EPPI CENTRE

IOE LONDON

Leading education and social research

Institute of Education
University of London

# Low-Cost Private Schools in Afghanistan and Pakistan: What evidence to support sustainable scale-up?

Protocol written by Sultan Barakat, Frank Hardman, Brigitte Rohwerder and Kathryn Rzeszut, part of the Post-war Reconstruction and Development Unit and Institute for Effective Education at the University of York

EPPI-Centre
Social Science Research Unit
Institute of Education
University of London

August 2012

PROTOCOL

The authors are part of the Post-war Reconstruction and Development Unit and Institute for Effective Education at the University of York and were supported by the Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre (EPPI-Centre).

This protocol should be cited as: Barakat, S., Hardman, F., Rohwerder, B., and Rzeszut, K., (2012) *Low-Cost Private Schools in Afghanistan and Pakistan: What evidence to support sustainable scale-up*? Protocol. London: EPPI-Centre, Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London

© Copyright
Authors of the systematic reviews on the EPPI-Centre website (http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/) hold the copyright for the text of their reviews. The EPPI-Centre owns the copyright for all material on the website it has developed, including the contents of the databases, manuals, and keywording and data extraction systems. The centre and authors give permission for users of the site to display and print the contents of the site for their own non-commercial use, providing that the materials are not modified, copyright and other proprietary notices contained in the materials are retained, and the source of the material is cited clearly following the citation details provided. Otherwise users are not permitted to duplicate, reproduce, re-publish, distribute, or store material from this website without express written permission.

## Contents

1. Background ..... 1
1.1 Aims and rationale for review ..... 1
1.2 Definitional and conceptual issues ..... 3
1.3 Policy and practice background ..... 4
1.4 Research background ..... 5
1.5 Purpose and rationale for review ..... 6
1.6 Authors, funders, and other users of the review ..... 7
1.7 Review questions and approach ..... 8
2. Methods used in the review ..... 10
2.1 Type of review ..... 10
2.2 User involvement ..... 10
2.3 Identifying and describing studies ..... 11
2.4 In-depth review ..... 21
2.5 Deriving conclusions and implications ..... 23
References ..... 25
Appendix 1: Authorship of this report ..... 28
Appendix 2: List of Potential Studies to Include ..... 33
Appendix 3: Study characterisation tool ..... 35
Appendix 4: Study quality appraisal tool ..... 40

## List of abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| ADEA | Association for the Development of Education in Africa |
| AusAID | Australian Agency for International Development |
| BLDS | British Library for Development Studies |
| CIDA | Canadian International Development Agency |
| CIS | Critical Interpretive Synthesis |
| CREATE | Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions, and Equity |
| CT | Cannot Tell |
| DANIDA | Danish International Development Agency |
| DFID | Department for International Development |
| EEPCT | Education in Emergencies and Post-Conflict Transition |
| EFA | Education for All |
| ERIC | Educational Research Information Clearinghouse |
| IEE | Institute for Effective Education |
| INEE | Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies |
| MDG | Millennium Development Goal |
| MDTFs | Multi-Donor Trust Funds |
| MRRD | Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development |
| NS | No Stated |
| NSP | National Solidarity Programme |
| OIC | Organization of the Islamic Conference |
| PAIS | Public Affairs Information Service |
| PRDU | Post-war Reconstruction and Development Unit |
| PRES | Program Review and Evaluability Study |
| R4D | Research for Development |
| RCTs | Randomized Control Trial |
| RIPORT | Regional Institute of Policy Research and Training |
| STC | Save the Children |
| UNESCO | United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |

# 1. Background

This protocol provides the structure that will guide DFID's Systematic Review No. 29, which addresses the question:

> *'What is the evidence regarding the sustainable scale-up of low-cost private primary schools in South and West Asia, in particular in Afghanistan and Pakistan?'*[1]

It outlines the conceptual framework and methodology that will be employed throughout the review. The first section provides an explanation of the objectives for the review and defines key concepts and terms. Next, it discusses the background of low-cost private primary schooling in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Section 1 concludes by laying out the objectives of the review.

## 1.1 Aims and rationale for review

As the world's largest bilateral supporter of education, DFID views education as a fundamental tool in the fight against poverty (DFID, 2011a). Currently, DFID estimates that there are 67 million children of primary school age who remain out of school and many more fail to complete primary school, limiting their ability to find employment and negatively impacting the national economy (DFID, 2011b). It is mainly children who come from poor rural areas, are disabled, or have mothers who did not go to school that are excluded from education, perpetuating the cycle of poverty and exclusion (DFID, 2011b). DFID's current development goals are to provide support to nine million children in primary school, concentrating on unstable and conflict-affected states where over half of out-of—school primary aged children live (DFID, 2011b). In fragile contexts, education plays an important part in the long term process of reconstruction and stabilization. To that end, DFID aims to spend around half their direct education aid in fragile and conflict-affected states, working with national governments to rebuild the capacity of the ministries of education gradually, enabling them to pay teacher salaries, re-open schools and guarantee safe learning environments, particularly for girls (DFID, 2012).

---

[1] The research question originally posed for the systematic review was '*How can low-cost private schools be sustainably scaled-up in South and West Asia, in particular in Afghanistan and Pakistan?*' Because of the difficulties in answering a 'how' question with such a broadly defined scope with a systematic review, the Review Team proposes to restructure the question in a way that is more adaptable to a rigorous systematic review methodology and can be more easily quantifiable. In answering the revised research question, the Review Team will identify best practices that will, in turn, respond to the original question of how low-cost schools can be scaled up in a sustainable way.

During the protocol review, an external reviewer questioned the appropriateness of examining the ways in which low-cost private schools can be scaled-up without first examining whether they ***should*** be scaled up, particularly in the context of Western Asia. Although it was suggested that this review examine this issue as a sub-question of the overall review, the review team determined that it was beyond the scope of the review and would be difficult to fully address given the timeframe allowed for the study. It is, therefore, the recommendation of the review team that a separate study be conducted on the suitability of low-cost private schools as a tool to enhance and strengthen the education systems in Western Asia, focusing specifically on Pakistan and Afghanistan, which the review team understands to be taking place in a separate systematic review commissioned by DFID.

In addition to increasing school enrollment, ensuring that children receive a quality education is a top priority for DFID. As a result they want to give poor families more choice over their children's schooling, so that it is closer to home, better quality, and more affordable (DFID, 2011b). In Pakistan for instance, DFID seeks to work towards increasing the range of options for parents, expanding access to low cost, local schools for the poorest children. They will encourage better partnerships between government and the not-for-profit and private sectors to increase access to education for the poorest and raise overall standards (DFID, 2011b). Afghanistan and Pakistan remain key recipients of the UK's bilateral aid. Recently, DFID increased its support to Pakistan, with overall UK assistance projected to double, averaging £350 million per year until the Millennium Development Goal deadline in 2015 (DFID, 2011c). Much of that aid will target education in Pakistan, which is the top priority for DFID there. And for good reason: 17 million children are out-of-school and there is a 50% adult literacy rate, which declines to 33% for adult women (DFID, 2011c). To work to strengthen Pakistan's education system, DFID's strategy for 2011-2015 in Pakistan aims for the following results:

1. Educate 4 million more children;
2. Recruit and train 90,000 new teachers;
3. Provide more than 6 million textbook sets; and
4. Construct or rebuild 43,000 classrooms.

(DFID, 2011c).

Furthermore, DFID's operational strategy in Pakistan focuses not only on the quantity of classrooms available to students, but the quality of the education the classrooms provide. Likewise in Afghanistan, DFID is projected to provide an average of 30 million per year to the education sector indirectly through the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund from 2011 to 2015 (DFID, 2011d). Through this support, DFID aims to have 211,900 more children (95,355 of whom are girls) enrolled in primary school by 2015 (DFID, 2011d).

Because of the importance of the education sector in DFID's overall aid strategy, as well as the Department's focus on the education sector in South and West Asia, particularly Pakistan, information on what works in education sector interventions is vital to the policy decision-making process. The commissioning of this systematic review is part of DFID's championing of research which provides evidence of best practices in development policy. It aims to assist DFID in reaching its goals of supporting governments in developing countries in their efforts to improve education quality and outputs (DFID, 2012). This review also seeks to provide information on interventions that provide the most impact and value for money (DFID, 2011a).

DFID is committed to pursuing flexible and responsive approaches to education in fragile and conflict affected states, such as Afghanistan and Pakistan, including through partnerships with non-state providers to help overcome the challenges of working in these environments. One of the possible means of ensuring the delivery of quality education for all is low cost private schools. There continues to be debate around the benefits of low cost private schooling and while it is expected that elements of this discussion will be examined in the studies included in this systematic review, they will not be its primary focus. Rather, this systematic review aims to provide evidence of what works in the sustainable scale-up of low cost private primary schools in these regional and country contexts, focusing on the

mechanisms and processes of sustainable scale-up. It is not the goal of this study to take a stance on the appropriateness of low cost private schools as a mechanism to meet education development goals; rather, this systematic review will analyze the mechanics of sustainable low-cost private school scale-up and offer recommendations aligned with the experiences found in the literature.

