INCLUSION IN IBERO-AMERICA

A guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education in Ibero-America

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A guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education in Ibero-America
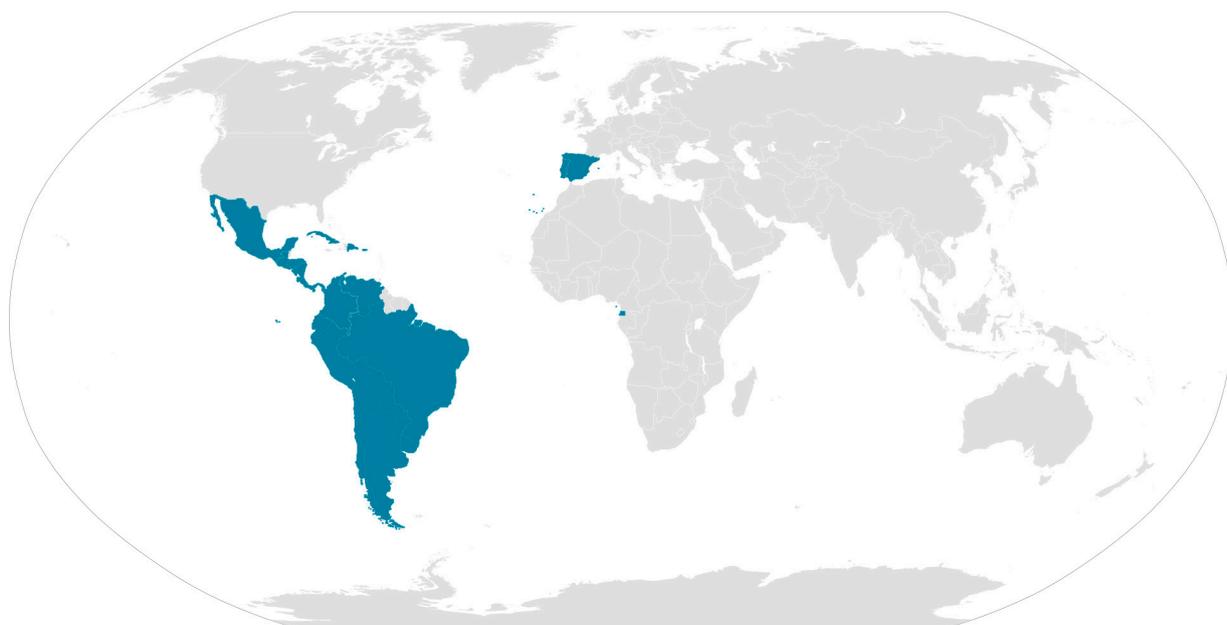
Foreword

OEI

Inclusive education stems from the conviction that the right to education is a basic human right that forms the basis of a more just society. From a humanist point of view, education is the instrument that enables the preservation of human dignity, social participation and the development of personality and societies. It is guaranteed by the States and, therefore, it is of a public and universal nature.

Inclusive education is at the very heart of the Sustainable Development Goals, a global roadmap that was approved in November 2015. Specifically, Goal number 4, which is focused on education, seeks to "*ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*" by 2030.

Based on its core project, "*Metas Educativas 2021*" (Educational Goals for 2021), the Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture (OEI), as an international intergovernmental organization for cooperation between the Ibero-American States, reflects on the potential of its partnership action in this new global arena. Thus, ensuring inclusion and equity in education is the focus of the Second General Goal, in order to "achieve educational equality and overcome all forms of discrimination in education".

The "Educational Goals for 2021" programme and the Education 2030 Agenda share the firm belief that education is a human right and the basis for realizing other rights, as well as a key strategy to ensure progress in terms of social cohesion and social inclusion.

Inclusive education is synonymous with fair and equitable education, in which those with greater learning difficulties receive the necessary tools and support, along with the collective encouragement and commitment to achieve their goals.

Thus, the OEI is committed to ensure participation, mutual respect, support for those with greater learning difficulties; guarantee awareness and recognition of minority and vulnerable groups; and promote trust and high expectations with regards to the future possibilities of all students in the Ibero-American region.

Mariano Jabonero Blanco
General Secretary of the OEI

Foreword

IBE-UNESCO

The fourth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 4), which emphasizes the need to advocate for inclusive and equitable quality education systems, forces us, first and foremost, to rethink the meaning of these two concepts and of all related elements. The "Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education", published by UNESCO in 2017, is strongly focused on this reflection. The guide highlights the fact that inclusion and equity in education are two concepts that go hand in hand, both of which are necessary to address all forms of exclusion, both inside and outside the school environment, placing particular emphasis on groups that have been and continue to be excluded from learning opportunities.

Education systems can reinforce social and cultural stereotypes through the curriculum, pedagogy, teachers, teaching and learning materials and assessment practices, giving rise to different types of discriminatory practices that hinder learning opportunities for all. In this respect, Ibero-America is no exception. Therefore, rethinking inclusive and equitable education means find specific solutions to remove barriers that limit educational achievements and create learning opportunities that consider the needs of all students, regardless their ethnic background, migration status, physical, social and intellectual condition and, naturally, their gender, so that each and every boy and girl plays a leading role in the successful and sustainable construction of their future.

These same premises also form the basis of the work developed by the International Bureau of Education of UNESCO (IBE-UNESCO) for over a decade and they are also the reason behind the publication "*Reaching Out to All Learners: a Resource Pack for Supporting. Inclusive Education*". These premises have also made it possible to lay the foundations for the creation of powerful collaboration agreements with other international organizations, such as the case of the OEI, an organization that has been working alongside IBE-UNESCO since 2010 on matters of inclusive education in different Ibero-American countries.

This document, "Inclusion in Ibero-America: A guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education in Ibero-America", is the most recent result of this fruitful collaboration. Throughout an extensive discussion on education policies, inclusive curricula, teachers' role and the voices of different stakeholders, particularly those of the students, this publication seeks to promote, with a forward-looking vision, what countries of the region could eventually establish, both at policy and practical levels, to achieve fairer, more equitable and more inclusive education systems, with full knowledge that inclusive education is a process that never ends.

Dr. Mmantsetsa Marope
Director of the International Bureau of Education of UNESCO

Acknowledgments

Table of contents

List of images, figures and boxes

List of Images:
Image 1: Ibero-American Region

Image 2: How does the OEI understand inclusion?

List of Figures:
Figure 1: Gini coefficient in the Latin American region

Figure 2: Dimensions of the Policy Review Framework

List of boxes:
Box 1. Key terms

Box 2. Inclusive education for children with disabilities

Box 3. Luces para aprender

Box 4. Reducing the gender divide in the STEM fields in Costa Rica

Box 5. The introduction of inclusive principles and practices in education in Chile

Box 6. Empowering the deaf community in Uruguay

Box 7. Educational inclusion for gifted students in Panama

Box 8: A national policy for multiculturalism in Paraguay

Box 9. Strengthening indigenous leadership in Bolivia

Box 10: Educational roundtables in Nicaragua engage civil society in policy advocacy

Box 11. Improving the quality of early childhood education for Colombian afro descendants

Box 12. Integrated systems of inclusive schools in El Salvador SI-EITP

Box 13. Prevention, care and support of children with special needs in Spain

Box 14. A virtual desktop for inclusive education in Argentina

Box 15. Overcoming obstacles to inclusion in Cuba

Box 16. Using artistic creativity for social inclusion in Brazil

Box 17. Supporting teacher training in inclusive education in Honduras

Box 18. Strengthening the educational community in the Dominican Republic

Box 19: Students helping teachers to innovate in Portugal

Acronyms

APASU: Asociación de Padres y Amigos de los Sordos del Uruguay [Association of Parents and Friends of Deaf People of Uruguay].

ASUR: Asociación de Sordos del Uruguay [Association for Deaf People of Uruguay].

BBVA: Banco Bilbao Vizcaya Argentaria.

CEPAL/ECLAC: Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe [Economic Comission for Latin America and the Caribbean].

CEPO: Consejos Educativos de Pueblos Originarios de Bolivia [Education Councils for Indigenous Peoples in Bolivia].

CFIA: Colegio Federado de Ingenieros y de Arquitectos [Federate College of Engineers and Architects].

CIE: Conferencia Iberoamericana de Educación [Ibero-American Conference on Education].

CINDE: Centro de Investigación y Desarrollo para las Personas Sordas [Research and Development Centre for Deaf People].

CLADE: Campaña Latinoamericana por el Derecho a la Educación [Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education].

CRECOVI: Centro Regional de Coordinación y Valoración Infantil [Regional Centre for Coordination and Child Assessment].

EFA: Education for All.

EITP: Escuelas Inclusivas de Tiempo Pleno [Full-time Inclusive Schools].

ESPA: Escola Secundária Pedro Alexandrino [Pedro Alexandrino Secondary School].

EWB: Energy Without Borders Foundation.

IBE: Intercultural Bilingual Education.

IBE-UNESCO: International Bureau of Education of UNESCO.

ICPS: International Centre for Prison Studies of the University of Essex.

IDIE: Instituto para el Desarrollo y la Innovación Educativa [Institute for Educational Development and Innovation].

INA: Instituto Nacional de Aprendizaje [National Learning Institute].

INAMU: Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres [National Women's Institute].

INDER: Instituto Nacional de Deportes, Educación Física y Recreación [National Institute for Sports, Physical Education and Recreation].

IOM: International Organization for Migration.

ISCED: International Standard Classification of Education

LGBTI: Lesbians, Gays, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex people.

MICITT: Ministerio de Ciencia, Tecnología y Telecomunicaciones [Ministry of Science, Technology and Telecommunications].

OEI: Organización de Estados Iberoamericanos para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura [Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture].

PLANIED: Plan Nacional Integral de Educación Digital [Comprehensive National Digital Education Plan].

PROEIB Andes: Programa de Formación en Educación Intercultural Bilingüe para los países andinos [Training Programme in Intercultural Bilingual Education for the Andean Countries].

RREI: Red Regional por la Educación Inclusiva Latinoamericana [Regional Network for Inclusive Education in Latin America].

S.A.E: Servicio de Apoyo Educativo [Educational Support Service].

SEAD: Servicios Educativos de Atención a la Diversidad [Educational Services to Attend Diversity].

SECADI: Secretaria de Educação Continuada, Alfabetização, Diversidade e Inclusão [Secretariat for Continuing Education, Literacy, Diversity and Inclusion].

SENADIS: Secretaría Nacional de Discapacidad [National Secretary for Disability].

SDG: Sustainable Development Goals.

STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics.

UMSS: Universidad Mayor de San Simón [University of San Simon].

UNESCO: United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization.

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme.

UNICEF: United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund.

WHO: World Health Organization.

Glossary[1]

Diversity: People's differences which may relate to their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, language, culture, religion, mental and physical ability, class, and immigration status.

Equity: Ensuring that there is a concern with fairness, such that the education of all learners is seen as being of equal importance.

Equality: Identical treatment in the exercise of fundamental rights (economic, social and cultural), resulting in the mutual recognition of all actors such as citizens, regardless of their gender, race and physical condition, along with any other category.

Gender equality: The understanding that women and men have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and for contributing to, and benefiting from, economic, social, cultural and political development.

Inclusion: A process that helps to overcome barriers limiting the presence, participation and achievement of learners.

Inclusive education: Process of strengthening the capacity of the education system to reach out to all learners.

Individual education plan: Written plan/programme with input from the parents that specifies the student's academic goals and the method to obtain these goals.

Integration: Learners labelled as having 'special educational needs' are placed in mainstream education settings with some adaptations and resources, but on condition that they can fit in with pre-existing structures, attitudes and an unaltered environment.

Mainstreaming/Mainstream education: The practice of educating students with learning challenges in regular classes during specific time-periods based on their skills.

Special education: Classes or instruction designed for students categorized as having special educational needs.

Special educational needs: A term used in some countries to refer to children with impairments that are seen as requiring additional support.

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[1] The majority of the definitions of the glossary terms have been reproduced textually from the document published by UNESCO in 2017: A guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education. ISBN 978-92-3-100222-9. © UNESCO 2017

Introduction

In 2017, UNESCO published the "Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education". This document was the result of a lengthy research and consultation process involving a group of international experts. Thanks to their valuable contributions, it was possible to stimulate the debate on the paradigm shift that the Guide seeks to promote in inclusive and equitable education. This paradigm shift, motivated by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), particularly SDG 4, positions inclusion and equity at the very core of education systems.

Based on these premises, one of the main tasks proposed by the aforementioned group of experts was to develop a conceptual framework to support a relatively universal definition of inclusion and equity. Based on this framework, the Guide can be understood as a means to support countries in the revision, development, implementation and supervision of inclusive and equitable policies and practices in order to generate systematic changes. Such changes can help to overcome different types of obstacles that hinder the development and achievement of quality education.

As indicated in the introduction to the original document, the Guide includes "examples of initiatives that are contributing to more inclusive and equitable education systems in different parts of the world" (UNESCO, 2017, p. 10). Reference is also made to the series of training tools for curriculum development designed by the International Bureau of Education of UNESCO (IBE-UNESCO), *Reaching Out to All Learners: A Resource Pack for Supporting Inclusive Education*, which complements the Guide in the implementation of inclusion at the school and classroom levels. Furthermore, the updated guidelines published by UNESCO in 2009 regarding inclusion policies in education represent a significant precedent to broaden the vision of the concept of inclusive education.

Taking the above into account, the guide, which has been developed based on the Ibero-American context, can be considered as a second stage in the process of expansion and further development of the concept of inclusive education focused on regional contexts. This document is the result of the convergence of two situations: on one hand, to acknowledge and highlight the fact that the Ibero-American countries have demonstrated their willingness and commitment to transforming their education systems through more inclusive and equitable public policies and practices; and, on the other, to stress the need to further reflect upon the educational reality of the countries in the region, whose history has been marked by a high level of socio-economic inequality, poverty and exclusion, transforming it into the most inequitable region in the world (OEI, 2010).

This guide includes a selection of effective practices related to equity and inclusion in Ibero-American education systems, identified by the Organization of Ibero-American States (OEI) with the support of the International Bureau of Education of UNESCO (IBE-UNESCO). Its main target audience and users are the key education stakeholders, such as decision makers, national education policy-makers, specialists and professionals involved in processes of educational and curriculum change, school leaders and supervisors, teachers, teacher trainers, students, families and community representatives.

On this basis, the document "Inclusion in Ibero-America: A Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education in Ibero-America" comprises the following sections:

1. An introduction, describing the Ibero-American context and identifying the regional reality from different perspectives (from an ethnic and racial perspective, from a socio-economic perspective, from a gender perspective and from a territorial perspective) and the main factors associated to the structural inequalities of the region;

2. A first section, addressing the debate on inclusion and equity within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Education 2030 Agenda. The text of this first section corresponds word for word with the original UNESCO Guide and incorporates the framework of the regional Ibero-American policies, agreements and programmes on inclusive education, analyzed from a historical perspective and including the regional OEI programme "Educational Goals for 2021". This section analyzes the meaning of educational inclusion and equity in Ibero-America. Likewise, annex 1 includes the main stages in the evolution of inclusive education from the 1990s to date, while annexes 5 and 6 further examine the regional situation;

3. A second section, concentrating on the analysis of inclusion and equity policies, the key scope of which, along with annexes 2, 3 and 4, has also been taken word for word from the original UNESCO Guide and has been enriched with relevant examples relating to Ibero-America; and

4. A conclusions section, reflecting upon the work already carried out and describing what can still be done in the region to achieve more inclusive and equitable education systems.

Ibero-America: a disparate and diverse region

As a region, Ibero-America refers to 22 countries that were historically part of the kingdoms of Spain and Portugal. It includes the following countries: Argentina, Andorra, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Spain, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Uruguay and Venezuela. It is different from the Latin American region because the latter includes the group of countries that are located on the American continent whose official language is Spanish, Portuguese and French, as specified by the Royal Spanish Academy (2014).

In 2014, the Ibero-American region had an estimated population of 634.7 million inhabitants (9% of the world population) (World Bank, 2015). However, this has increased by 104.2 million inhabitants in the past ten years (OEI, 2016).

The Ibero-American countries have a wide range of different national realities, not only from an educational and cultural perspective, but also with regards to their general indicators of economic and social development, making it the most inequitable region in the world, as indicated in the introduction. Several different dimensions and factors contribute to this inequality. While it is true that significant progress has been made in recent decades towards equality and equity, there is still a lot to consider and to do in order to reduce the socio-economic divides that affect the different countries (OEI, 2010).

The problem of inequality in the region is largely related to the high concentration of income in the highest decile. This then becomes a vicious circle because, as there is a higher concentration, it is more difficult for the growth of the countries to quickly result in better conditions for the poorest sectors of society (UNDP, 2016).

