ and ‘developing’, as there is no term that is more heavily contested in the social sciences than ‘development’. One of the reasons for this is that what passes as development in one cultural context could have been imposed and promoted as the ‘best’ way to development in other contexts. As several researchers point out (e.g. Asabere-Ameyaw, Anamuah-Mensah, Dei, & Raheem, 2014; Singal and Muthukrishna 2014; Srivastava, de Boer, & Pijl, 2014) terminology like ‘developed’, ‘developing’, ‘North’ and ‘South’ highlights the stark inequalities between countries and has become shorthand for highlighting the complex set of inequalities and dependencies between countries divided not by geographical boundaries but by fundamental economic inequality. It also needs to be pointed out that, significantly, most of the countries defined as ‘developing’ countries also share the legacy of a colonial past. This fundamental economic inequality between the two country groups has resulted in inequalities in the standard of living, resources available and domination by the ‘developed’ nations in international development.

In order to answer the research questions in this specific study, the decision to use the term ‘developing’ is based on the recent classification of countries according to the Human Development Index of the United Nations Development Programme (Srivastava, de Boer, & Pijl, 2014), but with the full acknowledgement that a knowledge base is emerging, which is reflexive of these deeply embedded inequalities and structural imbalances. The discussion of our research findings therefore emphasises what Singal and Muthukrishna (2014) call the powerful ‘enablers’ within two unique contexts, which have fostered the growth of education and enable us to begin to develop a deeper appreciation of the context and understand the individual and collective voices that we have heard. The focus is therefore on local solutions with respect to unique contexts and recognition of innovative solutions to education challenges that come from within each country.

It became clear in the study that ‘developing’ countries like Guatemala and Malawi cannot be assumed to be homogeneous when looking at their inner reality. Within one country or even within different regions, there are deep differences in the life conditions that people experience. This contextual characteristic, closely related to inequities, implies that inclusion can have different starting points among inhabitants and also, different faces and expectations determined by contextual and cultural factors. So, efforts toward promoting inclusive education must take into consideration a) differences among countries; and b) differences within one particular country, although common goals are expected to be accomplished.

Even though the economic, geographical and cultural conditions in Guatemala and Malawi differ, just as the contextual factors for inclusive education differ fundamentally, certain similarities in the results can be discovered and formulated as overlapping patterns. The findings and recommendations of this study cannot be generalised for all (‘developing’) countries. However, the
identification of the overlapping patterns in Guatemala and Malawi can initiate a discourse about the extent to which the following aspects are applicable for other contexts as well.

1. Close relation between poverty, inequalities, and education in developing countries

The context in both study countries is characterised by a high level of poverty and huge inequalities (e.g. rural – urban) within the population. This situation is reflected by a significant lack of financial resources in the state system and therefore in the education sector. Existing inequalities in society are reflected in the education sector with a high impact on equity and equality in education.

It became clear during the process of this study in Guatemala and Malawi that talking about inclusive education elicited ideas, values, concerns, hopes, expectations that could only be understood when considering the person in his or her inseparable relationship with the context of where he or she lives. It was also clear that inequalities explain most of the barriers for inclusion into the society as a final result of any educational effort. Furthermore, it became obvious that being excluded from educational opportunities limits possibilities of self-realisation, or being capable and positively free, in Amartya Sen’s (1987) terms.

For these reasons, focusing on inclusive education brings to the fore the overwhelming complexity of inequalities in low-income countries. This enormous complexity can be expressed in exaggerated terms with the question: inclusion under what conditions and inclusion for what?

2. Context-sensitive development of inclusive education

The results of this research show that inclusive education has to be seen in relation to the complexities of local contexts (e.g. cultural, regional). Furthermore, it becomes apparent that the participants in the research also consider inclusive education as a concept in need of local adaptation (contextualization). For instance, do the value, meaning and expectations of education vary across actors and/or levels and affect the realisation of inclusive education? Against the background of inclusive education as a broad global agenda there is a clear need to develop locally context-sensitive ways of implementing inclusive education as became evident in our findings.