The geographic scope of this review will include studies from the wider region of South and West Asia, due to the fact that methodologically rigorous studies on the general status of education in Pakistan and Afghanistan are limited and there are even fewer studies low-cost private schools in these two countries. Additionally, the review will focus on primary schools only, to be responsive to DFID's education strategy in Pakistan and Afghanistan, which concentrates most of the support on children of primary school age (DFID, 2011c; DFID, 2011d). Because the review will compile the most methodologically rigorous studies on the subject and develop theories based on the concrete data they contain, the results of the review can be relied upon to inform policy makers and practitioners on best practices for low-cost private schools in South and West Asia.

### 1.2 Definitional and conceptual issues

Several key terms and concepts must be defined in order to ensure internal consistency during the course of this review.

1. *Low-cost*: Low-cost in this context is relative to the income of the intended beneficiaries of the intervention, not the cost of operating the school. Schooling costs should not exceed 4% of the household budget to be considered low-cost. For the purposes of this review, the terms low-cost and low-fee are synonymous.

2. *Private school*: Strictly speaking, a private school is one that is not operated by the state; however, this review recognizes that there are many types of private schools. Some are solely dependent on the financial support of a development partner or charitable organization; others are run by for-profit companies. Some private schools are associated with religious organizations and offer a religious-based curriculum, while others are secular. This review will focus on private schools that are not solely dependent on government financial assistance in the long-term, or, if they are currently dependent on such assistance, have a clearly defined plan to become self-sustaining within a specified amount of time. In this way, the review will be able to address the issue of sustainable scale-up. The review is also limited to schools whose curriculum is not solely religious.

3. *Sustainable*: In this review, sustainable is defined as a school that is able to stay open for at least the length of a school cycle, with decreasing external financial support from outside agencies such as the government, international aid organisations and NGOs.

4. *Scale-up*: In this review, scale-up is refers to expanding education provision to more children, especially those currently out of education and offering a choice of quality education. An example of scale-up would be a programme that increases the number of schools throughout a country or part of the country.

## 1.3 Policy and practice background

Some countries can struggle with education service delivery when it comes to meeting the development goals of universal primary education and gender equality and often the poor and marginalized may miss out. In recent years there has been a realization that non-state providers of education schools can play a large role in the delivery of education services. Alongside the problems of delivery, there may be problems in the quality of the education and parents have sometimes turned to private-education as an alternative. Amongst those turning to private schools are families from poor backgrounds who are served by the emergence and proliferation of low-cost private schools. However, initially the existence of these schools was dismissed or denied and not factored into policy as a way of aiding in the delivery of development goals as private schooling was considered to only serve the elite (Tooley 2009).

However, recent research in countries such as India, Pakistan, and Nigeria indicates that private schools have emerged which cater for the poor. These schools do not solely comprise of charity or NGO funded schools, but also include for-profit schools. Indeed, Bernstein and Schirmer (2010), who conducted a recent study on private schools in South Africa, identified private schooling for the poor as a "global growth industry" in developing countries. An increasing awareness of the various types of schools available to students in developing countries had lead to interest in the role that low-cost private schools can play in education service delivery through either public-private partnerships or private-led development.

Despite this increasing awareness and popularity, private schools in developing and fragile states are still viewed with some suspicion. Private funding and delivery of education services are often perceived as a threat to state authority, rather than complementary or agents of government programmes. In the case of for-profit institutions, the profit motive is often viewed as incongruent with the perception of education as a social rather than commercial good. This has resulted in reluctance amongst some governments and NGOs to support private schooling and has meant that some governments have banned the existence of private schools or have limited the number of schools that can be established. In addition, registration rates of low-cost private schools are generally quite high, especially where they may face legal or regulatory hurdles which could limit their operations (UNICEF and ADB 2011: ix). Despite these challenges, the number of low-cost private schools is increasing and parents are choosing to educate their children there—often stretching their meagre household incomes to do so.

Organizations like UNICEF and its development partners are interested in advancing the partnership agenda to help ensure the realization of the rights of all children, especially the poor, envisioning the state as an enabler as well as provider of education (UNICEF and ADB 2011: 1). DFID is also increasingly committed to flexible and responsive approaches to education challenges, including partnerships with non-state providers (DFID 2010). Donors and education development organizations are examining ways that will allow them to take the benefits of the private sector— value for money, innovation, and entrepreneurship—into the work of meeting the educational needs of the countries it works in. To facilitate the incorporation of the private sector into service delivery, DFID is committed to helping governments work by getting rid of redundant rules, cutting red-tape and making regulation smarter and more effective (DFID 2011c).

With an increasing emphasis on public-private partnerships for development, there is a need to construct a design framework to ensure the success of not only the partnership, but the sustainability of its achievements. Generally, successful public-private partnerships need to consider and incorporate the following aspects:

- **Vision:** describes the objectives, processes and structure of the partnership;
- **Intimacy:** refers to the level of integration of the partners;
- **Impact:** looks at the capacity to deliver results, and make sure that the partnership's objectives mirror the country's priorities.

(Ingram et al. 2006)

When approaching public-private partnerships within the education sector specifically, UNICEF (2011) asserts that the design should reflect the following factors:

- **Objectives sought:** better access to education, the quality of the education provided, and efficiency of delivery;
- **Target beneficiaries:** the nature of targeting and the target group to be assisted (e.g., girls, ethnic groups, remote geographic areas);
- **'Market' factors:** the extent of the existing private school network, the potential for new education providers to establish themselves, and the extent of the existing non-profit delivery network.

### 1.4 Research background

Despite the proliferation of low-cost schools in developing countries, published research in the area is still in its infancy; hence the small size and relatively low quality of the current evidence base (Aslam, 2007). The research team, therefore, anticipates that this systematic review will generate a modest number of empirical studies, and randomised evaluations will be rare.

The international community has made basic education provision a central component of development. The second Millennium Development Goal (MDG) seeks to achieve universal primary education and 164 governments committed to the global initiative for Education for All (EFA) under the Dakar Framework for Action in 2000. Despite these major commitments and targets, access to basic education, its quality, and levels of literacy remain major challenges in developing contexts throughout the world. In South and West Asia specifically, particularly in Pakistan and Afghanistan, levels of literacy and school enrolment are significantly below the 2015 MDG targets (Andrabi *et al.*, 2006).

Afghanistan and Pakistan specifically have experienced decades of recurring crises and multiple emergencies, as a result of both violent conflict and natural hazards (Cramer and Goodhand, 2002). Such crisis-affected states often experience common problems in the provision of services related to education (Buckland, 2006). The capacity of education systems to provide quality education are often severely hampered and this is compounded by the unique broader challenges presented by crisis and conflict, meaning that the state can struggle to meet the

responsibility of providing quality basic education for all (Brinkerhoff, 2005; Barakat, 2009; Turrent, 2009).

Although primary education is often seen as primarily a state responsibility, non-state providers can play an important role in expanding access to education where public provision is not meeting needs (Rose, 2006). In South and West Asia, and particularly in Pakistan, alternative education providers, such as low-cost private schools, are increasingly being called upon to fill this vital gap in educational services in order to help improve access to education in the region (Andrabi, *et al.*, 2002). The 1990s saw secular private schools gain a significant share of overall primary enrolment in Pakistan, and this was found to be across all provinces, in both urban and rural areas and across all income groups (Andrabi, *et al.*, 2006; Alderman, *et al.*, 2003). Perhaps more recently, Afghanistan has also seen a rise in private schools, though there appears to be substantially less literature available on this at present.

The proliferation of low-cost private schools in the developing world, particularly in countries like Pakistan, has raised the question of what role such schools can play in achieving the global drive for basic primary education. It also raises a number of issues about the sustainability and the scaling up of such alternative forms of educational provision, and whether low-income private schools can contribute to equitable access to quality education in the long term. It is postulated that low-cost private schools improve the quality of education as well as being a means to leverage public funds in order to provide access to schooling at rates faster than are possible with public funds alone (Kim, *et al.*, 1999). Further to this, low-cost private schools provide the potential to give access to education for poorer communities (Alderman, *et al.*, 2001), as well as some studies finding private schools can contribute to addressing gender imbalances in access (Andrabi, *et al.*, 2006). Furthermore, others have found that private schools can provide better mechanisms for accountability to service users (Tooley, 2007), and have greater flexibility than their public counterparts, for example in finding school land more appropriate to the needs of the local community (Alderman, *et al.*, 2003).