Image 1: Ibero-American Region
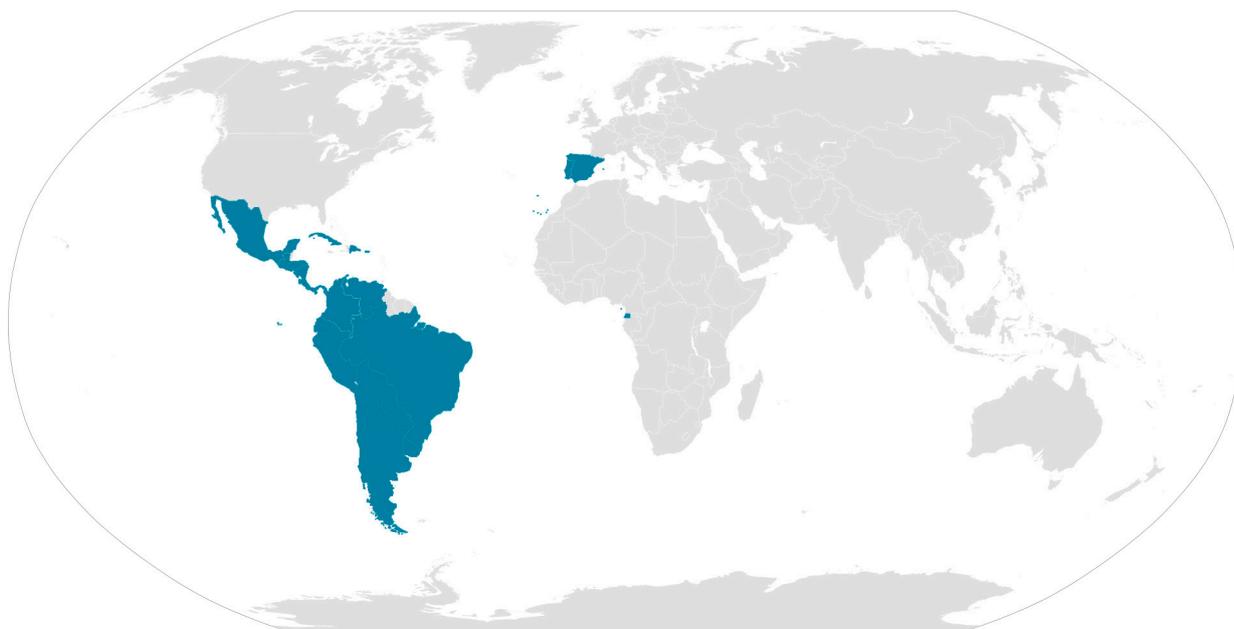
Source: Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture (OEI)

Between 2008 and 2015, a reduction in the unequal income distribution in the majority of countries can be observed in the region, particularly in Latin America (Figure 1). The rate of decrease of the Gini coefficient during the most recent period (2012-2015) was halved (-0.6% annual equivalent), compared to that recorded between 2008 and 2012 (-1.2% annual equivalent) (CEPAL/ECLAC, 2016a). This situation, which is due to the relative increase of the income of the bottom quintile compared to the top quintile, was particularly relevant for the different sources of household income, mainly employment income (both employees and self-employed work), pensions and transfers.

Nevertheless, despite the improvement showed by recent data, the reduction of the average poverty rate has been moderate in the last decades and difficulties have been encountered in relation to the Millennium Development Goals of reducing poverty by half between 1990 and 2015 (CEPAL/ECLAC, 2016a). In addition to the structural inequalities in the region, there is also growing cultural diversity, leading to greater complexity in exclusion processes and social fragmentation (López, 2008). Therefore, besides the challenge of overcoming inequalities in economic terms, it is also necessary to find more effective answers to the problem of social, political and cultural exclusion faced by the majority of the population (OEI, 2014b).

Given that exclusion can be encountered in different areas of social development, and that education is a key factor that can either reproduce, accentuate or reduce inequalities, it is necessary to promote the implementation of inclusive and equitable educational policies and practices in order to reduce inequalities and contribute to the creation of fairer and more inclusive societies.

Figure 1. Gini coefficient in the Latin American region
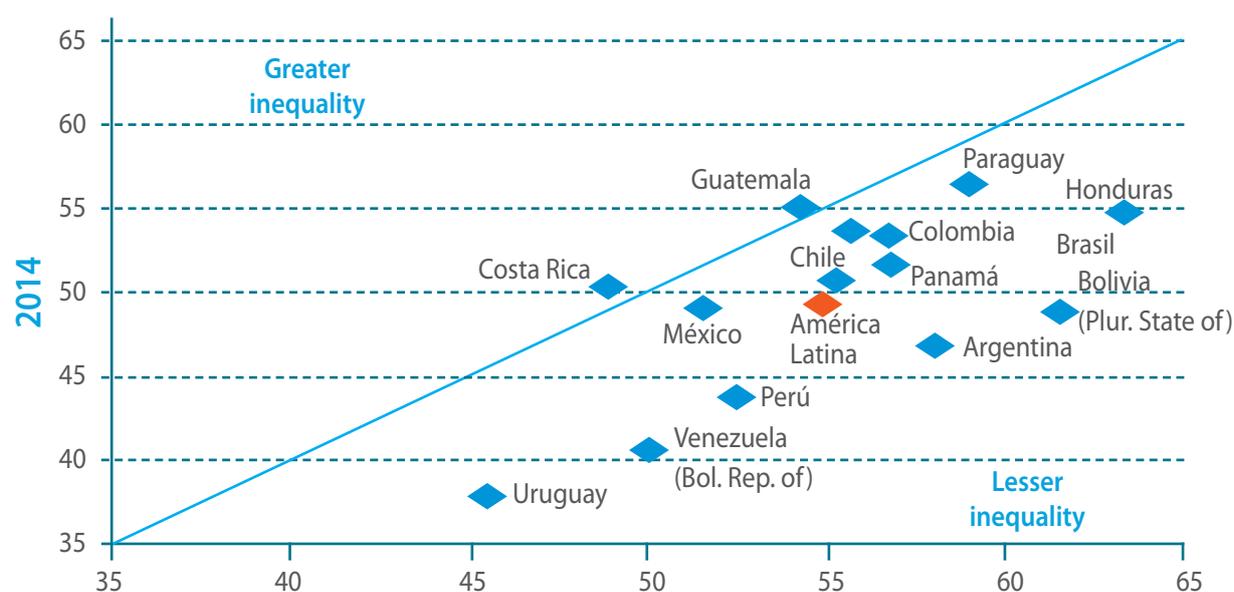
Inclusion and equity in education

Inclusion and equity in development agendas[2]

The right of all children to education is asserted in numerous international treaties and texts, and has been affirmed by both legally binding and non-binding instruments[3]. States therefore have an obligation to respect, protect and fulfil the right of *all learners* to education (UNESCO, 2014).

The last 15 years have seen significant progress globally in expanding access to education, particularly at the primary level. Nevertheless, UNESCO's most recent figures indicate that some 263 million children and youth aged between 6 and 17 years, most of them girls, are not in school today (Global Education Monitoring Report, 2016). Projections indicate that 25 million of these children will never set foot in a classroom. Significant gender disparities exist, with girls representing two-thirds of the total number of children out of school.

Compared with the richest children, the poorest children are four times more likely to be out of school and five times more likely not to complete primary education (Global Education Monitoring Report, 2016).

The Sustainable Development Goals build on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the goals of Education for All (EFA) – the global movement to ensure quality basic education for all children, youth and adults – and are specific about the kind of education that is needed in today's world. SDG 4 calls for countries to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education, and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'.

The Education 2030 Framework for Action has been adopted by the global education community to advance progress towards SDG4 and its targets. The Framework stresses the need to address all forms of exclusion and marginalization. It specifically calls for addressing inequalities related to access, participation, and learning processes and outcomes, paying particular attention to gender equality. This includes efforts to enable education systems to serve all learners, with a particular focus on those who have traditionally been excluded from educational opportunities. Excluded learners include those from the poorest households, ethnic and linguistic minorities, indigenous people, and persons with special needs and disabilities[4].

The vision of education presented by the SDGs does not differ greatly from that established in the Educational Goals for 2021 published by the Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture (OEI) in 2010, that shares with the 2030 Agenda and SDG 4 the conviction that education is the key strategy to move towards social cohesion and social inclusion and to achieve real progress. Furthermore, several different subjects overlap in

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[2]*See annex 1 for more information regarding the main international events that have moved the inclusive education agenda forward.*
[3]*This includes, for example, Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (1951), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1960), the Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), and the UN General Assembly Resolution on the Right to Education in Emergency Situations. See: UNESCO. 2015. Education 2030 Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action. Paris, UNESCO.*
[4]*This is the end of the part taken word for word from the document published by UNESCO in 2017: A guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education. ISBN 978-92-3-100222-9. © UNESCO 2017*

the priorities proposed in both initiatives, one of them being the important role of inclusion and the eradication of all forms of exclusion and marginalization in education (OEI, 2016).

In 2010, the OEI launched the project "Educational Goals for 2021: the education we want for the bicentennial generation", which proposed a series of goals with ambitious objectives: to improve the quality and equity in education to confront poverty and inequality, thus fostering social inclusion. The project, approved by the XX Conference of Ministers of Education and endorsed by the XX Ibero-American Conference of Heads of State and Government in Mar del Plata, was set up as one of the largest and most important initiatives to be implemented in recent years in the Ibero-American Community of Nations.

Within the Goals 2021 framework, it is considered necessary to establish a specific programme of inclusive action to strengthen and provide visibility to one of the most important challenges, ensuring educational equity and education in diversity as a right that must be implemented in schools, in terms of access, permanence and promotion of the students, regardless of their economic, social, cultural or personal situation.

The programme highlights five lines of action: 1) afro-descendants; 2) interculturality and bilingualism; 3) the inclusion of students with special educational needs; 4) vulnerable groups; and 5) improved access and permanence of girls in school, in addition to guaranteeing all their educational rights in every respect.

The "Educational Goals for 2021" programme is focused on providing education for diversity to students and groups that are at greater risk of exclusion, in order to: a) foster students' learning through cultural and linguistic content specific to indigenous peoples and afro-descendants in the region; b) improve access and permanence of girls in schools and guarantee all their educational rights; c) improve the education of groups with special education needs resulting from any kind of disability; d) facilitate the educational integration of immigrant students in their destination countries and ensures the adequate educational development of children and young people whose parents have emigrated; e) contribute to improving the life and raising awareness of the cultural manifestations of afro-descendants and indigenous groups; and f) improve the access of indigenous groups and afro-decedents to the education system, from early childhood to vocational training and university.

Thus, it can be noted that Ibero-America is a key region of action in relation to the development priorities for 2030, which highlight the role of inclusive education as a fundamental aspect to fulfil them. Likewise, despite the progress that is still to be made, the region has the necessary impetus to ensure that education is a right for all.

Inclusion and equity in educational policy

The central message is simple: **every learner matters and matters equally**. The complexity arises, however, when we try to put this message into practice. Implementing this message will likely require changes in thinking and practice at every level of an education system, from classroom teachers and others who provide educational experiences directly, to those responsible for national policy.

Education policy can influence and support inclusive thinking and practices by establishing the equal right of every individual to education, and by outlining the forms of teaching, support and leadership that lay the foundation for quality education for all (UNESCO, 2015b).

Developing policies that are inclusive and equitable requires the recognition that students' difficulties arise from aspects of the education system itself, including: the ways in which education systems are organized currently, the forms of teaching that are provided, the learning environment, and the ways in which students' progress is supported and evaluated.

Even more important is translating this recognition into concrete reforms, **seeing individual differences not as problems to be fixed, but as opportunities for democratizing and enriching learning**. Differences can act as a catalyst for innovation that can benefit all learners, whatever their personal characteristics and home circumstances.

Integrating the principles of equity and inclusion into education policy involves:

◈ Valuing the presence, participation and achievement of all learners, regardless of their contexts and personal characteristics.

◈ Recognizing the benefits of student diversity, and how to live with, and learn from, difference.

◈ Collecting, collating and evaluating evidence on children's barriers to education access, to participation and to achievement, with particular attention to learners who may be most at risk of underachievement, marginalization or exclusion.

◈ Building a common understanding that more inclusive and equitable education systems have the potential to promote gender equality, reduce inequalities, develop teacher and system capabilities, and encourage supportive learning environments. These various efforts will, in turn, contribute to overall improvements in educational quality.

◈ Engaging key education and community stakeholders to foster the conditions for inclusive learning, and to foster a broader understanding of the principles of inclusion and equity.

◈ Implementing changes effectively and monitoring them for impact, recognizing that building inclusion and equity in education is an on-going process, rather than a one-time effort.

Box 1. Key Terms

Inclusion is a process that helps overcome barriers limiting the presence, participation and achievement of learners.

Equity is about ensuring that there is a concern with fairness, such that the education of all learners is seen as having equal importance.

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Bringing the principles of equity and inclusion into education policy also requires engaging other sectors, such as health, social welfare and child protection services, to ensure a common administrative and legislative framework for inclusive and equitable education.

Many factors can work either to facilitate or to inhibit inclusive and equitable practices within education systems. Some of those factors are: teacher skills and attitudes, infrastructure, pedagogical strategies and the curriculum. These are all variables which education ministries either control directly, or over which they can at least exert considerable influence.

The framework presented in the next section explores the key dimensions and features of education policy. If supported by the necessary legislation, institutions and resources, this framework can be transformative in creating inclusive and equitable education systems[5].

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[5]*This is the end of the part taken word for word from the document published by UNESCO in 2017: A guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education. ISBN 978-92-3-100222-9. © UNESCO 2017*

Box 2. Inclusive education for children with disabilities

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Children with disabilities are among the most marginalized and excluded groups of children; routinely, they are denied their right to quality education (WHO and World Bank, 2011). Policies vary considerably worldwide, with some countries prioritizing education for these children in different settings: special schools and centres; special classes in integrated schools; or inclusive schools which work to identify and remove barriers, and to enable every learner to participate and achieve in mainstream settings. Establishing inclusive schools is widely regarded as desirable for equality and human rights, and it has educational, social and economic benefits (UNESCO, 2001)[6]. In this respect, it is extremely **important to consider the implication of communities and families in the promotion of the right to an inclusive education**.

It is worth noting the active role held in the region by **the *Red Regional por la Educación Inclusiva Latinoamericana* (Regional Network for Inclusive Education in Latin America [RREI, by its Spanish acronym])**, a coalition of organizations acting on behalf and for people with disabilities and their families and human rights organizations in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay, created in 2015, which **works for the right of people with disabilities to receive inclusive education within the framework of "a school for all"**.

The objective of the RREI is to take coordinated actions to ensure that society as a whole as well as people with disabilities, their families and friends contribute to the promotion of the right to inclusive education for students with disabilities. The ultimate aim of these coordinated actions is to have a political impact at national, regional and international levels to ensure that States guarantee the right of all individuals to an inclusive education.

For further information: http://rededucacioninclusiva.org

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[6]*This is the end of the part taken word for word from the document published by UNESCO in 2017: A guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education. ISBN 978-92-3-100222-9. © UNESCO 2017.*

Image 2: How does the OEI understand inclusion?

How do we understand INCLUSION?

OEI

COMMITMENT TO INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The objective of achieving inclusive schools has become one of the biggest ambitions of all those who defend equity in education. Schools for all without exception, where children from different social circumstances, different cultures and with different skills and interests can come together from the most gifted children to those with some type of disability. It is an ideal model that motivates a great deal of people committed to educational change.

Publications

OUR IDEAS

Through several studies published in the journal *Revista Iberoamericana de Educación* (Ibero-American Journal on Education), we hope to contribute to the debate and to broadening knowledge on the matter.

Likewise, the Guide for inclusive Education is a resource for centers seeking inclusion models.

The book *Avances y Desafíos de la Educación Inclusiva en Iberoamérica* (Advances and Challenges of inclusive Education in Ibero-America) brings together the research of prestigious experts on the matter.

The report *Miradas 2015* focuses particularly on the development of inclusion within the Educational Goals for 2021 programme.

Second General Goal

OUR OBJECTIVES

TO ACHIEVE EDUCATIONAL EQUALITY AND OVERCOME ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION IN EDUCATION

SPECIFIC GOAL 2. To guarantee access and permanence of all children in the educational system by means of the implementation of support and development programs for the families to promote the permanence of their children in school.

SPECIFIC GOAL 3. To provide special support to ethnic minorities, indigenous people and afro descendants, to female students and students that live in urban marginal areas and rural areas, to achieve equality in eduction.

SPECIFIC GOAL 4. To guarantee quality, bilingual, intercultural education to students belonging to ethnic minorities and indigenous people.