3. Clarification and mutual understanding about the concept and the scope of inclusive education

From the findings of this research it became apparent that in both countries the perception of different stakeholders and the orientation of the current educational services related to inclusive education are still closely linked to concepts of disability and special needs education, with its traditional deficits approach. Therefore educational policies and measures under the phrase inclusive education are currently still mainly pointing to children with disabilities. There is therefore a need to develop and clarify a mutual understanding of the concept of inclusive education and who else this approach should be looking to in developing countries.

Clarification is also needed when it is recognised that the notion of inclusive education carries with it socio-historical baggage related to exclusion and inequities. Despite the fact that there are some changing views in this regard and a wider view of the target group is being considered, there is a predominant preconception of inclusive education as the way in which educational systems respond to people with special needs. So, when considering ‘inclusion’ as a public matter in the educational domain...
agenda, issues of exclusion, marginalisation, vulnerability and/or discriminatory relationships among citizens arise in the discourse, and other groups beside people with special needs are recognised as potential targets of inclusion. So, attention is redirected to people in these societies who have been historically excluded or discriminated against.

In conclusion, discourses and educational policies regarding disadvantaged groups in both countries mainly target specific groups (e.g. indigenous population groups, girls, children with disabilities) and are therefore fragmented. A common perspective regarding a broader understanding of inclusive education should now be developed by the relevant stakeholders in each country.

4. **More coordination and collaboration between different stakeholders**

As mentioned in the previous point, stakeholders, public policies and measures to provide support for disadvantaged groups in the education sector tend to be isolated in both countries. They focus their goals only on certain target groups, with the result that actions lead to fragmentation in the way the educational system functions. As the evidence points out, one possible explanation for this fact is that attention still focuses on the child and not on the system itself.

Hence, when vulnerability is the common denominator among inhabitants in ‘developing’ countries, it is clear that defining potential target groups one by one for inclusion could elicit more segregation for people who are less visible or who do not have the power to be represented on the policy agendas. In addition, when there are intersections in the factors causing vulnerability (i.e. indigenous girls who are over-age, living in rural areas), the definition of target groups becomes unclear and complex.

Therefore, instead of focusing on certain disadvantaged groups, it is necessary to look at the way educational systems manage diverse people, considering diversity as a natural human condition. The development of effective and regular communication, coordination and collaboration between different stakeholders in the society are required in order to improve joint efforts that go beyond educational policies and also include policies for economic and social development. Furthermore, coordination between micro-, meso- and macro-levels needs to be strengthened to achieve a coordinated approach.

5. **Defining reachable goals under concrete conditions to avoid negative pressure: a tension between the international commitment toward education and the national conditions prevailing in ‘developing’ countries**

The results in both countries show that broad (international) goals of education collide with interrelated conditions in both countries, including financial constraints and inequalities that lead to educational realities characterised by enormous gaps and lack of resources. This often leads to the frustration of stakeholders active in the implementation of educational policies and inclusive education, in particular, and produces negative pressure (Fullan, 2009) on professionals in the educational systems.

Finally, education is an international priority and for ‘developing’ countries like Guatemala and Malawi, international cooperation has played a key role in supporting policies and education actions for its advancement. It is also clear, however, that there is tension between international agreements
ratified by governments and assumed as state commitments, and the time and the starting points between developed and developing countries that share the expected goals. The idea of negative pressure in Fullan’s terms (2009) refers to the fact that for ‘developing’ countries it seems as if they never make enough efforts to achieve the expected goals. While developing a common understanding of the concept of inclusive education (see above), reachable goals in the context of the realities of local conditions need to be developed likewise, in order to avoid negative pressure but also, keep ‘developing’ countries on the international developmental agenda.