As with any educational provision, issues of the sustainability of low-cost private schools as long-term providers of education must be considered and addressed. The literature points to a number of factors that might challenge the sustainability of such interventions: the quality of education (Alderman, *et al.*, 2001; James, 1991); financing mechanisms (Alderman, *et al.*, 2003; Asadullah, 2009; Tooley, 2007; Kim, *et al.*, 1999); as well as ongoing concerns about equity of access primarily in terms of income disparities and access of the poor to quality education (Andrabi, *et al.*, 2002). There are also reported gender disparities in access, as well as access inequalities between urban and rural communities (Andrabi, *et al.*, 2006). It is anticipated that the questions and issues raised above, among others, will be addressed by this systematic review.

### 1.5 Purpose and rationale for review

The primary objective of this review is to provide to DFID's policy, regional, and country teams the best evidence of the mechanisms through which low-cost schools can be sustainably scaled-up in South and West Asia, with a specific focus on Pakistan and Afghanistan, if this policy and practice should be prove to be desirable. The conclusions and recommendations stemming from the information found in this review would also be useful for other donor countries, as well as other developmental actors in the educational sector concerned with the establishment

and operation of primary schools, including UNICEF, UNDP, and Save the Children, amongst other private institutions and civil society organizations.

Because the studies included for synthesis in the final data set will be the most methodologically rigorous out of wide-ranging search results, the results of the review can be relied upon as part of the body of literature that can inform future policy and interventions in the education sector. Additionally, the review has identified some secondary objectives, which are:

1. To consolidate available studies on low-cost private schools in South and West Asia so that future research can be based on easily identifiable relevant studies in one database that can be updated regularly.

2. To assess the quality and methodological rigour of the available research on low-cost education alternatives in order to identify areas in need of further study or new approaches in research methodology.

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

The review will be led by Professor Sultan Barakat of the Post-war Reconstruction and Development Unit (PRDU), Department of Politics, University of York. Professor Frank Hardman of the Institute for Effective Education (IEE) at the University of York will serve as Deputy Team Leader. Along with the team leaders, Ms. Kathryn Rzeszut, a research fellow at the PRDU, will conduct the study search, analysis, and synthesis. Ms. Brigitte Rohwerder, a PRDU research assistant with experience of educational issues in developing contexts, will provide additional support throughout the review period. Specific feedback and guidance during the protocol development stage was provided by Professor Bette Chambers, the Chair of the IEE. Two experts in education in the region of South and West Asia, Mr. Ehsan Zia and Mr. Khalid Aziz will provide added technical and context-specific information both during data analysis and synthesis, as well as during the drafting of the final report. Collectively, the team has considerable experience working on education issues in fragile and conflict affected states, particularly in Afghanistan and Pakistan, which puts them in an excellent position to carry out the required research with an informed but open mind. For more information on their experience please see Appendix 1.

The review is being carried out and funded by and on behalf of DFID as a result of DFID's desire to meet the goals of its developmental educational policy in the most effective way possible. This entails a through exploration of all the ways in which it might be possible to deliver quality basic education for all. The emerging evidence of the existence of low-cost private schools catering to the poor and the low levels of attendance amongst families from low-income backgrounds and in fragile and conflict-affected states, combined with the commitment by DFID to finding diverse ways to deliver education goals, including working with the private sector, and to devote around half its direct education aid budget to fragile and conflict-affected states, especially Pakistan and Afghanistan has resulted in the commissioning of this review. The desire to ensure that aid is delivered in a way that best meets the needs of the people and provides value for money means that a thorough examination of the existing evidence is an important contribution towards designing effective aid strategies.

DFID's South/West Asia Education Policy Team will form a Review Group to ensure that all the relevant issues which they have come across in their work will be

addressed. Further review and advice may be provided by the academic and professional networks of the PRDU and associates, especially amongst international organizations and non-governmental organizations working on education in the region or in similar contexts. This consultation with experts in the field will ensure that relevant material and issues not immediately obvious from the search of the literature of the current concepts are also included to ensure that the review produces an informed report.

As identified in Section 1.5, while DFID policy makers and its South/West Asia Education Policy Team are intended to be the primary users of this review, it is the goal of the review team that other actors working in education in that region or in other developing, fragile, and/or conflict-affected states will be able to utilize the findings to better meet the educational needs of the children with whom they work.

### 1.7 Review questions and approach

The introduction outlined the overarching review question, namely:

> *'What is the evidence regarding the sustainable scale-up of low-cost private primary schools in South and West Asia, particularly in Afghanistan and Pakistan?'*

This question is focused on examining the evidence about the feasibility, acceptability, and impact of the sustainable scale-up of low-cost private primary schools as defined earlier in Section 1.2 and further explored in Section 2.3. It specifically seeks to draw out information about the mechanisms of sustainable scale-up. The geographic scope of the review is South and West Asia generally, but with a special focus on Afghanistan and Pakistan; however, studies from other fragile or conflict-affected countries around the world that could provide relevant lessons will be included.

The conceptual framework within the review question is based on DFID policy and current educational thought in relation to the idea of low-cost private schools serving the poor and providing a means with which the goal of quality basic education for all—Millennium Development Goal 2—can be met. Fragile and conflict affected countries require flexible and responsive approaches to ensure the provision of education, which can be brought about through partnerships with non-state providers. However, there is also recognition that where the cost of schooling has been removed or lessened for households, enrolment in primary education has increased (DFID 2010). At a time when progress on increasing enrolment is slowing, and equity of access must be addressed (DFID 2010), the review's conceptual framework examines the role of fee paying schools in meeting the enrolment aims of the second Millennium Development Goal, especially in relation to fragile and conflict affected countries. In addition, it is concerned with the mechanisms of the sustainable scale-up of education interventions in order to better meet development policy goals.

In order to best understand the mechanics involved in the sustainable scale-up of low cost private schools, this systematic review aims to conduct individual analyses of the most rigorous and relevant literature on the following two concepts:

1. Low-cost private schools

2. The sustainable scale-up of development projects in fragile states (with a particular focus on private-led development, as well as public-private partnerships)

The results of the analysis of these two individual concepts will then be synthesized in order to respond to the research question. Because of the limited amount of literature that addresses only the sustainable scale-up of low-cost private schools, individual analyses of the two concepts are being carried out in order to ensure that the review leads to the best possible understanding of the mechanics of sustainable scale-up which might be missed by a focus only on the concept of low cost private schools.

The aim of this review is to contribute to the strengthening of the knowledge base of the role of sustainable scale-up of low-cost private schools in South and West Asia, especially Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as other fragile and conflict-affected states. It seeks to provide knowledge in order to inform policy and practice in order to meet the educational aid goals of DFID and other stakeholders working to deliver quality basic education for all in an effective and fiscally responsible way.

# 2. Methods used in the review

This section details the methodology employed by the review. It outlines the databases, libraries, websites, and journals that will be searched; provides a list of the specific search terms; and explains the inclusion/exclusion criteria that will be applied to the search results. It also addresses the methods through which search results, citations, inclusion/exclusion decisions, and other information will be documented, and also explains the analytical approach that the review team will adopt when reviewing the studies included in the final data set.

## 2.1 Type of review

The characteristics of a systematic review, as identified by the EPPI-Centre (n.d.) are:

- The use of explicit and transparent methods;
- A standard set of stages;
- Accountability, replicability, and updateability; and
- User involvement to ensure relevance and usefulness.

Additional aspects of systematic reviews are outlined by other organizations that work in this field of research. For example, the Cochrane Collaboration (2011) highlights these requirements for a systematic review:

- Clearly stated objectives with pre-defined eligibility criteria;
- Explicit, reproducible methodology;
- Systematic searching methods;
- Assessment of the validity of findings of included studies;
- Systematic presentation and synthesis of findings.

This review will incorporate these two sets of characteristics, employing replicable and transparent search methods following clearly defined stages. The studies that will be included in the final data set for analysis will be selected utilizing pre-defined criteria and the assessment of the quality of the studies, as well as their findings and conclusions will be done in a systematic way that can be reproduced at a later date. Finally, the review team will employ a three-step narrative synthesis approach.

## 2.2 User involvement

One of the main features of the EPPI-Centre Systematic Review structure is the requirement for user involvement in the review process. As discussed in Sections 1.5 and 1.6, the primary users are currently identified as DFID policy makers and the department's South/West Asia education policy team. Secondary users are identified as other donor countries, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, and other actors involved in the provision of education sector interventions and programs, particularly in the South and West Asia region. Despite the geographic focus on this region, it is an aim of the review to provide findings and recommendations that can be useful in other developing, fragile, and conflict-affected states.

### *2.2.1 Approach and rationale*

User involvement in the development and execution of this systematic review is essential to ensure that the information provided in the final report is relevant and

useful to actors in this field. For that reason, the review team has indentified ways in which various users will have the opportunity to participate during each stage of the review.