SPECIFIC GOAL 5. To support the educational inclusion of students that need special education by means of adjustments and specific help.

Institutional Development

CAEU

"The main objective of inclusive schools must be for all children to learn together." OEI - Educational Goals for 2021

Action Plans

The *Centro de Altos Estudios Universitarios* (Center for Higher Education Studies) offers the diploma course *"Escuelas inclusivas: enseñar y aprender en la diversidad"* (Inclusive schools: teach and learn in an environment of diversity)

The *Instituto de Educación en Derechos Humanos* (Institute of Human Rights Education) provides development programs in over 13 countries.

OUR ACTIONS

At a **regional level**, we hold ministerial meetings, we design inclusion programs and we start up resource centers to promote inclusion at centers.

At a **national level**, we have at least 11 programs in countries for the implementation of inclusion.

Own source

Inclusive education in Ibero-America

Historical evolution of regional commitments in inclusive education

Since 1988, the *Conferencia Iberoamericana de Educación* (Ibero-American Conference on Education [CIE, by its Spanish acronym]) has been held on a regular basis, bringing together the Ministers of Education of the 22 Ibero-American countries. During the conference, education priorities are established for the region along with the steps that should be taken to achieve such objectives. In 1991, the Ibero-American Summits of Heads of State and Government were established. These are high-level meetings held at both regional and international levels.

In the first declaration issued by the CIE, education was established as the main focus of relations between member countries. This was also reflected in the 2nd CIE (1992), which considered the key role played by education for democracy and economic and social development. During the 5th CIE (1995), education was prioritized as a social investment, stating that "it is the only way to ensure conditions of equity, making it possible to address the social inequalities that our countries have not been able to overcome, placing particular focus on specific realities, such as age, gender, social and economic situation, race, religion, culture and language" (Buenos Aires Declaration, 1995), in addition to lifelong educational quality and equity at all levels. At the subsequent 5th Ibero-American Summit (1995), education was defined as a cohesive factor for the Ibero-American community and it was stated that "education policies must be State policies, based on the consensus and participation of all social sectors, in order to guarantee access to education to the whole population without distinction" (Declaration of Bariloche, 1995).

Likewise, the 9th CIE (1999), on the subject of "*Quality of education: equity, development and integration in the face of globalization*", highlighted the importance of providing quality education to all inhabitants of Ibero-America, emphasizing the fact that achieving equity in education is not only limited to achieving universal access to educational services, but rather it also entails the use of personalized learning approaches responding to the different needs of students on a daily basis. Furthermore, the 9th CIE pointed out the importance and positive impact of compensatory policies aimed at the allocation of resources and educational efforts to students belonging to the most vulnerable sectors of the population, from elementary education to higher education, thus increasing their opportunities to remain in school and complete their studies.

In essence, the 9th CIE recognized the need to implement compensatory policies and programmes to increase the opportunities of the most vulnerable groups, to strengthen existing educational programmes such as rural education and early childhood education, to promote education that contributes to the preservation of indigenous cultures and to strengthen and protect the rights of marginalized groups such as children, youth and people with disabilities, among others.

The 13th CIE (2003) recognized the role of education in the reduction of inequalities and the achievement of social inclusion, placing particular emphasis on the training and use of the information and communication technologies, which are essential for the reduction and subsequent elimination of the technological divide. Measures were also established in accordance with the Education

for All goals (2000), in addition to others to ensure the continuity of indigenous and intercultural education, the extension of coverage of early education, the prevention of exclusion of and compensation for students with special needs, among others.

The 14th CIE (2004) and subsequent 14th Ibero-American Summit, entitled "Education for Progress", reiterated the need to invest sufficient economic resources into the education of vulnerable groups such as indigenous communities and migrants, taking into account that the allocation of sufficient resources can result in the productive and social inclusion of the members of these groups. These conferences also focused on the need to eliminate child labour and on the importance of taking steps to achieve gender equity in access to education, along with equity among young people and adults who are excluded from the education process.

During the 17th CIE (2007), focused on social cohesion and inclusive policies, emphasis was placed on the need for States to promote "education policies that facilitate inclusion and social cohesion and the sense of belonging, based on the promotion of education quality and equity and its link to the productive system to achieve fairer societies, with better opportunities for all, greater levels of well-being and enabling the construction of citizenship" (Declaration of Valparaíso, 2007). Furthermore, "the commitment to prevent, correct and reverse any form of discrimination within education systems, especially by recognizing gender equity, ethnic diversity, multiculturalism and by developing a safe school model in the region" was once again reaffirmed (ibid.).

Subsequent CIEs provided the political and programmatic basis to pave the way for the creation of the Educational Goals for 2021 (OEI, 2010) established at the 20th Ibero-American Summit. The objective of these goals is to "achieve inclusive

education systems that guarantee the social and economic development of Ibero-America, promoting its dissemination and socialization" (Buenos Aires Declaration, 2010). Thus, inclusion and equity appear in the Second General Goal, which seeks "to achieve educational equality and overcome all forms of discrimination in education", and which comprises four specific goals: (1) to guarantee access and permanence of all children in the education system by means of the implementation of support and development programmes for the families to promote the permanence of their children in school; (2) to provide special support to ethnic minorities, indigenous people and afro-descendants, to female students and students that live in urban marginal areas and rural areas, to achieve equality in education; (3) to guarantee quality, bilingual, intercultural education to students belonging to ethnic minorities and indigenous people; and (4) to support the educational inclusion of students that need special education by means of adjustments and specific help. There are also other goals that fall within the category of inclusion and equity, such as the Seventh General Goal, which seeks to "offer life-long educational opportunities for all".

In 2015, the Ibero-American Cooperation Meeting in Inclusive Education was held, where the priorities of OEI in inclusive education for the region were established, such as the development of research in inclusion at a regional level, promotion campaigns, training spaces, etc.

In 2016, after the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) were approved, at the 25th CIE it was agreed that OEI would coordinate "the continuity of the programme "Educational Goals for 2021", in cooperation with the Education 2030 Agenda, given that many of the goals coincide with the proposals in the 2030 Agenda such as, in our case, SDG 4.

Box 3. Luces para aprender

Luces para aprender (Lights to learn) is a project led by the OEI, Organization of Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture, which seeks to provide over 55,000 schools in Ibero-America with solar power and Internet access, the majority of which are located in rural or hard-to-reach areas. **The "*Lights to learn*" initiative emerged within the framework of the Educational Goals for 2021 and it seeks to address unresolved challenges in the Ibero-American region such as access to quality public education that offers better opportunities to girls and boys and allows them to confront poverty and inequality.** Aware if this situation and taking into account that educational quality is one of the most important issues to achieve social balance between citizens, the OEI proposed a project to contribute to improving the education of all boys and girls who do not have access to a decent education due to lack of resources. "*Lights to learn*" seeks to reduce the technological divide and put an end to the isolation experienced in rural communities, which have historically been excluded from technological advances, thus facilitating their access to the communication technologies in order to promote their educational, economic, social and cultural development. The project therefore opens a door to community participation processes, establishing schools as a place for meeting and leisure within the community. To date, "*Lights to learn*" has received support from several public institutions and private entities, including BBVA, Endesa Foundation, Mapfre Foundation, SM Foundation, Telefónica and Iberia Foundation, along with consultancy services from the Energy Without Borders Foundation (EWB).

For further information: http://lucesparaaprender.org/web/

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Likewise, within the framework of the new development agendas to ensure quality learning opportunities for all students, in September 2015 all of the Ibero-American countries committed to the framework for action of the global development objectives by approving and adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and, particularly, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

This commitment led to a new agenda that, both in relation to the discourse and in relation to the actions taken, considers the complementarity between economic and environmental development, growth and equity, competitiveness and social cohesion, along with the establishment of a new balance between the democratic state, the economy, citizenship and social responsibility and individual and collective freedoms, with the objective of "reducing inequality in countries and between countries", as clearly demonstrated in the slogan "leave no one behind" (CEPAL/ECLAC, 2016a).

The focus of this new agenda to reduce socioeconomic divides in the region is education and, particularly, inclusive and equitable educational policies and practices. With regards to inclusive education, 20 of the 22 Ibero-American countries have their own concept of inclusive education, defined through laws, ministerial resolutions and decrees, guidelines, plans and national education policies. Despite the differences between the different definitions, there are basic concepts that can be observed in the majority of countries, such as the idea of inclusive education as a way to overcome all barriers faced by students limiting both their learning opportunities and their access to education, particularly among the most vulnerable groups, using personalized learning approaches that can respond to different needs. All of the above facilitated by a structural transformation, both of the education system and of the learning environments that promote the participation of the community. Likewise, it is worth noting that, in the majority of the countries, diversity is considered an enriching element.

The above point on diversity is extremely relevant in a region where inequalities are essentially related to ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender and geography together with the ones related to the life cycle and where many groups have limited learning opportunities or are completely excluded from education systems for being "different", as in the case of afro-descendants, indigenous people and migrants; girls and women; students belonging to the LGBTI community and those with some form of disability, to mention a few. By considering diversity as an enriching element, in addition to combating inequalities, we are forced to go beyond simply classifying students in different target groups and we can concentrate more on the individual characteristics and uniqueness of each student to sustain personalized learning opportunities. Nevertheless, the characteristics of the vulnerable groups should be taken into account when creating inclusive educational policies[7]. Policies focusing on diversity and inequality complement and go hand in hand with each other.

There are still doubts as to the manner in which the education systems of the region can become fully inclusive and equitable and regarding the steps that should be taken to ensure that the voices and the knowledge of the most marginalized groups are embraced and transformed into a valuable source of education and learning. In the following chapter we will pose some key questions related to four different dimensions that enable us to reflect on the way in which we can achieve more inclusive and equitable education systems.

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[7] Consult annex 5 to obtain further information on factors and at-risk population in Ibero-America

Box 4. Reducing the gender divide in the STEM fields in Costa Rica

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In Ibero-America, both at basic and youth education levels, curriculum, pedagogy, teachers and learning materials are sources of discrimination and stereotypes, which hinder students' learning opportunities. As a result of such discrimination and stereotypes, for example, girls are not encouraged to study disciplines such as STEM. This not only limits individual development opportunities, but also national development opportunities.

In **Costa Rica, *Encuentros de Mujeres en Ciencia y Tecnología* [Meetings for Women in Science and Technology] are implemented, to foster the participation and recognition of women, girls and adolescents in the different fields of science and technology, demonstrating the importance of investing in the education of women for the socioeconomic development of the country.** The main activities carried out include round tables, film clubs and spaces to share with science and technology professionals, in addition to workshops on robotics.

These meetings are part of the initiatives undertaken in relation to gender and the promotion of scientific and technological vocations among girls and teenagers by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Telecommunications (MICITT, by its Spanish acronym), the *Instituto Nacional de Aprendizaje* (National Learning Institute [INA, by its Spanish acronym]), the *Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres* (National Women's Institute [INAMU, by its Spanish acronym]), the Colegio Federado de Ingenieros y de Arquitectos (Federate College of Engineers and Architects [CFIA, by its Spanish acronym]) and Intel Costa Rica. It is worth noting that, with the support of OEI in Costa Rica, the Meetings for Women in Science and Technology have reached more rural areas, encouraging young people outside of the metropolitan area to pursue studies in science and technology and to find future solutions for local problems in their communities.

For further information
http://www.oeicostarica.org/Oei/Noticia/encuentro-mujeres-en-ciencia-y-tecnologia-realizado-en-san-jose

Inclusion and equity policy analysis[8]

Whether at the national or more local level, countries can use the policy review framework presented in this Guide in three ways: to assess existing education policies for their attention to equity and inclusion; to create and implement an action plan to advance education policy; and, to monitor progress as actions are taken. This policy review framework is based on a framework originally developed for the 48th session of the International Conference on Education and it relates to 'Reaching Out to All Learners: A Resource Pack for Supporting Inclusive Education'.

It is worth noting that the 48th session of the International Conference on Education, which took place in Geneva, Switzerland, in November 2008, was a major milestone as it laid the foundations for the new paradigm shift in inclusive education motivated by UNESCO. During this meeting, key education stakeholders from 153 countries recognized the need to bring a renewed sense to the concept of inclusive education, progressing from an approach that is focused only on students with disabilities to a new approach focused on all students. Within this new framework, "inclusion" means to transform education systems and adapt them to the needs of each student, which is exactly the basis for the development of this document and the previous version, elaborated by UNESCO in 2017.

International research has identified four overlapping dimensions as keys to establishing inclusive and equitable education systems (Figure 2). This section explains these dimensions at length, providing examples of initiatives in different parts of the world that are contributing to more inclusive and equitable education systems.

Each dimension has four defining features. These features form the basis of the self-assessment framework.

Figure 2: Dimensions of the Policy Review Framework
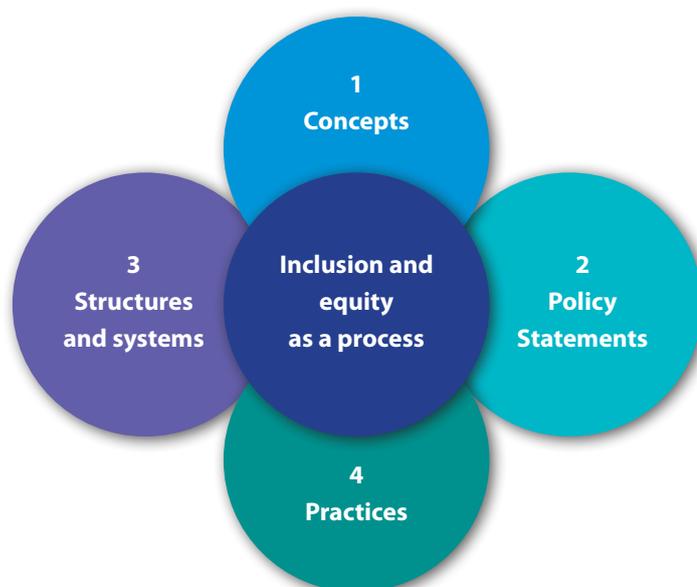
Source: Adapted from IBE-UNESCO (2016)

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[8]*In this chapter, the central framework for analysis of the inclusion and equity policies, the discussion regarding the four dimensions, boxes 9, 11 and 20 and annexes 2, 3 and 4 have been taken word for word from the original document published by UNESCO in 2017: A guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education. ISBN 978-92-3-100222-9. © UNESCO 2017.*

Dimension 1 - Concepts

Key Features

1.1 Inclusion and equity are overarching principles that guide all educational policies, plans and practices

1.2 The national curriculum and its associated assessment systems are designed to respond effectively to all learners

1.3 All partners who work with learners and their families understand and support the national policy goals for promoting inclusion and equity in education

1.4 Systems are in place to monitor the presence, participation and achievement of all learners within the education system

1.1 Inclusion and equity are overarching principles that guide all educational policies, plans and practices

Inclusion and equity are overarching principles that should guide *all* educational policies, plans and practices, rather than being the focus of a separate policy. These principles recognize that education is a human right and is the foundation for more equitable, inclusive and cohesive communities (Vitello and Mithaug, 1998).

Ensuring that all learners have access to quality education also acknowledges the intrinsic value of diversity and respect for human dignity (UNESCO, 2015a). In this way, differences come to be seen in a positive light as the stimulus for fostering learning among children, young people and adults, and for promoting gender equality. The principles of inclusion and equity are, then, not only about ensuring access to education, but also about having quality learning spaces and pedagogies that enable students to thrive, to understand their realities, and to work for a more just society.

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Box 5. The introduction of inclusive principles and practices in education in Chile

For several decades, Chile has been implementing policies aimed at students in situations of vulnerability and educational inequality, guaranteeing the right to a quality education for all. According to UNICEF data, there are 300,000 out-of-school children and youth (UNICEF, 2012). The recent *Ley de Inclusión Escolar* **(School Inclusion Act), which entered into force on 1 March 2016, establishes the principle of integration and inclusion based on which the system will foster the elimination of all forms of arbitrary discrimination that hinder the learning and participation of students** (article 1, paragraph 1, sub-paragraph e of Act no. 20,845/2015).

The term "inclusion" is defined as "the construction of educational communities that promote the learning, discovery, participation and recognition of the diversity of their members; create and enrich their educational proposal based on the differences and specific characteristics of members; and ensure that all students can develop relevant, appropriate and quality education trajectories" (Ministry of Education, 2016).