6. **Improvement of teacher education in general (better qualifications for regular teachers to teach in heterogeneous groups) and more qualified teachers with special professional competences (special teachers)**

As teachers play a crucial role in implementing educational goals in the classroom, teacher education (initial as well as continuous professional development programmes) comes into the focus when the realisation of inclusive education is discussed. Significant heterogeneity (e.g. with regard to language, age, cultural background, socio-economic life conditions) in the classroom is a fact in schools in Guatemala and Malawi, and this challenges teachers on a daily basis. Teachers need to continuously address the challenges posed by heterogeneity in their classrooms, and there is the clearly expressed need to be equipped with the competencies to deal with and finally use heterogeneity in a positive way.

Moreover, there is evidence in both countries that many efforts are being undertaken to provide teachers with resources and teaching aids to handle special educational needs or vulnerable children in schools. However, these resources are not always timely or not always accessible for the whole school population, or do not respond to other needs that children or youth have. Therefore, in addition to continuous training opportunities, there is a strong need to provide a support system for teachers in their classrooms, as well as for the education community, in order to achieve quality in the educational support they provide and to promote acceptance of human diversity without any restrictions.

Additionally, more teachers specifically qualified in special needs education are needed to work with regular classroom teachers within regular schools and to support these schools with educative tools that will improve the fulfilment of the curriculum and the inclusion (not integration) of everyone in the classroom.

7. **Leadership and ownership at all levels matter for the implementation of inclusive education**

Numerous positive examples were found in the data where individuals or groups have taken the lead and developed a positive sense of ownership, coming up with spontaneous solutions in their direct sphere of influence, with the effect of supporting education for all.

This issue is considered as a great opportunity in both countries for developing and achieving inclusive educational systems. The participation of relevant stakeholders on all levels is therefore a priority for mobilising existing networks toward inclusive education for all. This also confirms that in ‘developing’ countries people mobilise their own resources toward purposes that are meaningful for them, like education as a common expectation. However, these efforts are limited by huge
uncovered needs associated with their limited life conditions. So leadership involves not just teachers or headmasters in the schools but also local, regional or national leaders in the society. Actions of institutional agents must favour the active participation of all the parents in the educative community.

8. Local versions of inclusive education tend to privilege access over acceptance and participation. A pedagogy of inclusion is suggested for handling inclusive education in everyday school activities.

Remarkable achievements regarding access to education have been attained in both countries in the past years. However, it seems that measures regarding education for all still mainly focus on access. It needs to be pointed out that in a contradictory way improvements in access have partially resulted in exacerbating the situation regarding acceptance and participation. In both countries, for instance, the abolition of payments like tuition fees has resulted in a considerable increase in enrolment rates. However, it has decreased the quality of education as the education system has not reacted to higher enrolment with the provision of more and better equipped teachers and classrooms. Moreover, teachers as well as schools were not prepared to support children to stay in school, or to be able to advance at the same rhythm as other children with previous school experience or without additional duties (i.e. working children).

The evidence in this study points out that improving access to school is not enough for achieving inclusive education goals. It was confirmed in both countries that there is a need for further knowledge about how to promote acceptance and participation in the learning experiences for diverse and heterogeneous pupils/students in regular classrooms. Moreover, there is also a need to further develop notions of non-formal educational programmes for those people who cannot adjust their daily life to a rigid timetable associated with a formal modality of education, but who could benefit from non-formal educational programmes.

9. Inclusion as part of wider strategies for development and social mobilisation

The evidence in both countries shows that there is a trust in education as a valuable resource for improving life conditions and ‘becoming someone in life’, as it was expressed. Moreover, the evidence also confirms that efforts for getting children into schools depend on additional actions on the side of the national States as a whole. Therefore, inclusive educational policies must be linked to policies directed towards national development, labour and social inclusion for all.

To conclude, both countries are characterised by the heterogeneity of their population as well as fundamental economic inequality. Inclusion aims at reverting inequalities and appreciating heterogeneity as a human trait. Following this perspective, existing heterogeneity in the country and therefore in the classrooms can be positively used in inclusive learning processes. This perspective was also expressed by participants in the study. However, in both countries there is a great need for methods that take advantage of the existing heterogeneity as expressed throughout by participants, ranging from national policy making level participants to teachers at school level who are implementing the curricula.
5 References


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