*2.2.2 User Involvement in designing the review*

DFID, who commissioned this review, determined the initial review question, which was adjusted slightly to accommodate the systematic review methodology. The DFID policy team has provided essential feedback during the development of this protocol.

*2.2.3 User involvement in process of conducting the review*

During the review process and dissemination phase, the reviewers from the University of York will engage their own academic and professional networks in order to seek additional input from fellow scholars and experts/practitioners from international organizations and non-governmental organizations engaged in the education sector in developing countries, such as UNICEF and Save the Children, amongst others. Additionally, the DFID policy team will be involved in this stage of the review by recommending studies to be considered and suggesting other potential users who could be involved in the review process.

At the beginning of the review stage, the team will create a database of potential users and will record their contribution to and involvement in the review process. These users will also be the recipients of the final outputs of the review.

*2.2.4 User involvement in interpreting the review results*

In addition to the expertise in their respective countries and the education sector that Ehsan Zia and Khalid Aziz provide and will bring to the analysis and review stage, members of the DFID policy team and other users will also be invited to provide feedback on the interpretation of the review results.

*2.2.5 User involvement in communication and dissemination of review results*

All users mentioned at the beginning of this section will receive the final report and policy briefing. Other relevant stakeholders in the University of York's and DFID's networks will also be invited to be part of the communication and dissemination of the review results.

*2.2.6 Any known plans for further interpretation and application*

The nature of systematic reviews intends for them to be expanded by future studies. As such, this review is meant to be replicated and expanded upon in order to provide DFID with the most relevant and current information for its policy-making process.

**2.3 Identifying and describing studies**

As Section 1.7 explained, because of the multi-dimensional nature of the research question—involving the concepts of both low-cost private schools and the mechanisms of sustainable scale-up—the review team has divided it into two main concepts of which searches of the relevant literature on each topic will be conducted. This structure will also mitigate the challenge posed by the limited

amount of studies focused specifically on sustainable scale-up of low-cost private schools. The research team took this approach following pilot searches on Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) electronic bibliographic database. The team discovered that when combining the two concepts, only four of the 57 search results were potentially relevant to this review. On the other hand, when the team conducted separate searches on the two concepts separately, more relevant documents resulted. Thus, the research team firmly believes that this two-concept search approach will provide the best and most evidence that will allow them to respond more thoroughly to the research question and to identify the most rigorous evidence on the sustainable scale-up of low-cost private schools.

These concepts are defined as follows:

1. **Low-Cost Private Schools**: Private schools are schools that are not operated by the state and not solely dependent on government support. Support can come from a number of different sources, including government subsidies, support from development partners or charitable organisations, or they can be run as for profit operations. Some may be run by religious organisations, while others may be secular. In this review the private schools to be considered are the schools which are not solely dependent on government financial assistance in the long-term but are able to secure alternative means of long term funding, so that they may become self-sustaining and therefore suitable for sustainable scale-up. NGO funded and religious/faith-based private schools will be included alongside for-profit schools where they meet the criteria for sustainability and their curriculum is not solely religious-based (i.e. they provide more than religious classes). Private support for education can also involve supporting government service delivery such as through support to school feeding or building programmes, but the focus of this study is on private service delivery.

**Table 1:** Summary of types and forms of private (non-state) provision in education

| Types of providers | Forms of non-state provision |
|---|---|
| • Community driven private entrepreneurs operating individual schools<br>• Commercially driven private school chains<br>• NGOs<br>• Faith-based organizations<br>• Philanthropic associations<br>• Spontaneous community-based organizations | **Support for government service delivery**<br>• Supply inputs to government schools (learning materials, school feeding)<br>• Support to infrastructure development of government schools (school buildings)<br>• Support to management of government-run schools<br>• Regulation and quality control of associated services (inspection, teacher training and certification)<br>• Managing and operating government schools<br><br>**Non-governmental service delivery**<br>• Establishing and operating private schools<br>• Private tuition supplementing government provision<br>• Receiving state funds to provide schooling to specific groups of children |

Source: Adapted from Rose, P. 2007. Supporting Non-State Providers in Basic Education Service Delivery. Research Monograph No. 4 UK Department for International Development, p.5.

Cost in this context is considered relative to the income of the intended beneficiaries and is synonymous with 'low-fee'. For example, a low-cost school would charge fees of around 1-2 dollars a month that are still affordable to parents earning poverty line wages. Schooling costs should not exceed 4% of the household budget to still be considered low cost.[2] It should be acknowledged that the costs of education involve more than school fees, but include other costs such uniforms, books, and PTA levies.

Due to the focus of the question, most of the interest will be on studies of low-cost private schools in fragile and conflict-affected countries but examples from developing countries in the region and the world will also be considered if it is readily apparent that they offer relevant lessons learnt. The contribution to increasing access and improving quality is an important consideration when it comes to low-cost private schools, especially in relation to the educational opportunities of girls and children with disabilities, as well as other marginalised children. There will be no exclusion based on level of education, although the primary focus is on primary education in order to met MDG2 and as a result of the focus of most of the literature.

2. **Sustainable Scale-Up:** In the context of this review, the term *sustainable* refers to schools which are able to stay open for at least the length of a primary school cycle (roughly between 5-7 years); however, as there may be limited literature available on private education in South and West Asia within that time frame, the review will consider a school sustainable if it remains in operation for at least 3 years. Where schools require initial external financial inputs, to be considered sustainable for the purposes of this review, they must possess a clearly defined and realistic plan to become self-sustaining and decreasingly reliant on external financial support from agencies such as international aid organisations, governments and NGOs, unless there is a clearly defined long term financial support plan in place that will enable them to remain open.

   Sustainable scale-up refers to the expansion of low-cost private-schooling enabling greater access to more children and a improved choice of quality education in a manner in which schools are able to stay open and deliver education to children for the length of a school-cycle and are not forced to close and disrupt children's education because they are no longer financially self-sufficient. The process of scale-up shall focus on private sector led development, as well as public-private partnerships.[3] Depending on the amount of low-cost primary schools in the countries reviewed, the factors involved in

[2] The review team is employing 4% of a household budget as the definition of low-cost, as it is a commonly accepted education fee threshold for poor families.

[3] Private-sector led development refers to development that involves business and enterprise leading projects that contribute to development goals, while public-private partnerships are combinations designed to bring out the best qualities of both by may be providing opportunities to drive up efficiency and innovation by linking payment to delivery and performance. The public sector defines the scope of the outputs, while the private sector is in charge of delivering them.

sustainable scale-up will differ, as there are different factors involved in scaling up from 0% to 25% than there are from 25% to 50%. What level of scale-up is desirable and/or feasible is also a factor to be considered in the quality assessment portion of the review process.

However the concept of sustainable scale-up will look beyond low-cost private schools towards the scale-up of other education interventions in developing, middle-income, and fragile states where the lessons learnt would be relevant to the context of South and West Asia. Appropriate examples for inclusion would be projects that have been able to become financially self-sufficient and which have been expanded through private sector-led development or public-private partnerships.

A framework which lays out the scope and context for each of these concepts is provided in Table 2. The framework also identifies potential indicators, outcomes, and other relevant factors by which the findings and conclusions of the potential studies can be evaluated.

**Table 2:** Framework for concepts, scope, context, and indicators of potential studies

| Concept | Scope | Context | Indicators/outcomes/other relevant factors |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Low-cost private schools** | 1. Schools which are not solely dependent on government financial support and with a long-term source of funding independent of this support.<br>2. Schools whose costs are less than 4% of the household budget and where the fees are still affordable to parents earning poverty line wages.<br>3. All levels of education, with a primary focus on primary education. | 1. Developing, fragile, and conflict-affected countries throughout the world.<br>2. Western and Southern Asia.<br>3. Afghanistan and Pakistan. | 1. Increased availability of schools.<br>2. Increase in the quality of the education provided, as indicated through standard education indicators (graduation rates, performance on standardized tests).<br>3. Increased access for female students and vulnerable groups (disabled, displaced, extremely impoverished). |
| **Sustainable scale-up** | 1. The scale-up of education-sector initiatives.<br>2. Private-led or public-private partnerships. | 1. Fragile and conflict states (and other developing countries where relevant).<br>2. Countries in Asia, particularly West and South Asia. | 1. Financial self-sufficiency.<br>2. Long-lasting programmes (when related to schools – at least the length of a school cycle 3 years).<br>3. Successful sustainability in locations other than the location of initial implementation. |

### *2.3.1 Defining relevant studies: inclusion and exclusion criteria*

All studies emerging from the searches which focus thematically on these two main concepts will be included in the initial round of the review. To refine these results

the determination for inclusion/exclusion at the second stage of the review will be based upon the following criteria:

- ***Relevance*:** Only studies with a primary focus on one or both of two main concepts will be included. Studies that discuss the main concepts, but do not focus primarily on them, will not be included. As the second concept of sustainable scale-up has been explicitly included to enable the systematic review to address all the component parts of the research question which are unlikely to be covered by only reviewing low-cost private education literature, the definition of the concept as understood by the review team will ensure that only those studies which are considered relevant to the research question will be selected. Clearly defining and narrowing down the concepts, as above, and using them as a inclusion/exclusion criteria will help mitigate against carrying out an unnecessary second systematic review of the broad concept of scaling-up.