In this context, **Chile's inclusive education programme seeks to contribute to the development of schools with an inclusive approach** through the capacity-building of teachers and education stakeholders, the collaboration and exchange between schools and universities and the generation and dissemination of knowledge and tools to facilitate political decision-making and the strengthening of educational practices and training processes:

Among the measures implemented, there are several different lines of action:

1. Training courses in inclusive education for teachers and education stakeholders fostered by the Ministry of Education, such as the 2nd edition of the course "*Desarrollo de competencias para el trabajo educativo desde un enfoque inclusivo*" (Skills development for educational work from an inclusive perspective), organized by the Ministry of Education, the OEI and the Central University (Ministry of Education, 2017); and the training course entitled "*Perspectivas y Prácticas para una educación inclusiva*" (Perspectives and practices for inclusive education) (Ministry of Education, 2016), which brought together hundreds of teachers from different regions in the country.

2. Seminars and workshops aimed at different stakeholders within the education system.

3. Nationwide contests to reward good inclusive practices, such as the *Concurso Nacional de Proyectos para la Inclusión Educativa de Estudiantes en Situación de Discapacidad* (National Contest of Educational Inclusion Projects for Students with Disabilities) (SENADIS, 2016).

4. The development of audio-visual and printed material to support training processes in inclusive education such as, for example, the manual published in 2016 under the title *Orientaciones para la construcción de comunidades educativas inclusivas* (Guidelines for the construction of inclusive educational communities).

5. The systematization and exchange of experiences between schools that are in the process of developing inclusive practices.

1.2 The national curriculum and its associated assessment systems are designed to respond effectively to all learners

The curriculum is the central means for enacting the principles of inclusion and equity within an education system. Developing a curriculum that will include all learners may well involve broadening the definition of learning used by teachers and education decision-makers. As long as learning is defined narrowly as the acquisition of knowledge presented by a teacher, schools will likely be locked into rigidly organized curricula and teaching practices. In stark contrast, **inclusive curricula are based on the view that learning occurs when students are actively involved, taking the lead in making sense of their experiences** (Udvari-Solnar, 1996).

"...learning occurs when students are actively involved..."

In this changed view, the teacher's role becomes one of guiding and facilitating engagement and learning, rather than instructing. This makes it possible for a diverse group of students to be educated together, since the students need not to be at the same point in their learning, or receive the same instruction from their teacher. Rather, they can work at their own pace and in their own way, within a common framework of objectives and activities. This approach also fosters a sense of belonging to a community and a shared understanding of key values and global citizenship – a sense of being a part of a broader community and common humanity (UNESCO, 2015d).

At its heart are the planned teaching and learning opportunities that are available in ordinary classrooms – the intended curricula effectively implemented. It is also essential to develop and use national assessment systems that comply with international human rights norms, so that education will fulfil the objectives that human rights conventions established (see Dimension 4.3 below[9]).

It is important to remember, at the same time, that students have access to many other learning experiences; while these experiences may be more difficult to plan, they are certainly influenced by the schools and other aspects of the education system. These experiences include social interactions among students, interactions between students and teachers both in and out of the classroom, and learning experiences that occur within the community, for instance, in the family or in various social or religious contexts.

[9]See Human Rights Council. 2014. Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, A/HRC/26/27.

1.3 All partners who work with learners and their families understand and support the national policy goals for promoting inclusion and equity in education

Educational change is technically simple but politically and socially complex (Fullan, 2007). Moves towards inclusion and equity may not always be understood or welcomed in contexts where people are used to segregated education provision, or where educators doubt their ability to cope with learners' diversity. Therefore, it is necessary to mobilize opinion in favour of these principles of equity and inclusion.

Some key lessons have emerged from efforts to build consensus for equity and inclusion in education. These lessons include the need for:

◈ **Clarity of purpose**, and a shared understanding of the rationale for and the purpose of the changes that are being introduced;

◈ **An understanding of the added value** of the proposed changes, emphasizing the benefits for parents and children, for the community at large, and for the education system itself;

◈ **Evidence to enable** informed judgements about the current situation and the impact expected from the proposed changes;

◈ **Champions**, those who are committed to inclusive and equitable education, and who can mobilize networks of support; and

◈ **Strategic communication**, which may require the development of a strategy that draws on different channels to reach different stakeholders.

Box 6. Empowering the deaf community in Uruguay

A remarkable example of **collaboration between different organizations to create an empowered community with a strong identity can be found in the Uruguayan deaf community.** Its creation and growth have developed over time, with different individuals and associations working together to remove the barriers that prevent deaf people in Uruguay from accessing basic services such as education. The movement took root in 1928 with the foundation of the Association for the Deaf of Uruguay (ASUR), thus commencing the fight for the education and employment of deaf people. A few years later, after gaining momentum and publicity, the movement opened the Research and Development Centre for Deaf People (CINDE), an institute that trains professional interpreters and deaf teachers, in addition to promoting the deaf culture and sign language. Recognizing the importance of collaboration between different public and private institutions to guarantee better opportunities and social welfare for the deaf community in Uruguay, the Association of Parents and Friends of the Deaf of Uruguay (APASU) was also created in 1998 by the parents of deaf children concerned about the education and integration of their children in society. **Collaboration between these institutions has made it possible to provide support to deaf children, youth and adults and their families, and to raise awareness among the hearing community**, creating better opportunities for educational, social and employment integration for the Uruguayan deaf community.

For further information:
http://www.apasu.org.uy
http://www.cinde.net/

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1.4 Systems are in place to monitor the presence, participation and achievement of all learners within the education system

Research points to 'levers for change' that can be used to promote equity and inclusion in education. In particular, research identifies important **evidence that the presence, participation and achievement of learners are among the most important factors for success** (Ainscow, 2005).

Deciding what kinds of evidence to collect and how to use it requires care. For example, education systems now collect far more statistical data on learning outcomes than ever before (often using standardized tests for country comparisons), in order to determine the effectiveness of those systems. This reflects a narrow view of education as merely the acquisition of a set of functional skills. This view has, in turn, led to new pressures: in many countries, the officials who guide the nation's policies have become preoccupied with measuring school outcomes through test scores, and with comparing their progress to the progress of other countries.

In countries with narrowly conceived criteria for defining success, monitoring mechanisms can impede the development of a more inclusive education system. A well-functioning education system requires policies that focus on the participation and achievement of all learners. It must also address the disadvantages faced by some groups in the population, such as those from the poorest households, ethnic and linguistic minorities, indigenous people, persons with special needs and disabilities, and girls (World Bank Group, 2011).

Therefore, accepted, clearly stated definitions of inclusion and equity should be the starting point for deciding what to monitor. In other words, there is a need to 'measure what we value', rather than 'value what we can measure' (Ainscow et al, 2003), which is often what happens.

The SDGs call for a greater focus on equity point to renewed efforts for measuring inequality in education. Many countries have standards for assessing children's educational attainment, at all levels of schooling. In some countries, detailed statistics at the level of the school, or even the class, are available on students having difficulty in school or suffering from other disadvantages. In many cases though, household surveys or other methods are needed in order to identify those who are the furthest behind.

"...monitoring mechanisms can impede the development of a more inclusive education system..."

Box 7. Educational inclusion for gifted students in Panama

In January 2011, the National Directorate for Special Education implemented "*El proceso evaluador de las Aptitudes Sobresalientes*" (The process for the assessment of Gifted Students). Its main objective is to **detect/identify such children and propose curriculum adaptations to the relevant authorities**. Training and mentoring sessions for teachers, professionals and administrative workers along with psychological assessments and reports were carried out through this initiative, in cooperation with the *Servicio de Apoyo Educativo* (Educational Support Service [S.A.E., by its Spanish acronym]). A pilot plan was also created, aimed at five private schools and five official schools to support them in the care of gifted students and students with specific talents.

From February 2016, the *Programa de Aptitudes Sobresalientes y Talentos Específicos* [Programme for Gifted Students and Students with Specific Talents] was created to institutionalize the assessment process. This made it possible to expand coverage and establish specific procedures, methodological principles and a schedule of actions and people responsible for such actions. It is worth noting that the programme is part of the *Plan Nacional de Educación Inclusiva* (National Inclusive Education Plan).

The objectives of the Programme for Gifted Students and Students with Specific Talents include the comprehensive care of all boys and girls diagnosed through a prior assessment, regardless of the social, economic or cultural situation or their school of origin. This assessment entails the participation of the family group and, based on the respective psychological report, recommendations are submitted to the appropriate bodies to incorporate the necessary curriculum adaptations.

For further information:
http://www.educapanama.edu.pa/?q=educasitio/educacion-especial/programa-de-aptitudes-sobresalientes-y-talentos-especiales

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Dimension 2 - Policy Statements

Key Features

2.1 The important national education policy documents strongly emphasize inclusion and equity

2.2 Senior staff at the national, district and school levels provide leadership on inclusion and equity in education

2.3 Leaders at all levels articulate consistent policy goals to develop inclusive and equitable educational practices

2.4 Leaders at all levels challenge non-inclusive, discriminatory and inequitable educational practices

2.1 The important national educational policy documents strongly emphasize inclusion and equity

Legislation is a vital part of developing a more inclusive and equitable education system. In particular, legislation provides the articulation of principles and rights that is needed for creating a framework for inclusion, and for reforming those elements in the existing system that may constitute major barriers to equity. (Such barriers include policies which forbid students from specific groups – such as learners with disabilities, or from different language groups – from attending their neighbourhood school.) Furthermore, legislation articulates the mandate of fundamental inclusive practice (for instance, that schools should educate all learners in their communities). It also articulates the procedures and practices throughout the education system that will facilitate equity (for example, by creating a flexible curriculum, or by introducing community governance).

Even where radical legislative reform is neither desirable nor possible, **statements of principles at the government level can generate debate around inclusion and equity in education and begin the process of consensus building.** In some countries, special education systems are covered by separate legislation and administrated by separate sections or departments at national and local levels. Special education may also have separate systems for training and funding, and its own curricula and assessment procedures. In these situations, it may be necessary to integrate the legislative frameworks that govern the welfare, social and health sectors with general and special education. This is not just about locating the special education system under the umbrella of general education legislation, but about merging the two systems.

Additionally, it is important to ensure effective communication among various stakeholders in countries where various laws and sectors regulate certain population groups. When communication is effective, it is possible to build a legislative framework that will unite available resources around the single purpose of creating a more inclusive and equitable system of education.

However, international declarations on educational inclusion and equity have to be interpreted in light of local circumstances. Many countries have found it useful to formulate an explicit statement of the principles that guide their own transition towards greater inclusion and equity. States that do this fulfil their obligations by making positive efforts to enable individuals and communities to enjoy their right to education (UNESCO, 2014).

Box 8. A national policy for multiculturalism in Paraguay

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Paraguay is a multi-ethnic, multicultural society. The 1967 constitution recognized Paraguay as a bilingual country, and bilingual teaching and learning have been national policy since 1994. Language plays a very important role, both for understanding the national culture and for transmitting cultural values that are universally accepted. Bilingual education responds to an approach that respects the mother language throughout the whole process of formal education and introduces a second language in such a way that students have sufficient communicative competence in both languages. In curriculum planning, the 'mother tongue' has been defined as the language that students across the education system use preferentially. The 'second language' is the language in which the child has less communicative proficiency (Benítez Ojeda y Martínez Stark, 2014, p.122). **One innovative literacy model that has been successfully implemented uses both official languages at the same time. In this perspective, education in two languages and in two cultures is the foundation that ensures functional and meaningful learning.** This avoids a long, complicated process of trying to prioritize one language over the other.

2.2 Senior staff at the national, district and school levels provides leadership on inclusion and equity in education

Policy is made at all levels of an education system, not least at the level of the classroom. As such, **the transition to inclusion and equity is not simply a technical or an organizational change. Rather, it is a move in a clearly philosophical direction** (Fulcher, 1989).

Moving to more inclusive and equitable ways of working requires changes in the culture throughout an education system (Dyson et all, 2004). These changes range from shifts in policy-makers' values and ways of thinking, which then enable them to provide a new vision for shaping a culture of inclusion and equity, to significant changes within schools.

A culture of inclusion and equity in education requires a shared set of assumptions and beliefs among senior staff at the national, district and school levels. Central to these assumptions and beliefs is valuing differences, believing in collaboration, and being committed to offering educational opportunities to all students (Dyson et all, 2004).

Altering the cultural norms that exist in an education system is difficult; it is particularly difficult in a context that faces so many competing pressures and where practitioners tend to work alone when addressing problems. Leaders at all levels, including those in civil society and in other sectors, **have to be prepared to analyze their own situations, identify local barriers and facilitators, plan an appropriate development process, and provide leadership** for inclusive practices and effective strategies for monitoring equity in education.

"...A culture of inclusion and equity in education requires a shared set of assumptions and beliefs among senior staff at the national, district and school levels..."

Box 9. Strengthening indigenous leadership in Bolivia

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The Training Programme in Intercultural Bilingual Education for the Andean Countries (PROEIB Andes), created at the beginning of 1996, seeks to provide support to the consolidation and development of Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE) in Latin America by training teaching staff, thus contributing to improving the quality of life of indigenous peoples. In 2005, the Programa de Fortalecimiento de Liderazgos Indígenas para la Gestión Educativa en Contextos de Educación Intercultural Bilingüe (Indigenous Leadership Strengthening Programme for Educational Management in Intercultural Bilingual Education) was launched in Bolivia, at the request of and in close coordination with the Consejos Educativos de Pueblos Originarios de Bolivia (Education Councils for Indigenous Peoples of Bolivia [CEPO, by its Spanish acronym]). The programme includes 12 modules that are taken over 12 intensive classroom sessions, of one-week duration each, along with 10 fieldwork sessions and 4 internships also lasting one week. It must be completed in 10 months, after which students receive a diploma in Educational Management in Intercultural Bilingual Education, granted by the University of San Simón (UMSS, by its Spanish acronym).

For further information:
http://www.proeibandes.org/
http://fundacion.proeibandes.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=19&Itemid=158
http://www.cepos.bo/cnc-cepos/

2.3 Leaders at all levels articulate consistent policy goals to develop inclusive and equitable educational practices

Developing inclusive and equitable educational practices is not only about promoting new techniques. More importantly, it is about **providing the space to review and unpack the social processes of learning that occur in specific school contexts, and the actions and the thinking that inform these processes** (Ainscow et al., 2006).

Leaders at all levels of the education system have an important role in promoting inclusive ways of managing schools and the education process. Much of what teachers do during the intensive encounters that occur in a typical lesson happens at an automatic, intuitive level, involving tacit knowledge. Furthermore, teachers often have little time to stop, think, and engage in a dialogue with other teachers about their teaching practice.

Education systems can create opportunities for teachers and educators to build a common language about detailed aspects of their practice, and about how to make these aspects of practice more inclusive and equitable (Huberman, 1993). Without such a language, teachers may find it difficult to experiment with new possibilities. It is through their shared experiences that colleagues can help each other to articulate what they currently do and to define what they might like to do. Their common language and shared experiences are also the means for challenging assumptions and biases about particular groups of learners.

Techniques that are particularly powerful for sharing experiences use mutual observation, sometimes through video recordings, and evidence collected from students about teaching and learning arrangements within a school. Such approaches can help stimulate self-questioning, creativity, and actions to address barriers to participation and learning (Ainscow et al., 2003; Hiebert et al., 2002).

"...teachers often have little time to stop, think, and engage in a dialogue with other teachers about their teaching practice."

2.4 Leaders at all levels challenge non-inclusive, discriminatory and inequitable educational practices

Leaders at all levels need to establish the conditions within their organizations for challenging non-inclusive, discriminatory and inequitable educational practices. From the complementary perspective, leaders need to establish the conditions that build consensus and commitment towards putting the universal values of inclusion and equity into practice.

Particular forms of leadership are known to be effective in promoting school equality, equity and social justice. These approaches focus attention on teaching and learning; they create strong communities of students, teachers and parents; they nurture the understanding of a culture of education among families; and, they foster multi-agency support (Kugel-mass and Ainscow, 2005). Unlike mechanistic views of educational improvement, these approaches acknowledge that decisions about how to improve schools always involve moral and political reasoning, as well as technical considerations. Therefore, having discussions about inclusion and equity can help in articulating the values that underlie *which, how and why* changes should be made in schools.

Education systems can promote this kind of supportive school leadership by:

◈ Selecting and training school leaders based on their commitment to inclusive and equitable values, and their capacity to promote the style of management described above;

◈ Providing teachers with opportunities to pool their professional experience and expertise so as to re-examine their practice, with the goal of making that practice more responsive and flexible to learners (see 2.3 above); and,

◈ Developing 'inclusive cultures' and consensus around inclusive and equitable values within school communities (Deppeler y Ainscow, 2016).

> "...having discussions about inclusion and equity can help in articulating the values that underlie which, how and why changes should be made in schools."

Box 10. Educational roundtables in Nicaragua engage civil society in policy advocacy

The *Foro de Educación y Desarrollo Humano de la Iniciativa por Nicaragua* (the Forum for Education and Human Development of the Initiative for Nicaragua) promotes the participation of civil society participation in "formulating, implementing and evaluating national education policies and programmes" (Campaña Latinoamericana por el Derecho a la Educación, 2012, p.14).