- ***Document Type*:** Included documents must be articles, reports, books, chapters, or other professional publications, including 'grey literature (e.g., assessments or evaluations). Book reviews, news articles, and routine (non-analytical) programme or project reports from governments, multi- or bi-lateral development agencies and implementing partners will be excluded. Evaluation and assessment reports conducted on behalf of these development organizations will be included. Because there is little published academic research on the education sector in Afghanistan, it is anticipated that much of the relevant literature on the development of the education sector in Afghanistan be largely comprised of these types of documents.

- ***Methodology*:** Documents considered for inclusion will be assessed according to the appropriateness and robustness of their methodological approach. All included studies are required to possess a significant level of original research or high structured review methods (e.g., previous systematic reviews related to the education sector in developing countries, before/after comparative studies,[4] comparative studies of different types of education interventions, amongst others). It is anticipated that random control trials, while the most methodologically rigorous, will not comprise the majority of the relevant studies due to the nature of the education sector in developing and fragile states, particularly in this region of Asia. Additionally, general commentaries, editorial articles, or perception-based assessments will not be included, as they do not rely upon research, but the subjective opinions of the author and thus do not meet the criteria of methodological rigor; however, if the review team determines that these documents contain useful background information, they will be incorporated into the background section of the final report.

  Any studies which (a) lack a stated methodology and/or (b) fail to present sources of data upon which findings are based will not be included.

[4] As before/after comparative studies can sometimes be methodologically weak in the study quality appraisal tool they will be given a lower score where required. This will exclude those before/after comparative studies which are not methodologically rigorous enough.

- ***Language:*** Only those studies which are available in English will be included. If studies in local Afghan or Pakistani languages are identified for possible inclusion by our local partners, the partners will provide English translations of the studies.

- ***Date:*** Only documents published from 1991 onward will be considered due to their relevance to information on the effectiveness and potential for scaling-up the interventions.

Additional exclusion criteria may be identified during the process and will be noted within an updated edition of the systematic review protocol and will be applied to each and every study located.

### *2.3.2 Identification of potential studies: Search strategy*

This section details the search strategy to be employed by the review team, outlining the sources, search terms, and inclusion/exclusion process.

#### *2.3.2.1 Sources*

The review will draw upon the following sources:

1. Bibliographic databases;
2. Citation searchers of key authors/papers;
3. Reference lists of key papers;
4. References on key websites;
5. Networks of professional contacts; and
6. Direct requests from key informants.

Electronic and hand searches will be conducted of the following databases:

1. Education Resources Information Center (ERIC)
2. The British Educational Index
3. Australian Education Index
4. EPPI-Centre's educational research database
5. The Campbell Collaboration Library
6. CREATE (Consortium for Research on Education Access, Transitions and Equity)
7. Databases from PAIS International (covering 650 social science journals)
8. ASSIA/Sociological Abstracts
9. The Social Science Citation Index,
10. Econlit
11. IDEAS
12. JOLIS (the database for the World Bank and IMF)
13. The Asian Development Bank
14. Asian Journals Online
15. The Indian Citation Index
16. Google Scholar[5]

[5] Google Scholar will be used as a last resort if it is felt that the other databases are not providing enough sources from the developing world, as otherwise it is likely to just replicate the other sources found.

The publication sites of development partners working with government ministries to improve the capacity of teachers in the developing world will also be consulted. These include, but are not limited to:

1. The Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA),
2. AusAID
3. DFID
4. UNESCO
5. UNICEF
6. UNDP
7. DANIDA
8. CIDA
9. GTZ
10. USAID
11. The Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE)
12. The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)
13. Save the Children (STC)

In addition, searches will be made of R4D, BLDS, Eldis, and Search4Dev.

*2.3.2.2 Search terms*

The search terms for each of the key concepts identified above attempt to offer a balance between sensitivity and specificity, in order to ensure that the search results in the highest number of relevant studies (Rothstein *et al.*, 2005).

Separate searches will be conducted for each of the two main concepts. The proposed search terms[6] to be used, by concept, are:

**Table 3:** Search terms by key concept

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Concept 1: Low-Cost Private Schools** | low cost ***OR*** low fee* ***OR*** ***low income OR*** slum* ***OR*** poverty ***OR*** poor OR affordable | **AND** | private ***OR*** non-government*OR non-state ***OR*** charitable ***OR*** NGO fund* ***OR*** religious ***OR*** faith *AND* school* **OR** education | **AND** | develop* ***OR*** fragil* ***OR*** conflict ***AND*** state ***OR*** countr* ***OR*** context ***OR*** region ***OR*** nation* **OR** Pakistan* ***OR*** Afghan* ***OR*** south* Asia* ***OR*** west* Asia* | |

[6] The review team has conducted test searches with these terms and is confident that these terms will result in the most relevant studies for these concepts. If further refinement of search terms is required during the study search, the review team will note any changes. See also the description of the search carried out on ERIC on page 18.

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Concept 2: Sustainable Scale-Up** | Scal* up ***OR*** expand* ***OR*** roll-out ***OR*** grow* ***OR*** up-scale ***AND*** sustainable ***OR*** success* ***OR*** replicable | **AND** | education OR school* ***AND/OR***[7] private led ***OR*** public-private partnership ***OR*** non-state | **AND** | develop* ***OR*** fragil* ***OR*** conflict ***AND*** state ***OR*** countr* ***OR*** context ***OR*** region **OR** Pakistan* ***OR*** Afghan* ***OR*** south* Asia* ***OR*** west* Asia* | |

The study search process aims to identify two types of studies in order to fully answer the research question: the first related to low-cost private schooling, not only focusing on South and West Asia but on developing, fragile and conflict affected states throughout the world, as experiences with low-cost private schools in other developing country contexts can inform future implementation in this region; and the second addressing the mechanisms of sustainable scale-up of education sector initiatives generally. This is in order to have the opportunity to incorporate the maximum number of lessons learned relating to sustainable scale-up, with a special focus on private-led and/or public-private partnerships, as it is anticipated that there are very few studies focusing solely on the sustainable scale-up of low cost private schools.[8]

Each search will be recorded in a search log, along with the date, time, database, and initials of the researcher conducting the search. Following each search, the titles and abstracts of studies to be considered for retrieval will be uploaded to the EPPI Reviewer 4.0 (Thomas et al., 2010) along with other relevant details, including the database where the study originated, website location, journal, year of study, and the key concept to which the study relates, to name a few. Inclusion/exclusion decisions will also be recorded in the database.

As previously noted, the research team undertook a series of pilots of the search on ERIC via Proquest, a host for online databases. For the concept of low-cost private schools 1,244 results were returned. A review of the first 200 found 34 documents which appeared potentially relevant. For the concept of sustainable scale-up of education initiatives, the search returned 3,808 results. A review of the first 200 found 17 to be potentially relevant. Of the 17 found to be relevant, none were found in the 34 found by the search for low-cost private schools. However, when the searches for the two concepts were combined, only 4 of the 57 results were potentially relevant, indicating the need to conduct two distinct searches in order to indentify the most relevant documents.

The review team has already identified some possible studies for inclusion, which are listed in Appendix 2.

[7] Although our focus is on the private sector the below terms may lead to very few results which is why they can be excluded through the OR option.
[8] The decision was made not to combine the two sets of search terms into one search as it was anticipated that this would greatly restrict the number of studies returned, especially as many studies of low cost private education do not deal overtly with sustainable scale-up.

In addition to the systematic review searches, the team will also gather relevant background studies outside the search framework. The review team will focus on locating relevant literature on the developmental challenges to the education sector in Afghanistan and Pakistan, especially in relation to those around the issues surrounding conflict and the provision of quality education in fragile states. This is to ensure there is a good understanding of the context in which any scale-up would take place as this will affect the sustainability of the programme. As stated, this background research will be conducted outside the structure of the systematic review, but because of the importance of context to sustainability and thus the research question each of the relevant documents found during these searches will be recorded, along with their source, in a separate log for background materials. This approach will provide policy makers and researchers with a resource that will enable them to provide greater depth and understanding for policies and plans in this context.

For the scope of this review, development challenges to education are those which prevent the delivery of quality basic education for all. When it comes to conflict affected states the 2011 EFA Global Monitoring Report notes that the major challenges relate to protection, provision, reconstruction and peacebuilding. Developmental challenges to education also include that those which impact in a more indirect way on the education sector and the delivery of quality basic education for all. Knowledge of these development challenges within the context of South and West Asia, particularly Afghanistan and Pakistan, will enable a better evaluation of the role that low-cost private schools can play in meeting the educational needs of the countries. The information obtained from studies in this search will be incorporated into the background contextualization of the systematic review's final report with the aim to provide a more nuanced understanding of the requirements for education initiatives and programmes in the Afghanistan and Pakistan.

### *2.3.3 Screening studies: applying inclusion and exclusion criteria*

For the two key concept search results, inclusion and exclusion criteria will be applied successively to (i) titles and abstracts/keywords and (ii) full reports for the results from each of the two searches. Full reports will be obtained for those studies that appear to meet the criteria or where we have insufficient information to be sure. These reports will be uploaded to the EPPI-Centre Reviewer database. The inclusion and exclusion criteria will be re-applied to the full reports and those that do not meet the initial criteria will be excluded. The documents deemed most relevant will also be hand-searched in order to further identify key references for possible inclusion.

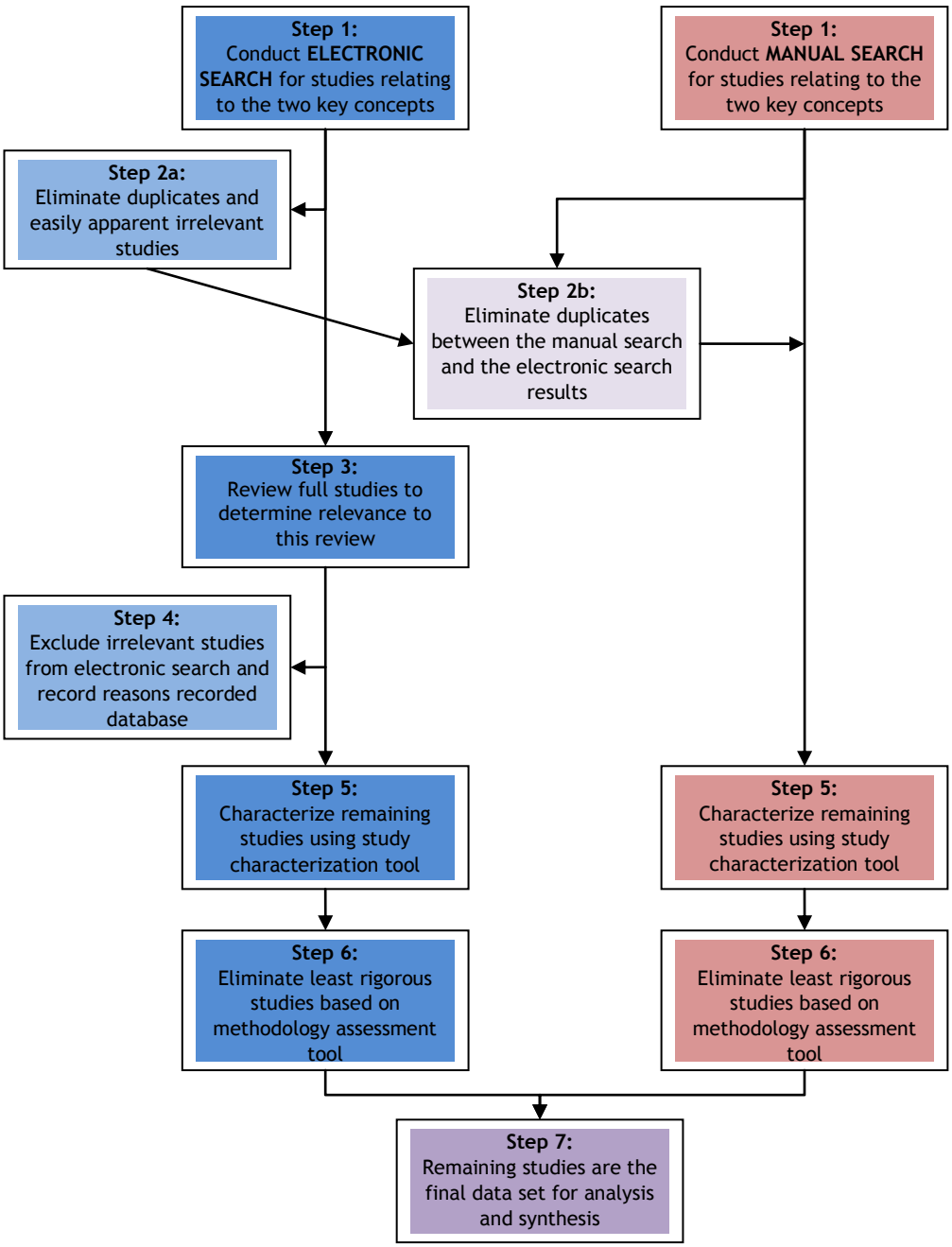
This process, which will combine electronic and hand/manual searchers will be guided by the process reflected in Figure 1.

### *2.3.4 Characterising included studies*

Each included study will be summarized by one of the researchers on the Study Characterisation Tool found in Appendix 3. It should be noted that for the purposes of this review, "summary" does not necessarily refer to the compilation

**Figure 1:** The Study Search and Selection Process

*Source: Adapted from Egan, et al. (2001).*




of an abstract which will already exist in most cases), but involves a checklist approach to assess the relation of the study to the inclusion/exclusion criteria. Studies will be characterised according to the criteria outlined in the Study Characterisation Tool, well as any additional appropriate taxonomy determined in the course of the electronic search and summarisation process.

Finally, the study characterisation and assessment outcomes will be included in the Reviewer database, as will all data emerging from the systematic review.

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

One team member will lead the process of summarising the studies and assessing their methodology. Studies which do not appear, to that individual, to fall clearly within the scope of the inclusion and exclusion criteria will be brought to the attention of a second team member. The final exclusion/inclusion decision will be made consensually following a discussion; the content of these deliberations, as well as the decision will be included in the review database.

As a further quality assurance mechanism, the research team leader will randomly sample at least 10 percent of the studies in order to assess his or her level of agreement with the decision of the other reviewers. Where discrepancies exist between the team leader's quality assurance review and the initial decision made by the first reviewer, a final decision will be reached through a process of deliberation and in-depth review of the study/ies in question. If numerous such discrepancies are found to exist, the team leader may, at his discretion, undertake a broader review of the included/excluded studies. In the event that the reviewers are unable to agree upon an outcome following in-depth reviews and discussions, the decision of the team leader will prevail. If numerous discrepancies do exist and it is found that they result from an unclear coding tool, the team would undertake a revision of the coding tool in order to address the discrepancies. Given the team's past systematic review experience and the specificity of the coding tool, it is not anticipated that numerous discrepancies will result—this procedure is in place only in the event that they do.

## 2.4 In-depth review

### *2.4.1 Detailed description of studies in the in-depth review*

The studies determined to be relevant to this review in Step 4 of the study search process outlined in Figure 1 will be characterized with the Study Characterization Tool attached as Appendix 3. This checklist provides a tool whereby the key factors of each of the studies can be identified and described, assisting the review team with more in-depth analysis and synthesis of findings later in the review process.

### *2.4.2 Assessing quality of studies and weight of evidence for the review question*

Once the studies have been characterized, the final data set will be determined through a comprehensive quality appraisal process which will utilize the Study Quality Appraisal Tool found in Appendix 4. The quality of studies will be assessed by considering the appropriateness of their methodological approach, the sample size and sampling method, the objectivity of the researchers, and the analytical approach, with a numerical score from a scale of 0 to 4 given for each possible option, enabling an overall score to be calculated for each study.

During the quality assessment process, attention will be paid to potential biases in the studies, specifically in study origins, possible data weaknesses, and the difficulty of impact attribution.

Additionally, studies that address the following factors will be considered particularly relevant:

1. The feasibility of the sustainable scale-up of low-cost private education (relating to factors such as its ability to keep attracting teachers, keep fees low, and find suitable premises and sustainable funding);

2. The acceptability of the sustainable scale-up of low-cost private education (relating to factors such as parental choice, governmental certification and retention); and

3. The impact of the sustainable scale-up of low cost private education (relating to factors such as quality of education, access for marginalized groups and replicability of model in relation to private-led or public-private partnerships).

Given the methodological diversity of studies likely to be included within the review, a further articulation of methodological quality is not feasible at this time. Criteria will be developed through an iterative process based upon the review of available studies and any additions to the current criteria in this protocol will be noted. A consistent set of criteria to assess methodological appropriateness and quality will be applied to all studies.

### *2.4.3 Synthesis of evidence*

This section details the process by which the review team will synthesize the evidence and develop theories to respond to the overall research question. The synthesis process is also depicted in Figure 2.