This has led to creating local education 'roundtables', which are cooperative, decision-making spaces for education discussions at the municipal level. All interested stakeholders are welcome to participate, including educators, NGOs, institutions and representatives from the Ministry of Education and local governments. Each roundtable determines its own organization and leadership, taking the context of each community into account. The project coordinator explains: "**Education roundtables provide an opportunity to discuss education policy advocacy. At the time, we felt it was important to influence national decisions, but it was also important to advocate in the communities in which we believe more tangible changes to education can be made**. It was also important to work with the roundtables as a strategy to decentralize the issue of education and for local authorities to make a greater commitment to education in their municipalities" (Campaña Latinoamericana por el Derecho a la Educación, 2012, p.15).

For further information:
http://v2.campanaderechoeducacion.org/es/publicaciones/clade/publicaciones-tematicas.html?download=183%3Ala-incidencia-politica-de-la-sociedad-civil-por-el-derecho-humano-a-la-educacion-relatos-y-aprendizajes-desde-america-latina-y-el-caribe&start=20

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Dimension 3 - Structures and systems

Key Features

3.1 There is high-quality support for vulnerable learners

3.2 All services and institutions involved with learners and their families work together in coordinating inclusive and equitable educational policies and practices

3.3 Resources, both human and financial, are distributed in ways that benefit potentially vulnerable learners

3.4 There is a clear role for special provision, such as special schools and units, in promoting inclusion and equity in education

3.1 There is high-quality support for vulnerable learners

In order to foster inclusion and equity in education, governments need to mobilize human and financial resources, some of which may not be under their direct control. **Forming partnerships among key stakeholders who can support and own the process of change is essential**. These stakeholders include: parents/caregivers; teachers and other education professionals; teacher trainers and researchers; national, local and school-level administrators and managers; policy-makers and service providers in other sectors (e.g. health, child protection and social services); civic groups in the community; and members of minority groups that are at risk of exclusion.

Families' involvement is particularly crucial. In some countries, parents and education authorities already cooperate closely in developing community-based programmes for certain groups of learners, such as those who are excluded because of their gender, social status or impairments (Mittler,

2000). A logical next step is for these parents to become involved in supporting change for developing inclusion in schools.

Where parents lack the confidence and skills to participate in such projects, it might be necessary to work with them to help them develop their capacity and build networks. This could include creating parent support groups, training parents to work with their children, or building parents' advocacy skills for negotiating with schools and authorities (Miles, 2002).

"...Forming partnerships among key stakeholders who can support and own the process of change is essential..."

Box 11. Improving the quality of early childhood education for Colombian afro-descendants

The afro-descendant population in the region consists of over 150 million people and represents approximately 30% of the total population, being one of the most discriminated against groups (CLADE, 2015). In Colombia, according to the most recent census in 2005, the afro-descendant population consists of approximately 4.3 million people, in other words, 10.4% of the total population (OEI, 2015.) **The project** *"Formación de agentes educativos en primera infancia desde pautas de crianza y saberes ancestrales afrodescendientes"* **(Training of early childhood education agents based on education guidelines and African ancestral wisdom), launched in 2010, seeks to improve the quality of early childhood education for boys and girls from the Colombian afro-descendant communities living on the Pacific coast and the Caribbean**. The main objective of the project is to "strengthen a pedagogy that incorporates the ancestral values and customs and the worldviews and beliefs of the afro-descendant cultures within early childhood education, thus enabling them to assert their identity and strengthen and preserve their values and relationships between the different cultural groups" (Torres Fuentes, 2014, p. 98). Based on pedagogical and teaching tools with an intercultural afro-descendant approach, education agents were trained on a blended learning basis, with the support of the *Instituto para el Desarrollo y la Innovación Educativa* (Institute for Educational Development and Innovation [IDIE, by its Spanish acronym]) of the OEI. During the course of the project, it has succeeded in forging a position for early childhood education within the communities in which it has been implemented, along with highlighting the importance of strengthening ancestral values and customs to achieve greater cultural recognition and reduce the racial discrimination suffered by afro-descendants.

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3.2 All services and institutions involved with learners and their families work together in coordinating inclusive and equitable educational policies and practices

In some countries, a move towards a decentralized management structure has accompanied the shift to more inclusive and equitable education. Decentralization seems to encourage flexibility and risk-taking, and it also counteracts the tendency of centralized bureaucracies to set up rigid decision-making procedures. Clearly, there are risks to avoid, not least regarding the control of financial resources. Decentralized control therefore entails a need for checks and balances to ensure fairness in allocating and using resources.

There is also evidence that **school-to-school collaboration can strengthen the capacity of individual organizations to respond to diversity among learners** (Muijs et al., 2011). Specifically, collaboration between schools can help reduce the polarization of schools, to the particular benefit of those students who are marginalized at the edges of the system. In addition, there is evidence that, when schools develop more collaborative ways of working, there is an impact on how teachers perceive themselves and their work. More specifically, discussing and comparing their practice can lead teachers to view underachieving students

in a new light. As a result, learners who are difficult to educate within the school's established routines are seen, not as 'having problems', but as challenging teachers to re-examine their own practice in order to make it more responsive and flexible.

"...challenging teachers to re-examine their own practice ..."

Box 12. Integrated systems of inclusive schools in El Salvador SI-EITP

In El Salvador, since 2009 the Ministry of Education has been promoting the *Modelo de Escuelas Inclusivas de Tiempo Pleno* **(Model of Full-Time Inclusive Schools [EITP, by its Spanish acronym]), focused on pedagogical and school management within the framework of the National Inclusive Education Policy**, which has been implemented by a group of educational centres on a national level. The objective is to promote "a safe school environment under a climate of equality and diversity with the following characteristics: the commitment to the quality of the learning processes and the use of the physical space, of the school organization and management as well as of students' family environment, community and cultural and social realities; the adoption, as a starting point, of the principle that formal education is a way to confront the challenge of the universalization of access for girls, boys and adolescents to a quality and relevant education at all levels, including early childhood education, elementary education and secondary and technical education; and the inclusion of flexible provisions for the educational continuity of the out-of-school population. Based on this model, inclusion principles facilitate access, permanence and effective completion opportunities of students in equal conditions, having as a premise the respect for disability, gender, faith, ethnicity or any other condition" (Ministry of Education, 2017).

Its operation is supported by the SI-EITP integrated systems, which form a coordinated school network to develop several different initiatives to ensure that curriculum and educational activities respond to the needs of students and that their opinion is considered in the decisions affecting their lives. These systems develop contextualized pedagogical proposals and include collective agreements for curriculum adaptations, extended school hours, the use of active methodologies, the use of the ICTs, art, culture and sports. Likewise, they include the continuous training of teachers, in line with the *Plan Nacional Formación Docente* (National Teacher Training Plan).

For further information:
http://www.mined.gob.sv/index.php/programas-educativos/eitp

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3.3 Resources, both human and financial, are distributed in ways that benefit potentially vulnerable learners

While all countries face difficulties in finding the funds to support inclusive and equitable developments, this is particularly challenging in the parts of the world that are economically poorer. Therefore, it is important to find ways of addressing the needs of the most marginalized and of student diversity that do not necessarily demand extra funding and additional resources. **The crucial factor is ensuring that available resources, particularly human resources, are used to best effect**. Countries should make sure that the criteria for allocating financial and human resources for education reflect the goals of inclusion and equity.

The long-term social and economic benefits of targeting public resources towards the marginalized far outweigh the costs. Some countries that have targeted spending towards disadvantaged groups have seen results in more equitable learning outcomes (UNESCO, 2015c).

It may be necessary to set up or strengthen monitoring systems to ensure that funding and other resources are used appropriately and effectively. Even though levels of funding differ from country to country, many of the challenges and the strategies are similar. Establishing sustainable partnerships between the government and other potential funders is also worthwhile.

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Box 13. Prevention, care and support of children with special needs in Spain

In recent decades, Spain has made great progress in terms of educational inclusion, particularly concerning the schooling of all individuals within a single education system. In total, 80.3% of students with special educational needs attend mainstream centres, although there is a certain degree of variability in the percentage of integration in the different autonomous communities (MECC, 2012). **The Community of Madrid has approved the Decree 46/2015, of 7 May, regulating the coordination of early intervention and establishing the procedure to determine the need for such care.**

The *Centro Regional de Coordinación y Valoración Infantil* (Regional Centre for Coordination and Child Assessment [CRECOVI, by its Spanish acronym]) has been created as the body in charge of handling administrative procedures to assess the need for early intervention in children aged between 0 and 6 with developmental disorders, disabilities, or the risk of suffering from them, or dependence, alongside their families. At the same time, it is the body in charge of organizing and coordinating comprehensive actions in relation to early intervention in the Community of Madrid, based on the work of the Technical Commission and the Plenary.

The number of annual assessments carried out by CRECOVI has increased gradually since its creation, to its current average of 4,000 assessments per year.

The early intervention system in the Community of Madrid is complemented by the public network of centres that offers outpatient treatment to children who have previously obtained an early intervention needs assessment by CRECOVI. The number of places available at these centres has experienced significant growth in the past three years, from 2660 places in 2015 to 3417 in 2018, maintaining growth expectations in the future.

Furthermore, CRECOVI is a space for the exchange of experiences between professionals and a centre that develops informative activities and workshops for families, in collaboration with associations and bodies specialized in the field of disability in the Community of Madrid.

For further information:
http://www.madrid.org/cs/Satellite?c=CM_InfPractica_FA&cid=1354421285831&language=es&pagename=ComunidadMadrid%2FEstructura&pv=1354421344590

3.4 There is a clear role for special provision, such as special schools and units, in promoting inclusion and equity in education

Where countries have separate special provisions, it is likely that these will continue contributing, at least for the time being. **Special schools and units can play a vital role by acting as resource centres for supporting regular schools as they seek to become more inclusive**. For this reason, encouraging cooperation between the two sectors is very important, not least so as to minimize social isolation. Such cooperation opens up new and promising opportunities for special school staff to continue their historical task of providing support for the most vulnerable learners in the education system (Ainscow, 2006).

Countries that do not have such schools or units can concentrate their resources on developing local schools in line with the principles of inclusion and equity. As the local schools become more inclusive, the need for separate special services will diminish.

Here, once again, **it is important that governments make a clear commitment to inclusion and equity, emphasizing the benefits for parents and children, and for the community at large**. Specifically, it is useful to distinguish between needs, rights and opportunities. While all learners have needs (e.g. for appropriate teaching), they also have the right to participate fully in a common social institution (that is, a local mainstream school) that offers them a range of opportunities. Too often, parents are forced to choose between ensuring that their child's needs are met (which sometimes implies placement in a special school or unit) and ensuring that they have the same rights and opportunities as other learners (which implies placement in a mainstream school). The goal should be to create an education system where these choices become unnecessary. This system should strive to support local schools and teachers by assisting them in developing their capacities, by providing equipment and materials, and by fostering collaboration across sectors.

Box 14. A virtual desktop for inclusive education in Argentina

In Argentina, the Ministry of Education has made great efforts to promote the educational inclusion of all boys and girls. In the last National Strategic Plan 2016-2021, "*Argentina Enseña y Aprende*" (Argentina Teaches and Learns), it is stated that joint efforts should be made to "progress towards the development of a comprehensive public education policy, focused on inclusion and quality, taking into account provincial and local characteristics and encompassing all levels and categories of the education system" (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2016, p. 3). One of the initiatives that is particularly noteworthy is the ***Plan Nacional Integral de Educación Digital* (Comprehensive National Digital Education Plan [PLANIED, by its Spanish acronym]), whose main mission is to integrate the educational community into the digital culture, favouring pedagogical innovation, educational quality and social and educational inclusion**. The PLANIED has expanded and strengthened the inclusion policy of the "*Conectar Igualdad*" (Connect Equality) programme, launched in 2010 by the Ministry of Education, with the aim of guaranteeing the digital and social and educational inclusion of all social groups and of students with special educational needs. This based on universal education and access to knowledge policies, prioritizing the most vulnerable sectors. **The programme offers assistive technologies to all special education centres in the country, including also those students enrolled in mainstream schools and teacher training colleges**. Furthermore, it provides training to students and teachers and creates specialized content to promote inclusive digital education.

For further information:
https://www.educ.ar/sitios/educar/seccion/?ir=educdigitalinclusiva

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Dimension 4 - Practices

Key Features

4.1 Schools and other learning centres have strategies for encouraging the presence, participation and achievement of all learners from their local community

4.2 Schools and other learning centres provide support for learners who are at risk of underachievement, marginalization and exclusion

4.3 Teachers and support staff are prepared to respond to learner diversity during their initial training

4.4 Teachers and support staff have opportunities to take part in continuing professional development regarding inclusive and equitable practices

4.1 Schools and other learning centres have strategies for encouraging the presence, participation and achievement of all learners from their local community

Too often, the kinds of individualized responses that have been the hallmark of special education divert attention from the forms of teaching and school conditions that can actually involve all of the learners in a class. This helps to explain why efforts at **inclusion that depend on practices imported from special education tend to foster new and more subtle forms of segregation, albeit in mainstream settings** (Florian et al., 2016).

For example, many countries have introduced support staff and teaching assistants into classrooms, working alongside class teachers, to give particular support to students categorized as having special needs. When such support is withdrawn, teachers may feel that they cannot handle their responsibilities (Takala et al., 2009). At the same time, the requirement for individualized education plans – mandated by legislation in some countries – has led some school leaders to feel that many more learners will require such responses, thus creating budget problems within some education systems.

The recognition that inclusive schools will not be achieved by transplanting special education thinking and practice into mainstream contexts opens up new possibilities. Many of these relate to the need to move from the individualized planning frame – referred to above – to a perspective that seeks to personalize learning through an engagement with the whole class (Hart et al., 2004)

Research indicates that encouraging student participation is the best use of available resources, particularly human resources, to support learning. In particular, **there is strong evidence of the potential of approaches that encourage cooperation between students for creating classroom conditions that can both maximize participation, while at the same time achieving high standards of learning for all members of a class** (Johnson and Johnson, 1989).

Furthermore, this evidence suggests that such practices can be effective in supporting the involvement of all learners who are facing vulnerable situations; examples include those who are new to a class, learners from different cultural and language backgrounds, and those with disabilities. However, it is important to stress the need for skill in orchestrating this type of classroom practice. When group approaches are poorly managed, there is usually a considerable waste of time and, possibly, increased disruption.

In this area, the economically poorer countries of the South have much to teach us. In these countries, limited resources have led to recognizing the potential of 'peer power' by developing 'child-to-child' programmes (Hawes, 1988). This suggests that the learners themselves are an under-used resource that can be mobilized to overcome barriers to participation in lessons and contribute to improved learning opportunities for all class members. The essential resource is already present in any classroom; what is key is the teachers' ability to mobilize this, often untapped, energy.

Box 15. Overcoming obstacles to inclusion in Cuba

In Cuba, the State undertakes actions to guarantee and promote full social equality. Its Constitution defines and establishes the rights and obligations of all citizens for their full participation in society and the right to equal opportunities (Constitution, 1992). The care of people with disabilities is one of the priorities of the social policy which guarantees and develops actions to improve quality of life and to ensure equal opportunities.

According to data from the Ministry of Education, there are a total of 1,577,348 children in school at all levels of education in 8,799 different schools, of which 6,665 have special educational needs and study in mainstream school. By comparison, 38,239 children with disabilities study in special school, of which 13,251 are girls. In total, there are 369 specialized centres (2013/2014 school year) (UNICEF, 2015).

Cuban children with disabilities can choose between studying at mainstream schools or at special schools, which are schools where they can learn a trade. Those children who cannot attend any type of institution are provided an at-home educational service through a support teacher specialized in special education. There are specialized diagnosis and guidance centres in all provinces to provide help and guidance to families. These centres have a multidisciplinary team that determines the educational needs of each of the children based on their disability.

The National Institute for Sports and Recreation (INDER, by its Spanish acronym), attached to the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with UNICEF and with the support of the Iberoestar Foundation, has launched **the Inclusive Football Tournament of Cuba, an initiative that uses sports as a way to foster social inclusion and the full development of children, in coexistence and exchange between children and teenagers in mainstream and special schools. Through sports, it is possible to acquire skills and values such as teamwork, solidarity, conflict resolution and strengthen gender equality** (UNICEF, 2015).

The initiative promotes inclusive badminton and football, the latter by creating teams and organizing football tournaments for students in secondary education, from the school level to the national level combining special education athletes in the same team for training and competition.