#### *2.4.3.1 Overall approach to and process of synthesis*

The review will employ a basic narrative synthesis approach, employing particular points of grounded theory adapted for the synthesis process in this review, including key point coding and theory development through the identification of codes, concepts, and categories (Allan, 2003).[9] Thematic synthesis will also be a key component at this stage, as it addresses questions that relate to the need, appropriateness, acceptability, and effectiveness of an intervention (Allan, 2003). Finally, elements of the textual narrative synthesis approach will be applied to the prospective studies. This methodology is particularly useful when synthesizing various types of data, which is expected in this review (Barnett-Page & Thomas, 2009). The synthesis will be carried out in three main steps: (i) organization of studies' description into categories; (ii) analysis of the findings within each category of study; and (iii) synthesis of the findings across studies (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006).

#### *2.4.3.2 Selection of studies for synthesis*

Only the studies that received the highest overall scores for quality and methodological rigor on the Study Quality Appraisal Tool will be included in the final data set for analysis and synthesis.

#### *2.4.3.3 Selection of outcome data for synthesis*

The studies included in the final data set will be thoroughly reviewed a second time. Descriptive information from each study will be input into an Access database. This information will include the name of the study, the year, the type of intervention, the study sample, the study design, findings, conclusions, and other themes applicable to the two main concepts identified in Section 2.2—low-

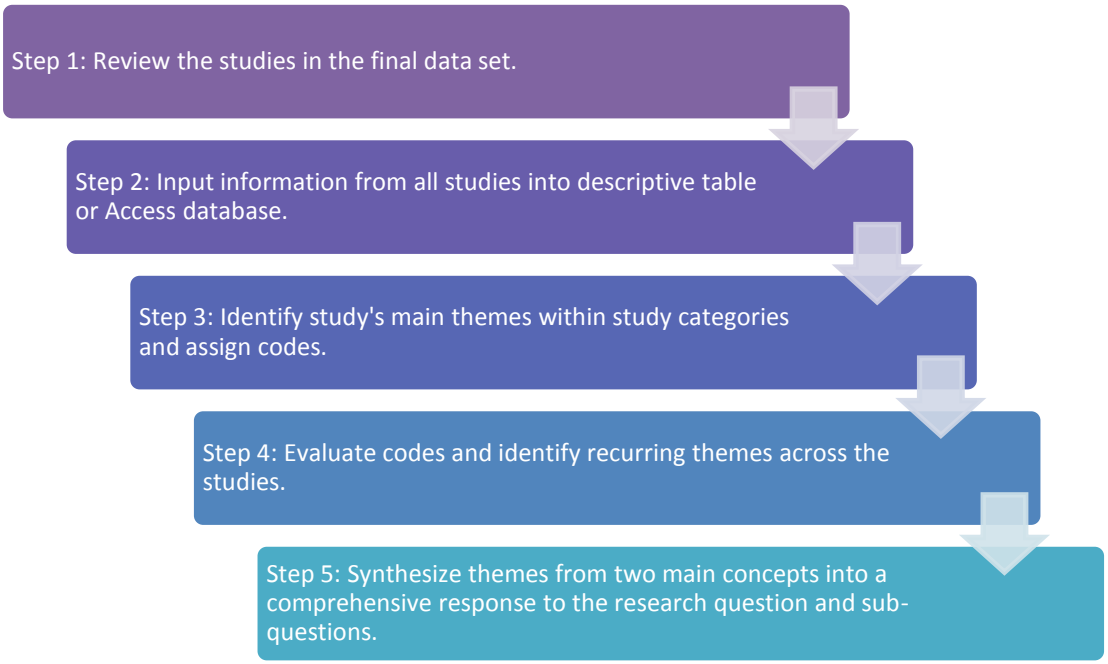
[9] The Review Team proposes this synthesis approach with the understanding that the synthesis methodology may change depending on the type of studies in the final data set, as well as the quality of the data and information they provide.

cost private schools and sustainable scale-up of development programmes in fragile states.

*2.4.3.4 Process used to combine/synthesise data*

Next, the review team will organize the studies by type and assign each study's intervention, findings, and conclusions a code. Each study and its coded data will be analyzed for identification of recurring themes across studies. The recurring themes will be further evaluated to identify the most recurrent and significant themes based on the framework of the two main concepts indentified in Section 2.2.

**Figure 2:** Synthesis Process




## 2.5 Deriving conclusions and implications

Based upon the results of the coding analysis, theories from data gathered in the included studies, relevant existing theories, and through collaborative discussions with experts in this sector, the research team will develop responses to the following sub-questions:

1. What factors affect the sustainability of low-cost private schools?
2. In what way can education projects in fragile and conflict-affected countries—particularly those that are private-led or private-public partnerships—be scaled-up to ensure sustainability?
3. What are the particular challenges in scaling-up development projects in Afghanistan and Pakistan?

These responses will then be synthesized into a very specific and comprehensive response to the original research question, following the thematic synthesis approach. It is anticipated that this review will not result in data that is rich

enough to develop new theories, so the theories derived from the synthesis will most likely be based on existing theories. In order to maintain transparency and ensure replicability, each step of the theory formulation process will be recorded and made available electronically.

## References

Alderman, H., Orazem P., and Paterno, E. (2001). 'School quality, school cost, and the public/private school choices of low-income households in Pakistan', *The Journal of Human Resources,* Vol. 36, No. 2, pp. 304-326.

Alderman, H., Jooseop, K., and Orazem, P. (2003). 'Design, evaluation, and sustainability of private schools for the poor: the Pakistan urban and rural fellowship school experiments', *Economics of Education Review,* Vol. 22, pp. 265-274.

Allan, G. (2003). 'A critique of using grounded theory as a research method,' *E-Journal of Business Research Methods*, Vol. 2 No. 1, pp. 1-10. Available at http://www.ejbrm.com/volume2/issue1/p1. [Accessed 30 March 2011].

Andrabi, T., Das, J., and Khwaja, A. (2002). *The rise of private schooling in Pakistan: catering to the urban elite or educating the rural poor?* Working Paper, Harvard University, March 2002.

Andrabi, T., Das, J., and Khwaja, A. (2006). *A Dime a day: The possibilities and limits of private schooling in Pakistan.* World Bank.

Asadullah, M. N. (2005). *The effectiveness of private and public schools in South Asia.* Mimeo

Aslam, M. (2007). 'Rates of return to education by gender in Pakistan', GPRG-WPS-064. London: Global Poverty Research Group. Available at http://economics.ouls.ox.ac.uk/14021/1/gprg-wps-064.pdf.

Barakat, S. (2009). "The failed promise of multi-donor trust funds: aid financing as an impediment to effective state-building in post-conflict environments", Policy Studies Vol. 30, No. 2, pp. 107-126.

Barnett-Page, E. and Thomas, J. (2009). 'Methods for the synthesis of qualitative research: a critical review', Working Paper 01/09. London: ESRC National Centre for Research Methods. Available at http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/690/. [Accessed 30 March 2011].

Bernstein, A. and Schirmer, S. (2010). 'Low-fee private schools: the solution to teaching crisis?', *Business Day*, 12 August 2010. Available at http://www.businessday.co.za/articles/Content.aspx?id=117733. [Accessed 24 November 2011].

Brinkerhoff, D.W. (2005). Rebuilding governance in failed states and post-conflict societies: Core concepts and cross-cutting themes. *Public Administration and Development*, Vol. 25, No. 1, pp. 3-14.

Buckland, P. (2006). 'Post-conflict education: time for a reality check?' FMR Education Supplement, p. 7-9. Available at http://www.fmreview.org/FMRpdfs/EducationSupplement/03.pdf

Cramer, C. and Goodhand, J. (2003). 'Try Again. Fail Again. Fail Better?' in Milliken, J, (ed.), *State Failure, Collapse & Reconstruction: Issues & Responses*. United Kingdom: Blackwell.

DFID (2010). *Learning for all: DFID's education strategy 2010-2015*. London: DFID. Available at http://www.ungei.org/resources/files/educ-strat.pdf. [Accessed on 15 June 2011].

DFID (2011a). *Operational Plan 2011-2015: DFID Human Development Department*, April 2011. London: DFID. Available at http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications1/op/hum-dvmt-dept-2011.pdf. [Accessed on 28 May 2012].

DFID (2011b). *UK aid: Changing lives, delivering results*. London: DFID. Available at http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Documents/publications1/mar/BAR-MAR-summary-document-web.pdf. [Accessed on 28 May 2012].

DFID (2011c). 'Summary of DFID's work in Pakistan', *DFID Operational Plan for Pakistan*, April 2011. London: DFID. Available at http://www.DFID.gov.uk/Documents/publications1/op/pakistan-2011-summary.pdf. [Accessed on 15 June 2011].

DFID (2011d). *Operational Plan 2011-2015 DFID Afghanistan*. Available at http://www.DFID.gov.uk/Documents/publications1/op/afghanistan-2011.pdf. [Accessed on 15 June 2011].