For further information:
https://www.unicef.es/memoria/proyectos/inclusion-deporte-cuba#quienes-somos

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4.2 Schools and other learning centres provide support for learners who are at risk of underachievement, marginalization and exclusion

In an effective education system, all students are assessed on an on-going basis in terms of their progress through the curriculum. This allows teachers to respond to a wide range of individual learners. This means that teachers and other professionals must be well informed about their students' characteristics and attainments, while also assessing broader qualities, such as their capacity for cohesion and cooperation.

However, the ability merely to identify each student's level of performance, or to enumerate certain students' particular difficulties is not enough. **Teachers in inclusive systems need to gauge the effectiveness of their teaching for the range of their students and should know what they need to do to enable each student to learn as well as possible.** Therefore, assessment should focus not only on the students' characteristics and attainments, but also on the curriculum and how each student can learn within and beyond it.

The most useful forms of assessment take place in the classroom and in the other contexts where learning occurs (William, 2011). Teachers need to have the skills to conduct assessments themselves; to prepare for this, they need on-going professional development. They also need to find the ways of working with special educators, psychologists, social workers and medical professionals, when they are available; teachers can use the assessments from these specialists for educational purposes. The most important partners of all are the colleagues, the parents and the students themselves, who are positioned to see things from unique points of view and can thus offer differing perspectives on what is needed to help all learners make progress.

"...Teachers in inclusive systems need to gauge the effectiveness of their teaching for the range of their students and should know what they need to do to enable each student to learn as well as possible..."

Box 16. Using artistic creativity for social inclusion in Brazil

In recent years, Brazil has made significant progress in terms of inclusive education. For example, the Brazilian Ministry of Education, through the *Secretaria de Educação Continuada, Alfabetização, Diversidade e Inclusão* (Secretariat for Continuing Education, Literacy, Diversity and Inclusion [SECADI, by its Portuguese acronym]), has launched several programmes and publications related to different aspects of school inclusion, such as teacher training. Along with the activities promoted by SECADI, **different projects have been implemented in Brazilian public schools to promote social inclusion**. One of them is "Pimpolhos nas Escolas", launched in 2006 by Pimpolhos da Grande Rio, which offers "recreational and pedagogical" workshops to children aged between 6 and 15 at the Lions municipal school, with the objective of raising awareness of the environment. The school is considered an "inclusive school", given that it meets the needs of children who are in a situation of socioeconomic vulnerability and with high repetition rates. The project uses the carnival and its values and connects them to the imagination and cultural experiences of children and youth. Through the project, students have the opportunity to learn more about the carnival culture and express their differences. Students also participate in the street parade with the samba school Pimpolhos da Grande Rio. During the month before the street parade, they also participate in the Educational Carnival, where they learn to handle recycled materials and transform them into costumes and accessories.

For further information:
http://pimpolhos.org.br/

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4.3 Teachers and support staff are prepared to respond to learner diversity during their initial training

In an inclusive and equitable education system, all teachers need to approach the diversity among learners with a positive attitude and an understanding of inclusive practices. **Teachers can acquire much of the preparation they need regarding such inclusive practices during their initial training and through short, customized, in-service training units.**

Research on teacher education for inclusive education[10] has identified four core values that undergird teachers' competence in developing and sustaining inclusive practice:

1. Valuing learner diversity: Students' differences are viewed as a resource and an asset to education;

2. Supporting all learners: Teachers have high expectations for all learners' achievements;

3. Working with others: Collaboration and teamwork are essential approaches for all teachers; and

4. Continuing personal professional development: Teaching is a learning activity and teachers must accept responsibility for their own lifelong learning.

Embedding these values in teacher education programmes can help empower teachers and support them in developing a wider range of responses to learners who experience difficulties in their learning.

Being explicit about these values helps to establish the potential of teacher education to be a high-leverage activity in bringing about change.

A few teachers will develop a high level of special education expertise. However, it would be advisable for such teachers to develop skills and experience as mainstream educators first, and specialize later. Moreover, it is also important that their specialization not be defined too narrowly, given the range of learning difficulties that they will encounter. Rather, the specialization should be built on a broad base of expertise about learning and teaching.

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[10]European Agency for Development in Inclusive and Special Education (n.d.) Teacher Education for Inclusion (TE4I): Key policy messages, https://www.european-agency.org/sites/default/files/teacher-education-for-inclusion-key-policy-messages_te4i-policy-paper-EN.pdf

Box 17. Supporting teacher training in inclusive education in Honduras

Different initiatives and projects to support inclusive education are carried out by the Sub-Directorate General for the Education of People with Special Needs or Exceptional Talents, attached to the Secretary of State for Education in Honduras. The following are particularly noteworthy, among others: a) the creation of the *Centro Nacional de Recursos para la Inclusión Educativa* (National Resource Center for Educational Inclusion) and *Servicios Educativos de Atención a la Diversidad* (Educational Services to Attend Diversity [SEAD, by its Spanish acronym]), which seeks to "**promote the learning and participation of all pupils, focusing on those with specific educational needs, whether or not they arise from a disability**" (SEAD, 2017); b) the project "*Fortalecimiento Institucional para la Atención de la Diversidad del alumnado en Honduras*" (Institutional Reinforcement to Attend the Diversity of students in Honduras), which has been implemented in three regions of the country and; c) the creation of **psycopedagogical teams for individual attention and teacher training.**

Likewise, 2014 was declared the "Year of Inclusive Education" (OEI, 2014a), leading to the creation of psycopedagogical teams for individual attention and teacher training.

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4.4 Teachers and support staff have opportunities to take part in continuing professional development regarding inclusive and equitable practices

In all countries, teachers are the most costly and, potentially, the most powerful resource in the education system. Therefore, **developing the teaching force is crucial, especially in countries where material resources are relatively scarce**.

As systems become more inclusive, professional development is particularly important because of the major new challenges that face regular school teachers, who have to respond to a greater diversity of student needs. Special educators, who find the context and focus of their work changing in major ways, need on-going professional development too. International research (Messiou and Ainscow, 2015) suggests that teacher development should:

◈ **Take place primarily in classrooms**, where practice develops;

◈ **Connect to and build on the expertise available within the school**, making connections with existing knowledge;

◈ **Create cooperative spaces** where teachers can plan together, share ideas and resources, and have opportunities to observe one another working; and

◈ **Engage teachers in developing a common language of practice** that assists individuals in reflecting on their own ways of working, on the thinking behind their actions, and on how to improve.

Sharing practices among colleagues is an effective means of encouraging teacher development. It is important to encourage teachers to collaborate with and support colleagues, to reflect on their practice and to build 'team' knowledge and skills. But in some cases, sharing practices can also lead to closing minds regarding new ways of responding to challenging circumstances. Research suggests that this problem can be addressed by engaging with different stakeholders' views. This would mean bringing together practitioners' ideas, the insights of students and their families, and the knowledge of academic researchers so as to challenge assumptions, stimulate new thinking within a school, and encourage experimentation with creative schemes for engaging learners.

Box 18. Strengthening the educational community in the Dominican Republic

Since the proclamation of the *Ley General de Educación* (General Education Act) 66/97 (1997) in the Dominican Republic, inclusive education has been assumed as a right that must be guaranteed to the whole population (General Education Act, 1997). Therefore, efforts have been made in the country to comply with the Act through several different initiatives of the Ministry of Education, such as the creation of the *Centro de Recursos para la Atención a la Diversidad* (Resource Centre to Attend Diversity), the introduction of inclusive strategies and measures for people with disabilities within the National Literacy Plan "*Quisqueya Aprende Contigo*" (Quisqueya Learns With You), the School Health Programme and the School Nutrition Programme, among others (Minerd, 2016). From 2012 to 2016, the programme *"Comunidad Educativa que Aprende"* **(Learning Educational Community) was launched in collaboration with UNICEF, to improve the educational inclusion and quality in the country**, by focusing simultaneously on the following areas: "a) **in-service teacher training** for teaching language, mathematics and for the inclusion of children with disabilities; b) **home visits to families** to provide advice on childcare practices, nutrition, health and the prevention of abuse and violence; c) **development in schools of skills** oriented towards a culture of peace and education without violence; d) **training to management and technical teams** of the regions and districts pertaining to the Ministry of Education; and e) **training of parent associations on participation in school management**" (UNICEF, undated). The objectives include the training of 800 teachers in educational inclusion; 200 schools elaborating school coexistence rules; 3 regions and 17 school districts in charge of designing an effective operational planning and 500 boys and girls with some type of disability to receive psycopedagogical support to attend mainstream schools (UNICEF, undated).

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Box 19. Students helping teachers to innovate in Portugal

*'Diversity in our school is now seen as an opportunity,
when approached through collaborative work'.*

*'The exchange of ideas and research work in teams
makes diversity evolve from a problem into a challenge'.*

These are typical comments from teachers at Escola Secundária Pedro Alexandrino (ESPA), a secondary school situated in the Portuguese capital city, Lisbon. **For these teachers, diversity is a central issue in their day-to-day work.** Over recent years, the school has made many efforts to reflect this diversity. This has involved trios of teachers supporting one another in analysing how to make their lessons more inclusive. For example, one trio focused on this question: Do all students participate in all the tasks of our lessons? The findings from these activities have led teachers to explore how students could be partners in education, and participate in planning and, sometimes, teaching lessons. **Teachers found that collaborating with their colleagues and with students has led them to think in new ways about how best to respond to learner diversity. It also gave them greater confidence to experiment with different teaching practices** (Messiou et al., 2016).

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Conclusions

Ibero-America has demonstrated a clear political and technical commitment and determination to progress towards more equitable and inclusive education systems. In the past decade, clear achievements and advances have been made in relation to the creation of inclusive public policies. To a large extent, this conclusion has been reached after taking two factors into account: on the one hand, the commitment of national leaders in relation to the achievements and objectives that must be reached and that emerged in national, regional and global agendas, focusing on the development of inclusive educational policies; and, on the other hand, increased awareness and clarification of the challenges associated with combining solid, comprehensive and sustainable policies with practices that have a real impact on the expansion, democratization and improvement of learning opportunities, processes and outcomes for the entire population, particularly, for vulnerable groups.

One of the main challenges seemingly faced by the region lies in strengthening and improving far-reaching public policies that invest in reducing social divides and the vast inequalities among the population groups within countries. Likewise, and in a complementary manner, it is a question of going beyond the vision of inclusion as an accumulation of solutions for different vulnerabilities and conditions/situations categorized as special and, in turn, replacing it with the recognition that, each student is unique and they should all be appreciated, empowered, motivated and supported. This recognition is based on the understanding and development of individual and collective diversities, along with the mitigation of the multiple sources of inequalities that hinder the achievement, progression and completeness of education.

All countries of the Ibero-American region are progressing towards a shared conceptualisation of inclusive education and, at the same time, they continue to develop legal protection frameworks to guarantee the rights of all citizens. This demonstrates that, in the region, efforts to develop inclusive public policies are a fact that must be recognized. Nevertheless, more intense and sustained programmatic efforts are required to position inclusive education as the main cross-cutting focus within the existing visions of education and education systems. It cannot be limited to a new or rebranded institutional unit or a series of initiatives, programmes or projects that do not encompass an appropriate and shared vision on the implications of the right to an inclusive and quality education. Specifically, the actions undertaken must be attached to a concept of inclusive education that has an impact and really resonates in educational policies, curricula, pedagogies, schools, learning environments, students and teachers, grounded on an approach that entails systematic, robust and sustainable change.

In short, "Inclusion in Ibero-America: A guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education in Ibero-America" represents a window of opportunity and provides different complementary ways to strengthen inclusion as a culture, mentality, policy and practice in pursuit of the implementation of the ethical principle that "every learner matters and matters equally" (UNESCO, 2017, p. 12). Thus, this Guide serves as a user-friendly and proactive tool so that our 22 countries can continue to progress strategically within an inclusion agenda that is unavoidable if we effectively aspire to broaden and democratize learning opportunities to truly guarantee them, regardless of the type of challenge faced.

Annex 1. Towards inclusive education

Year	Event	Achievements
1990	World Conference on Education in Jomtien (Thailand)	Committed to achieving Education for All (EFA), the countries recognized that students from vulnerable groups are excluded from educational opportunities.
1994	World Conference on Special Needs Education in Salamanca	Approval of the Salamanca Declaration, the benchmark legal instrument in the field of special education, which declares that schools must accommodate all children, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional or linguistic condition, or any other.
1996	"Learning: the treasure within" report, created by the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century for UNESCO and directed by Jacques Delors	The report examines a model that should offer equal opportunities for all.
2000	Dakar World Education Forum (Senegal)	Six objectives and eight commitments were established for 2015, with the objective of considering the needs of all individuals, particularly the most vulnerable, as part of Education for All (EFA). This is particularly true of objectives 1 and 2.
2000	Publication of the eight Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations	Of the eight objectives, the following are particularly noteworthy: objective 2, which refers to all children being able to complete a full course of primary schooling by 2015 and objective 3, regarding the elimination of gender disparity at all school levels.
2000	Publication of *Index for Inclusion* by Tony Booth and Mel Ainscow	This self-assessment guide for educational centres seeks to examine the inclusive approach of curriculum projects and educational practices of schools, to enable the identification of "barriers to learning and participation".
2006	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	To guarantee inclusive education as a right for those with disabilities.
2008	48th International Conference on Education: "Inclusive Education: the way of the future"	A series of recommendations were drawn up based on a broader concept of inclusive education, considered as a key principle to strengthen education as a whole.
2015	Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

World Education Forum

Education 2030 Agenda | In the new global agendas, inclusion and equity are the basis for achieving a transformative education for all boys and girls, focusing on students of the most marginalized groups. |
| 2017 | UNESCO published the document "A guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education" | The paradigm shift within inclusive education proposed by UNESCO is discussed at length in the Guide, and it also presents a new analysis framework to assess inclusion and equity policies in different countries and educational fields. |

Annex 2. Guidance for Completing the Review

The review framework that follows has been developed to assist countries in examining how inclusion and equity currently figure in their existing policies, and in determining the actions required to improve these policies and their implementation.

Proposed methodology

While each country will establish its own review process in a way that is consistent with its working traditions, its available resources and its timeline, UNESCO suggests the following process:

- **Establish a steering committee:** Under the leadership of the Ministry of Education, a steering committee should be established with a clear political mandate to ensure impact and change. Its role will be to coordinate the consultative process, and the collection of information for the assessment. The committee should be balanced in gender and in representation from different stakeholder groups, including teachers, professional associations, parents, students, researchers, civil society and community organizations.

- **Hold consultations:** Broad-based consultation is necessary in order to arrive at credible assessment. A collective process to stimulate reflection and debate about the levels of progress is encouraged (e.g. using workshops, focus group discussions) as opposed to individual outreach (e.g. interviews or surveys). Different participatory approaches should be considered in order to ensure that stakeholders from marginalized groups, such as ethnic and linguistic minorities, indigenous people, girls and persons with disabilities, will feel empowered to take part in the discussions.

- **Prepare a report:** Following consultations, the steering committee should guide the development of a synthesis report of the key findings, and develop recommendations for actions that are needed to move policy forward. The synthesis report can be accompanied by an action plan that identifies key steps, persons responsible and a timeline for implementing the recommendations (see Annex 3).

- **Monitor implementation of the action plan:** Remembering that education policy is 'made at all levels', it will be important to monitor the way that changes are introduced across the system. This monitoring could be one of the steering committee's continuing roles. As the committee conducts this monitoring, it will be important to keep stakeholders informed of the progress in implementing the plan, using examples of effective practice that inspire widespread involvement in the change process.

How should the review framework be completed?

For each of the four dimensions (concepts, policy, structures, and systems and practices), and the 16 accompanying features in the policy review framework:

1. Review the questions in the first column entitled 'Areas to be examined' and identify the types of evidence to collect.

2. Discuss these and other relevant questions that arise while reviewing the evidence.

3. Record any information, insights and recommended actions in the second column entitled 'Comments'.

4. Circle the response in the third column, 'Level of progress', that best fits the current assessment of the actions taken to embed the principles of inclusion and equity in educational policy. This will help in identifying the areas of strength to build on, and the aspects of policy that need attention. This method is consistent with the idea that developing inclusion and equity in education is an on-going process, rather than a single event.

Finally, identify recommended actions for each of the four dimensions.

Annex 3. The Review Framework

Dimension 1 - Concepts

1.1 Inclusion and equity are overarching principles that guide all educational policies, plans and practices

Areas to be examined	Comments	Level of Progress (*Circle one*)		
How far are the principles of inclusion and equity understood and defined within education policies? To what extent are inclusion and equity embedded as core principles in all education policies and plans? To what extent are all national educational policies and plans informed by the principles of inclusion and equity? To what extent are education practices guided by the principles of inclusion and equity?		Inclusion and equity are not yet strong features of educational policies, plans and practices but initial discussions have begun regarding how this can be addressed.	Planning has taken place to strengthen the role of inclusion and equity in relation to educational policies, plans and practices.	Actions have been taken to ensure that inclusion and equity are features of educational policies, plans and practices.

1.2 The national curriculum and its associated assessment systems are designed to respond effectively to all learners

Areas to be examined	Comments	Level of Progress (*Circle one*)		
To what extent is the national curriculum based on the principles of inclusion and equity? To what extent does the national curriculum have the robustness and flexibility to suit all learners? To what degree are the assessment systems used to celebrate different levels of achievement and to support the development of all learners?		The national curriculum and assessment systems are only suitable for some learners but initial discussions have begun regarding how this can be improved.	Planning activities are taking place to review the national curriculum and assessment procedures in relation to inclusion and equity.	Actions have been taken to ensure that the national curriculum and assessment systems respond effectively to all learners.

1.3 All partners who work with learners and their families understand and support the national policy goals for promoting inclusion and equity in education

Areas to be examined	Comments	Level of Progress (*Circle one*)		
To what extent is there a widespread commitment/agreement among all professionals who work with children, youth and adults to act according to the principles of inclusion and equity? To what extent do those who work with children, youth, and adults and their families understand the implications of the principles of inclusion and equity for their roles?		Although agencies have varied understanding of national policy aspirations and plans for promoting inclusion and equity in education, initial discussions have begun to address this issue.	Planning activities are taking place to ensure that agencies understand national policy aspirations and plans for promoting inclusion and equity in education.	Actions have been taken to ensure that agencies understand and support national policy aspirations for promoting inclusion and equity in education.

1.4 Systems are in place to monitor the presence, participation and achievement of all learners within the education system

Areas to be examined	Comments	Level of Progress (*Circle one*)		
How effective are the systems for collecting data (quantitative and qualitative) regarding the presence, participation and achievement of all learners? To what extent are data analysed in order to determine the impact of efforts to foster greater inclusion and equity? To what extent are actions taken in light of the data analysis to strengthen inclusive and equitable settings and practices?		There are limited arrangements for monitoring the presence, participation and achievement of all learners but initial discussions have begun to address this issue.	Planning has begun in establishing systems for monitoring the presence, participation and achievement of all learners.	Actions have been taken to establish effective systems for monitoring the presence, participation and achievement of all learners.

Recommended actions:

Dimension 2 - Policy Statements

Areas to be examined	Comments	Level of Progress (*Circle one*)	
2.1 The important national education policy documents strongly emphasize inclusion and equity			
To what extent do all major educational policy documents reflect the principles of inclusion and equity? To what degree are policy priorities informed by the principles of inclusion and equity?	Although there is little mention of inclusion and equity in important national education policy documents, initial discussions have taken place to address this issue.	Planning activities have taken place to make inclusion and equity a feature of important national education policy documents.	Actions have been taken to ensure that inclusion and equity are a feature of important national education policy documents.
2.2 Senior staff at the national, district and school levels provide leadership on inclusion and equity in education			
To what extent do education leaders at the local level encourage the development of inclusive and equitable cultures? To what extent do national policy-makers show clear and sustainable leadership to promote the principles of inclusion and equity? To what extent do local district administrators provide clear and sustainable leadership regarding inclusive education? To what extent are educational leaders (local authorities, senior staff, school principals) trained regarding their responsibilities for enhancing inclusion and removing barriers?	While senior staff at the national and district levels provide limited leadership on inclusion and equity in education, initial discussions have taken place to strengthen this aspect.	Planning has begun to encourage senior staff, at the national and district levels, to provide leadership on inclusion and equity in education.	Actions have been taken to ensure that senior staff at the national and district levels are providing leadership on inclusion and equity in education.
2.3 Leaders at all levels articulate consistent policy goals to develop inclusive and equitable educational practices			
To what extent do national policy-makers encourage the development of inclusive and equitable practices? To what extent do local district administrators take action to encourage the development of inclusive and equitable practices? To what extent do school principals and those who manage other centres of learning (e.g. pre-school provision; special schools) take action to encourage the development of inclusive and equitable practices?	Although there is little evidence that leaders at different levels of the education system articulate consistent policy aspirations for the development of inclusive and equitable educational practices, discussions have taken place to improve this situation.	Planning has taken place to encourage leaders at different levels of the education system to articulate consistent policy aspirations for the development of inclusive and equitable educational practices.	Action has taken place to ensure that leaders at different levels of the education system articulate consistent policy aspirations for the development of inclusive and equitable educational practices.
2.4 Leaders at all levels challenge non-inclusive, discriminatory and inequitable educational practices			
To what extent do systems for supporting schools and other centres of learning identify, challenge and remove non-inclusive, discriminatory and inequitable practices? Where non-inclusive, discriminatory and inequitable practices are found to exist, to what extent are they challenged?	Although leaders at different levels rarely challenge non-inclusive, discriminatory and inequitable educational practices, discussions have taken place to address this issue.	Planning has taken place to encourage leaders at all levels to challenge non-inclusive, discriminatory and inequitable educational practices.	Action has been taken to ensure that leaders at all levels challenge non-inclusive, discriminatory and inequitable educational practices.
Recommended actions:			

Dimension 3 – Structures and systems

Areas to be examined	Comments	Level of Progress (*Circle one*)		
3.1 There is high-quality support for vulnerable learners				
How effective are the systems for identifying vulnerable learners? To what extent are there flexible arrangements for ensuring that support is available to individuals as and when necessary? To what degree are families seen as partners in supporting their children's education? To what extent are learners themselves asked about their need for support?		While support for vulnerable learners is of variable quality, discussions have taken place to consider how this can be improved.	Planning has taken place to improve the quality of support for vulnerable learners.	Actions have taken place to ensure high-quality support for all vulnerable learners.
3.2 All services and institutions involved with learners and their families work together in coordinating inclusive and equitable educational policies and practices				
To what extent do schools (and other education providers) collaborate with other relevant sectors, such as health and social work? To what extent is there effective cooperation between schools and other centres of learning? To what degree do institutions and services within districts have a shared understanding of inclusion and equity, and work together? To what extent do both public and private education providers apply inclusive and equitable education practices?		Although the work of services and institutions tends not to be well coordinated, discussions have taken place to consider how this can be improved.	Planning has taken place to encourage services and institutions to collaborate.	Actions have been taken to ensure that services and institutions involved with learners and their families work together.
3.3 Resources, both human and financial, are distributed in ways that benefit potentially vulnerable learners				
To what extent are all learners seen as being of equal importance educationally? To what extent are available resources used flexibly, and targeted to support participation and learning?		While there are concerns that resources are not distributed fairly, discussions have taken place to address this issue.	Planning has taken place to improve the way resources are distributed, focusing in particular on the need to support vulnerable learners.	Actions have been taken to ensure that resources are distributed fairly, focusing in particular on vulnerable groups of learners.
3.4 There is a clear role for special provision, such as special schools and units, in promoting inclusion and equity in education				
To what extent do special schools and units have a common understanding of inclusion and equity? To what extent do students from special schools and units have opportunities to take part in activities within mainstream schools? To what degree is the expertise made available in special settings also made available to teachers in other schools?		While special provision is mainly separate from the mainstream education system, discussions have taken place to consider how closer links can be encouraged.	Planning has taken place to encourage ways of creating stronger links between special provision and mainstream education institutions.	Actions have been taken to ensure that special provision has a role in promoting inclusion and equity in education.

Recommended actions:

Dimension 4 - Practices

Areas to be examined	Comments	Level of Progress (*Circle one*)	
4.1 Schools and other learning centres have strategies for encouraging the presence, participation and achievement of all learners from their local community			
To what degree do teachers use a range of pedagogical strategies to cater to learner differences? To what extent are there effective procedures for taking account of students' views regarding their learning and aspirations? To what degree do school leaders support the presence, participation, and achievements of all learners?	While there is variation in the quality of the strategies used for encouraging presence, participation and achievement of all learners, discussions have taken place to improve this situation.	Planning has taken place to strengthen the quality of the strategies used to encourage the presence, participation and achievement of all learners.	Actions have taken place to ensure that there are effective strategies for encouraging the presence, participation and achievement of all learners.
4.2 Schools and other learning centres provide support for learners who are at risk of underachievement, marginalization or exclusion			
To what extent are teachers skilled in assessing the progress of individual students and in supporting their development? To what extent do teaching and non-teaching staff take account of the cultures, identities, interests and aspirations of all their students in order to enhance their learning? To what extent do teaching and non-teaching staff in schools, and other centres of learning, work closely with families in ensuring support for students?	Although support for vulnerable learners is varied in quality, discussions have taken place to bring about improvements.	Planning has been going on to strengthen the support provided for learners at risk of underachievement, marginalization and exclusion.	Action has been taken to ensure effective support for learners at risk of underachievement, marginalization and exclusion.
4.3 Teachers and support staff are prepared to respond to learner diversity during their initial training			
To what extent does the teacher education curriculum for all teachers emphasize the principle of inclusion? To what extent are teacher trainees guided to develop positive attitudes towards student diversity? To what extent are teacher trainees helped to develop teaching pedagogies that respond positively to student diversity?	The training of teachers and support staff for responding to learner diversity is varied in quality but discussions have taken place to bring about improvements.	Planning has taken place to strengthen the ways that teachers and support staff are trained to respond to learner diversity.	Actions have been taken to ensure that teachers and support staff have effective training in respect to the way they respond to learner diversity.
4.4 Teachers and support staff have opportunities to take part in continuing professional development regarding inclusive and equitable practices			
To what extent do schools and other centres of learning have effective staff development programmes related to inclusive practices? To what extent do teachers have opportunities to see one another working in order to share ideas and practices? To what extent are there opportunities for teachers to attend in-service courses and benefit from customized school support regarding the development of inclusive practices?	While there are only limited opportunities for professional development regarding inclusive and equitable practices, discussions have taken place to address this concern.	Planning has taken place to create more professional development opportunities that focus on inclusive and equitable practices.	Action has been taken to ensure that there are sufficient professional development opportunities that focus on inclusive and equitable practices.
Recommended actions:			

Annex 4. Action plan guidelines

The action plan will help you to strengthen inclusion and equity in education policy. In developing an action plan, keep these important points in mind:

◈ Identify discrete actions that are realistic, attainable and measurable.

◈ Develop a specific timeline and schedule for completing these actions.

◈ Identify resources necessary for completing the activities, including plans for acquiring those resources.

◈ Identify those persons who will be responsible for working with the different stakeholders that will move the suggested actions forward.

Sample action plan format:

Detailed actions/activities to embed inclusion and equity in policy	Person responsible	Resources required	Timeline

Annex 5. Factors and population at risk of social exclusion in Ibero-America

The following populations are at the greatest risk of exclusion:

1. Afro-descendants

According to the latest national censuses and the estimations made by CELADE-CEPAL, in 2010 there were over 111 million afro-descendants in the region, representing 21.1% of the total population, which was estimated around 527.5 million people (CEPAL/ECLAC, 2017, p. 52).

Brazil is the country with the greatest number of afro-descendants, both in absolute and relative terms, where they represent half of the total population. In terms of relative importance this is followed by Cuba, with 35.5% of afro-descendants, for a total of just over 4 million people, and on a smaller scale Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Panama, countries where afro-descendants represent between 7% and 11%. If we look beyond relative importance, in Colombia there are an estimated 5 million afro-descendants, in Mexico around 1.5 million, in Ecuador and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) around one million and over half a million in Peru (CEPAL/ECLAC, 2016b). The most significant differences between the afro-descendant population and the non-afro-descendant population are mainly reflected in child mortality rates, teenage pregnancies and access to and participation in the education system.

Within the field of education, divides can also be observed in the majority of countries in the region. The percentage of young people aged between 18 and 24 within the education system is lower in young afro-descendants in almost all cases, ranging between 16.9% in Uruguay and 41.4% in Argentina. These divides are even larger in the case of higher education. Likewise, the exclusion suffered by young female afro-descendants is two-fold (OAS/IACHR, 2011).

It is fundamental to generate initiatives that complement the commitments established in the Cartagena Declaration, which has defined a joint agenda for indigenous groups and afro-decedents in Latin America and the Caribbean 2009-2019 (Agenda for Afro-descendants in the Americas), promoting effective strategies to facilitate the social inclusion of such populations. This is key to reverse the conditions of the social disadvantage suffered due to their high levels of poverty, marginality and exclusion. In this sense, the report "Miradas 2015" (OEI, 2015) highlights that significant progress has been made in terms of the access to school of afro-descendant children, especially in the case of primary education, which is successfully completed by a high percentage of children, despite the fact that this rate drops significantly in the subsequent levels (OEI, 2015).

2. Indigenous peoples

Around 40 million people in Latin America belong to one of the almost 530 indigenous communities of the region (BIR/World Bank, 2015). It is estimated that the indigenous population represents 10% of the total number of inhabitants of Latin America (UNICEF et al., 2009) and they are sub-divided into around 400 different linguistic groups (Bello and Rangel, 2002).

The situation and perspectives of the right to education of indigenous peoples, especially children, are characterized by difficulties to access and remain within the education system (CLADE, 2009a). It has been stated that the right to education of 6.3% of indigenous children and young people aged between 7 and 18 is seriously infringed. A point of concern is that 7.1% of indigenous girls suffer severe levels of deprivation in

terms of education, compared to 5.6% of boys (CEPAL and UNICEF, 2012). The report "Miradas 2015" warns of the critical situation faced by the indigenous population and speakers of indigenous languages, who experience high drop-out rates.

3. Gender

Exclusion affects men and women differently. Likewise, there are widespread gender inequalities between women and men, in all contemporary societies, in social, economic, political and cultural matters. According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2002), currently there is no society in which women have the same opportunities as men (Valenzuela, 2003).

Socially constructed gender inequalities are manifested in the assignment of identities and activities and the separation of fields of action, characterized by the different ial attribution of symbolic value, in which masculinity dominates femininity (Gómez, 2008). This superior evaluation of masculinity results in an unequal access to power and to resources, thus establishing hierarchies in social relations between men and women (Valenzuela, 2003).

Current public policies, seemingly neutral in terms of gender, overlook time distribution as a fundamental resource for the social and economic welfare of individuals and of society in general. The lack of recognition of the contribution of men and women to the welfare of families and to developmental sustainability through unpaid work deepens the gaps and reproduces inequalities (Barquet, 1997).

Comprehensive solutions towards poverty, inequality and social exclusion require the adoption of a gender perspective and, in particular, the empowerment of women.

In Ibero-America, gender discrimination in the field of education can be observed in different forms: a) in the existing inequalities in terms of access to education; b) through school practices and curricula that reinforce gender stereotypes, perpetuate sexism, naturalize inequalities, promote attitudes of patriarchy and sexual division at work; c) through the existence of obstacles preventing full compliance with women's right to education, such as situations of violence or sexual harassment, or due to student pregnancies; and d) through discriminatory patterns in teacher training (CLADE, 2015).

For women in Ibero-America to overcome inequalities and exclusion it is not enough to increase their level of schooling and improve their integration in the workplace (Barquet, 1997).

The human right to education involves the existence of legal frameworks and policies promoting gender equality, while ensuring that a gender-based approach is included in all processes, plans and programmes across all the different educational stages and modalities. It is not only a case of ensuring gender equality in the access to and permanence in the education system, but also in educational processes, participation and outcomes, which requires the transformation of curricula and educational contents, so that they contribute to the reinforcement of equality (CLADE, 2015).

4. Sexual orientation

Nowadays in the Ibero-American society, there is still discrimination and exclusion against those with a non-predominant sexual orientation and identity or gender expression. This exclusion is based on cultural constructs that are focused on heterosexism and heteronormativity, in other words, "the demonstration of the patriarchal power over the corporeality and reproduction of a specific sociocultural model of the human body, thus giving rise to the fight to recognize that sexuality does not confine anybody to a single pattern of being: heterosexuality" (CLADE, 2014b).

Within the educational field, discrimination is focused on the exclusion of certain students or on the bullying of such students, which sometimes results in them dropping out of school. This situation is not

only detrimental to the right to education, but also to other right such as the right to personal identity and to equality.

The Ibero-American reality demonstrates that, in Spain, 80% of students receive insults as a result of their sexual orientation. In Bolivia, teachers were involved in 70% of the cases of discrimination (RIE-LGBTI, 2016). In Argentina, 45% of transgender students dropped out of secondary education and only 2.3% completed university studies (CLADE, 2014b). These data demonstrate the isolation and stigma that still exist in society.

Education is fundamental in the process of building an individual identity. The role of education systems and of school authorities is crucial in order to eliminate this type of exclusion. Efforts must be made for educational policies to introduce elements that help eradicate negative stereotypes related to sexual orientation and gender identity.

5. People with disabilities

Throughout the world there are between 500 and 600 million people with some type of disability, of which between 120 and 150 million are children. In Ibero-America there are around 66 million people with disabilities, representing approximately 12% of the total population of the region (CLADE, 2014a).

Currently, people with disabilities represent one of the most excluded groups and their discrimination goes unnoticed. People with a specific or multiple disabilities are restricted to their homes and their social life is extremely limited, due to the stereotypical vision surrounding them.

In total, 82% of people with disabilities in the region live in conditions of poverty. In some countries, the population with disabilities is formed mainly by men (such as the case of El Salvador, Honduras, Bolivia and Guatemala), while in others there is a greater number of women (Argentina, Nicaragua, Uruguay and Chile) (Samaniego de García, 2006).

More information is needed in relation to the ethnic and racial groups to which the population with disabilities belongs, given that public policies for these populations must take into account the different discriminations to which they are often subjected. In Brazil and Costa Rica, for example, a higher rate of disability can be observed among afro-descendant and indigenous populations. In Chile, indigenous peoples also represent a higher percentage compared to the white population (CLADE, 2014a).

Although there is very little information regarding the exclusion of people with disabilities in national education systems, between 20% and 30% of children with disabilities in the region go to school and, when they go, they often suffer the most severe levels of discrimination and exclusion within the school environment. The global literacy rate of adults with disabilities barely reaches 3% and it is only 1% in the case of women with disabilities (UNESCO, 2008a). Data also demonstrate that illiteracy rates are significantly higher among the population with disabilities.

Inclusive education promotes a change in the understanding of educational challenges, leaving behind the paradigm focused on the shortcomings of students and their learning difficulties and difficulties to adapt to the school environment, to move towards a paradigm focused on the potential of students and the challenges faced by the school to adapt to them and to teach them in the best possible way.

Inclusive education not only guarantees access thereto (in other words, availability and physical and economic access, without discrimination), but also permanence. This type of education must be acceptable (appropriate, relevant, non-discriminatory) and adaptable (able to respond to the needs and specific characteristics of students, flexible, able to make reasonable adjustments and, ultimately, focused on students (CLADE, 2009b). In effect, it is necessary for education to value differences and combat discriminatory practices, embracing plurality and guaranteeing equal opportunities.

6. Migrants

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2010), 57% of immigrants living in Latin America and the Caribbean are from another country of the region; of those who were born in a Latin American or Caribbean country, 4.08 million live in another country of the region; and the main countries of origin of intra-regional migration are Colombia (21%), Nicaragua (10%), Paraguay (9%), Haiti (8%), Chile, Argentina and Bolivia (7%, each). In turn, the main destination countries of intra-regional migrants are Argentina (23%), Venezuela (18%), Costa Rica (11%) and the Dominican Republic (9%). These four countries receive the 60% of people from other Latin American and Caribbean countries.

Faced with this situation, the right to education of the migrant population is often restricted by bureaucratic obstacles to school admission, the demand for documentation that they do not possess, the lack of mechanisms to facilitate adaptation to the new educational reality and marginalization in day-to-day school life. States must abide by the series of obligations and standards issued in international instruments in relation to the right to education for migrants. Therefore, legal and regulatory frameworks in relation to the right to education must guarantee the elimination of discrimination and ensure inclusion at all levels of the education system.

7. People in situations of deprivation of liberty

Four of the twenty countries with the largest prison population in the world are found in Ibero-America. According to the International Centre for Prison Studies of the University of Essex (ICPS), Brazil is ranked third worldwide, with 657,680 people in prison, followed by Mexico with 233,469 prisoners, Colombia with 115,628 and Peru with 83,639 (Wamsley, 2016).

The profile of those in situations of deprivation of liberty in Ibero-America reflects social inequality and exclusion. For example, in Brazil, according to data from the Ministry of Justice (2006), 4.4% are women and 95.6% are men; 95% are poor or very poor; 65% are black or mixed race; 75% did not complete basic education; 12% are illiterate and almost 60% are aged between 18 and 30 (UNESCO, 2008b).

The education of young people and adults in prison is an extremely important issue in terms of the reduction of social exclusion and inequalities. A mere prison sentence has been demonstrated to be insufficient for social and labour reintegration. Prisoners need adequate social and educational programmes to ensure rehabilitation.

Education in prisons is a right and as such it must be guaranteed to all those who express their desire to access schooling. Barely 26% of prisoners participate in occupational activities and 17.3% study (specifically, they participate in literacy activities and primary, secondary and supplementary education) (UNESCO, 2008b). These data largely justify the reassessment of the current "prison culture". The debate on "social reintegration" programmes in the prison systems should focus on education and employment, which are the two key issues. The support for actions focused on the organization and implementation of an educational policy in prisons for young people and adults enables the recognition of the right to education of the prison population and also offers new and better opportunities for the individual development of the person and for their reintegration in society.

8. Early childhood

Age is one of the key elements of exclusion and social inequality. Historically, four different life stages have been defined: childhood, adolescence, adulthood and old age (Cecchini et al., 2015).

Stratification in the different life stages is associated to the manner in which institutions and resource distribution systems, such as the State, the market and the family, generate social differentiation processes between different population groups, according to the corresponding life stage (CEPAL/ECLAC, 2016a).

Each life stage is associated to specific opportunities, challenges and risks. In terms of human development, childhood, especially early childhood, represents a particularly important stage, given that the foundations for future cognitive, emotional and social development of individuals are laid during this period (CEPAL/ECLAC, 2016a). It is a stage that combines risk factors in areas that are critical for development such as health and nutrition, early stimulation and education, along with the possibility of growing and developing within safe family and community environments. The violation of rights during this stage can have profound and long-lasting effects (CEPAL and UNICEF, 2012).

In Latin America, inequality is a characteristic feature from the very first stages of life of individuals. Childhood poverty is especially critical due to the greater level of dependency, the lack of autonomy and the high level of vulnerability of children faced with the economic and social conditions of their environment and families. Compared to people in other life stages, children are more prone to experience situations of deprivation. Furthermore, there are also significant inequalities among the actual child population, taking into account other key elements of social inequality, such as the socioeconomic level, gender, the ethnic or racial condition and the geographical location.

Access to preschool education is also another critical aspect for the development of children. There is also a large degree of heterogeneity within this aspect, and the divide between the different countries in the region is particularly noteworthy. Within the countries, presence at this school level is, generally, higher in urban areas compared to rural areas. Another important challenge is the quality of this education level, which significantly limits the expected positive effects.

INTERNATIONAL STANDARD CLASSIFICATION OF EDUCATION (UNESCO, 1977)

The objective of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) is to serve as a reference framework to normalize and standardize levels of education on an international level.

Level 0: PRESCHOOL EDUCATION: this level of education serves primarily to introduce very young children (aged between 3 and 5, approximately) to a school environment, which they will attend in the years ahead. In other words, it establishes a connection between the child's home and the school environment. It also includes education for children with special educational needs, provided in hospitals and inspecial school and centres.

Source: drawn up by the authors

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as indicated in goal 4.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals, and the commitment undertaken in 2010 in Ibero-America with regards to the Educational Goals for 2021 highlight the need to progress towards the universalization of preschool education to mitigate the inequalities in the development of competencies and skills, which has subsequent repercussions in the opportunities and welfare of individuals.

Annex 6. Concept according to country of the term inclusive education

Country	Definition of inclusion	Reference framework
Andorra	There is no specific definition for the term, but it is understood that "an inclusive school must include the joint participation and decision making of all members of the educational community in order to educate all students within the context of mainstream schooling and overcome the barriers that may be faced over the course of the school career. Measures within the mainstream school context include "providing appropriate educational services and programmes that are stimulating and adapted to the skills and needs of all students".	*Decret de regulació de l'escolarització de l'alumnat amb discapacitat en centres públics d'educació ordinària (2008)*
Argentina	"Inclusion entails transforming education systems and other learning environments to respond to the different needs of students. This implies that there are different times, different strategies and different resources for the education of all students. Within this context, the needs of students are considered as the needs of the institution and the differences represent the learning styles, rhythms or motivations".	*CFE Resolution no. 155/11. Consejo Federal de Educación (Federal Council of Education [CFE, by its Spanish acronym]) of the Argentine Republic (2011)*
Bolivia	The term inclusive education "assumes diversity as potential and wealth and entails changes in the institutional and educational management in order to ensure the relevance and opportunity of educational processes, not only for students with disabilities, but rather for all students. Thus, it entails a comprehensive change of educational institutions and their context from an ethical and political position of structural transformation".	*Ministerial Resolution no. 069/2013. Ministry of Education (2013)*
Brazil	Inclusive education "is a movement that includes education as a basic human right and as the basis for a fairer society. It is a movement that is concerned about addressing the needs of all individuals, whatever their characteristics, disadvantages or difficulties and enabling all schools to provide due care in their community, focusing on those who have suffered greater exclusion from educational opportunities. It also entails positioning schools in a wider context of education systems, bringing together resources from the community to guarantee that the special educational needs of students are met".	*Programa Educação Inclusiva: Direito à Diversidade (2003)*

Country	Definition of inclusion	Reference framework
Chile	With regards to the term inclusion, it is stated that "the system will strive to eliminate all forms of arbitrary discrimination that hinder students' learning and participation. Likewise, the system will strive to ensure that educational institutions are a meeting point for students with different socioeconomic, cultural and ethnic situations and different genders, nationalities or religions".	*Law no. 20 845/2015 on school inclusion, regulating the admission of students, eliminating shared financing and prohibiting profits at educational establishments that receive State funding (2016)*
Colombia	"Inclusion entails meeting the common and specific needs of students with quality and equity. To achieve this, it is necessary to implement organizational strategies that offer effective solutions to address diversity, ethical conceptualization that make it possible to consider inclusion as a matter of rights and values and flexible and innovative teaching strategies that enable a customized personalized education, reflected in the recognition of learning styles and skills among students and, as a result, offering different alternatives to access knowledge and assess competencies, along with considering it natural that students reach different levels of development".	*Política Nacional de Educación Inclusiva con Calidad (National Policy on Quality Inclusive Education) (2006)*
Costa Rica	Inclusive education is a "continuous process that, as a universal human right, is offered to the entire student population through quality and equitable educational processes, based on a relevant and flexible curriculum that pursues the comprehensive development of the individual, involves everybody equally, recognizes and values human diversity and seeks to eliminate all barriers that limit or hinder learning and full participation in equal opportunities".	*Centro Nacional de Recursos para la Educación Inclusiva (National Resource Center for Inclusive Education [CENAREC, by its Spanish acronym]) (2017)*

Country	Definition of inclusion	Reference framework
Cuba	No specific definition exists.	
Ecuador	Inclusive education is "the process of identifying and responding to the diversity of special needs of all students, through a higher degree of participation in learning, cultures and communities, in order to reduce exclusion in education".	*Agreement no. 0295-13, stipulating the regulations in relation to the education of students with special educational needs at mainstream schools or at specialized schools. Ministry of Education of the Republic of Ecuador (2013)*
El Salvador	Inclusive education is understood as "the series of educational solutions aimed at the gradual and effective elimination of barriers to access and participation that facilitate compliance with the effective right to a relevant, comprehensive and quality education in conditions of equity. Within the framework of consistent efforts to transform and strengthen the education system, empower the school and facilitate the participation of the community in the entire pedagogical process".	*Política de Educación Inclusiva (Inclusive Education Policy) (2010)*
Spain	"The objective of inclusive education is to provide educational care to favour the maximum possible development of all students and the cohesion of all members of the community. The educational community is formed by all people related to the centre: students, teachers, families, other professionals who work at the centre, educational administration, local administration, institutions and social organizations. All components of the educational community work together to offer quality education and to guarantee equal opportunities to all students to participate in a permanent learning process. […]"	*Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports (2017)*

Country	Definition of inclusion	Reference framework
Guatemala	Inclusion is responsible for "ensuring that the population has access to educational services without distinction and that such services respond to cultural, ethnic, gender and geographical diversity and special abilities".	*Plan Estratégico de Educación 2016-2020 (Strategic Education Plan 2016-2020) (2016)*
Honduras	Inclusion "is a matter of ensuring equal opportunities in the access to education without discrimination and of meeting special educational needs and cultural, linguistic, social and individual diversity as key elements of development".	*Decree no. 262-2011. Ley Fundamental de Educación (Fundamental Education Act) (2011)*
Mexico	Educational inclusion is defined as "the process that is based on the principle that assumes diversity as the inherent characteristic of social groups, which should be employed for the benefit of each of their members. Thus, the system and educational programmes must be designed and implemented in line with this diversity, in order to identify and respond to the needs, characteristics and skills of all students".	*Operational rules of the Programa para la Inclusión y la Equidad Educativa (Programme for Inclusion and Educational Equity) (2016)*
Nicaragua	Inclusive education "is an approach based on the valuation of diversity as an enriching element in the teaching and learning process for human development, facilitating the access, permanence and participation of all. It means that students from a particular community learn together, regardless of their personal, social or cultural conditions, including those who have a disability".	*Regulation for the care of students with educational needs within the Nicaraguan diversity framework (2012)*
Panama	Inclusive education "reaffirms the right to education, the potential of the human being, the pursuit of an equitable normalization as one of the ways to improve the quality of education for all and value diversity as an enriching element in the teaching and learning process […]. It focuses on all students, particularly those who have traditionally been excluded from educational opportunities, such as students with special needs and disabilities, children belonging to ethnic and linguistic minorities, and others".	*Plan Nacional de Educación Inclusiva (National Inclusive Education Plan) (2006)*

Country	Definition of inclusion	Reference framework
Paraguay	Inclusion is defined as "identification and minimization of the barriers to learning and participation, and maximization of the resources supporting both processes" and inclusive education as "a systematic process of educational improvement and innovation to promote the presence, performance and participation of all students in school life at the centres where they receive schooling, with particular focus on students who are more vulnerable to exclusion, academic failure or marginalization, to that end, detecting and eliminating the barriers that limit the process".	*Act No. 5136/2013 on Inclusive Education (2013)*
Peru	An inclusive school is defined as "one that generates opportunities of participation and learning for all students. Inclusive schools are committed to environments in which girls and boys learn together, regardless of their personal, social or cultural conditions. They accept, respect and value each girl and boy with all of their differences. They focus on the skills of students to foster them to the maximum. They have high expectations of development for all students. They understand that organizational and curricular structures can be adapted according to the educational needs of their students, because the most important thing is the right of all to learn. They adapt their policies, cultures and practices in an inclusive and consensual fashion".	*Ministry of Education of Peru (2017)*
Portugal	Inclusion "pursues educational equity, understood as the guarantee of equality, both in terms of access and in terms of results. Within the framework of educational equity, the system and educational practices must ensure the management of diversity, based on different types of strategies that make it possible to respond to the educational needs of students".	*Decreto-Lei n.º 3/2008 Define os apoios especializados a prestar na educação pré-escolar e nos ensinos básico e secundário dos sectores público, particular e cooperativo (2008)*

Country	Definition of inclusion	Reference framework
Dominican Republic	Inclusion "entails obtaining the full participation and learning of all boys and girls, regardless of their social, cultural and individual situation, based on an education that responds to the diverse educational needs of all students". Furthermore, "it is a new vision of general education with the objective of ensuring quality education for all, with particular focus on those at risk of being excluded or marginalized".	*Department Order no. 24-2003, establishing the national guidelines for inclusive education. Secretary of State for Education of the Dominican Republic (2003)*
Uruguay	In relation to inclusion it is stated that "the State will ensure the rights of minority groups or those in a particular situation of vulnerability, in order to ensure equal opportunities in the full exercise of the right to education and their effective social inclusion".	*Ley General de Educación de Uruguay (General Education Act of Uruguay) (2008)*
Venezuela	No specific definition exists.	

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INCLUSION IN IBERO-AMERICA

A guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education in Ibero-America

The "Guide for ensuring inclusion and equity in education", published by UNESCO in 2017, makes it possible to further reflect on the paradigm shift that is taking place throughout the world in relation to inclusive and quality education, within the framework of the new global development agenda. Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) focuses on inclusion and equity as key principles for education systems. This guide, which has been written based on the idea that "all children matter and matter equally", highlights the important role of inclusive and equitable education in the transformation of education systems in Ibero-America.

The contextualization of the guide for Ibero-America provides a more detailed analysis into the effective inclusive and equitable educational policies and practices of the region, which complements the conceptual discussion and enriches the reflections on the steps that still need to be taken. Thanks to its structure, this Guide serves as a "tool" to help users identify best practices in public policies and further reflect upon what could be done to achieve more inclusive and equitable education systems in the countries of the region.