DFID (2011e). *The engine of development: the private sector and prosperity for poor people*. London: DFID.DFID (2012). http://www.dfid.gov.uk/What-we-do/Key-Issues/Education/ [Accessed on 28 May 2012].

Dixon-Woods, M. (n.d.). 'Critical interpretive synthesis: what it is and why it is needed', presentation from the Department of Health sciences at the University of Leicester. Available at http://www.imbi.uni-freiburg.de/OJS/cca/index.php/cca/article/viewFile/5374/5004. [Accessed 9 March 2011].

Egan, M., Petticrew, M., Ogilvie, D., and Hamilton, V. (2001). *Protocol for Systematic Review: The health and social impacts of opening a new road*. Glasgow: Social and Public Health Sciences Unit.

EPPI-Centre (n.d.). 'What is a systematic review? Reviews of research are not necessarily rigorous or explicit in their methods of review.' Available at http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/cms/Default.aspx?tabid=67. [Accessed 25 November 2011].

Gough, D. (2007). Weight of evidence: a framework for the appraisal of the quality and relevance of evidence. In J. Furlong & A. Oancea, eds. *Applied and Practice-based Research*. Special Edition of Research Papers in Education, Vol. 22, No. 2, pp. 213-118.

Higgins, J. and Green, S., eds. (2011). *Cochrane Handbook of Systematic Review Interventions*. The Cochrane Collaboration. Available at http://www.cochrane-handbook.org/. [Accessed 25 November 2011].

Ingram, G. et al. (2006). *The Untapped Opportunity: How Public-Private Partnerships can advance education for all*. AED.

James, E. (1991). 'Public policies toward private education: an international comparison', *International Journal of Educational Research*, Vol. 15, pp. 359– 376.

Kim, J., Alderman, H. and Orazem, P. (1999). 'Can private school subsidies increase enrolment for the poor? The Quetta Urban Fellowship Program', The World Bank Economic Review, Vol. 13, No. 3, pp. 443-465.

LaRocque, N. and Lee, S. (2011). *Non-State Providers and Public-Private Partnerships in Education for the Poor*. UNICEF and ADB.

Petticrew, M. and Roberts, H. (2006). *Systematic Reviews in the Social Sciences: A Practical Guide*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Rose, P. (2006). 'Collaborating in Education for All? Experiences of government support for non-state provision of basic education in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa', *Public Administration and Development*, Vol. 26, pp. 219–229.

Rose, P. (2007). *Supporting Non-State Providers in Basic Education Service Delivery*. CREATE

Rothstein, H., Sutton, A., and Borenstein, M., eds. (2005). *Publication Bias in Meta-Analysis: Prevention, Assessment and Adjustment*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Thomas J, Brunton J, Graziosi S (2010). EPPI-Reviewer 4.0: software for research synthesis. EPPI-Centre Software. London: Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London.

Tooley, J. (2007). 'Could for-profit private education benefit the poor? Some *a priori* considerations arising from case study research in India', *Journal of Education Policy*, Vol. 22, No. 3, pp. 321–342.

Tooley, James (2009). *The Beautiful Tree: A Personal Journey Into How the World's Poorest People Are Educating Themselves*. Cato Institute.

Turrent, V. (2009). *Expanding support for education in fragile states: what role for the Education for All – Fast Track Initiative?* CREATE Monograph No. 30.

# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Authorship of this report

The review will be led by Professor Sultan Barakat of the Post-war Reconstruction and Development Unit (PRDU), Department of Politics, University of York. Professor Frank Hardman of the Institute for Effective Education at the University of York will serve as Deputy Team Leader. Along with the team leaders, Ms. Kathryn Rzeszut, a research fellow at the PRDU, will conduct the study search, analysis, and synthesis. A research assistant who will be identified later will provide additional support throughout the review period. Specific feedback and guidance during the protocol development stage was provided by Professor Bette Chambers, the Chair of the Institute for Effective Education. Two experts in education in the region of South and West Asia, Mr. Ehsan Zia and Mr. Khalid Aziz will provide added technical and context-specific information both during data analysis and synthesis, as well as during the drafting of the final report.

**Biographical Summaries of Key Team Members**

- *Sultan Barakat* – Sultan Barakat is a Professor at the PRDU at the University of York, and specialises in the design of recovery strategies and programmes for crisis-affected contexts. His research has particularly focused on the role of education in development, specifically in crisis-affected and emergency contexts. He was team leader on the 'Programme Review and Evaluability Study (PRES) of UNICEF's Education in Emergencies and Post-Crisis Transition (EEPCT) Programme' (May 2010), as well as being a key member of the World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE), delivering a keynote paper on 'Sustaining Education in Critical Circumstances, Conflict Zones and Poverty' in November 2009. Professor Barakat has worked extensively in Afghanistan, including as an author of a strategic conflict assessment of Afghanistan as part of DFID's 'Understanding Afghanistan' initiative and also as Team Leader for the Mid-Term Impact Evaluation of the National Solidarity Programme (NSP) in Afghanistan. He recently acted as co-lead investigator on the PRDU's Systematic Review for DFID, entitled 'What is the track record of Multi-Donor Trust Funds (MDTFs) in improving the impact of aid?', and is experienced in the methods of conducting a systematic review. Further to this, Professor Barakat has been involved in systematically reviewing literature on behalf of major international organisations, including evidence of conflict vulnerability from a political-economy perspective in Afghanistan on DFID's behalf, and the role of education in promoting stability, disaster risk reduction and poverty alleviation in crisis affected contexts for UNICEF. Professor Barakat has extensive experience in writing for peer reviewed academic journals, in academic books, for policy briefs as well as reports to disseminate findings of applied research projects for various international, national agencies and governmental organisations. He will be the lead author of the report which will detail the findings of the Systematic Review.

- *Frank Hardman* - Frank Hardman is a Professor at the Institute for Effective Education (IEE) at the University of York and the Chair of the

Education in Developing Countries. He specializes in the areas of language and education, classroom learning, and teacher development in high and low income countries. Professor Hardman has been successful in attracting large-scale funding from research councils and government and non-government agencies in the UK and overseas. He has carried out internationally-commissioned studies and consultancy assessments for the Commonwealth Secretariat, British Department for International Development (DFID), UNESCO, and UNICEF. Through these commissioned studies, Professor Hardman has extensive first-hand knowledge of independent evaluations in education. Most recently, Professor Hardman was Deputy Team Leader in the Programme Review and Evaluability Study of UNICEF's Education in Emergencies and Post-Crisis Transition Programme in 2009-2010, focusing on three case study field contexts of South Sudan, Nepal and Kenya. In the contexts of developing and crisis-affected states, Professor Hardman specializes and has published extensively in the monitoring of the quality of education in fragile states. His research has played an important role in policy formation and implementation by working with government ministries and international NGOs at a senior level. His research incorporates both qualitative and quantitative methods. With extensive evaluation experience, Prof. Hardman will work on the design of the field research (methods and sampling), provide expert knowledge of the operational and field contexts, and play a salient role in the synthesis and dissemination of the research findings and the writing of the final reports. Prof. Hardman is well placed to contribute to the field research and carry out stakeholder consultations and interviews at the Country Programme level.

- *Kathryn Rzeszut* – As a Research Fellow at the PRDU at the University of York, Ms. Rzeszut focuses on development project monitoring and evaluation, conflict analysis and management, and the practical application of development theory, specifically in the field of economic livelihoods. Her work includes evaluations of programmes relating to youth empowerment and women's economic development within the post-conflict environment context. Prior to joining the PRDU, she served for several years in the U.S. Army Civil Affairs Command, where she gained practical experience in the development and security sectors during and after conflict. After completing her military service, she worked as a senior paralegal concentrating on asylum-related immigration cases at a large Washington, D.C. law firm. She recently completed, along with Professor Barakat, DFID's Systematic Review No. 48, entitled 'What is the track record of Multi-Donor Trust Funds (MDTFs) in improving the impact of aid?', thus is quite experienced in the methods of conducting a systematic review. She is currently working on a study on behalf of the National Solidarity Programme (NSP) in Afghanistan to evaluate its impact on the reintegration of returning refugees and IDPs.

- *Brigitte Rohwerder* - As a research assistant at the PRDU at the University of York, Ms Rohwerder has been assisting on a number of different projects with background research, data analysis, and editing. The projects she has worked on include a study on behalf of the Afghan government's National Solidarity Programme (NSP) evaluating the

programme's impact on the reintegration of returning refugees and IDPs and an evaluation on behalf of UNICEF of their emergency preparedness and response (EPR) and disaster risk reduction (DRR) capacity development efforts in the education sector. In addition, she has gained experience with systematic reviews by assisting with the editing of the DFID's Systematic Review No. 48, entitled '*What is the track record of Multi-Donor Trust Funds (MDTFs) in improving the impact of aid*?'. She graduated in January 2012 with a distinction in the MA in Post-War Recovery Studies at the University of York. During her degree, she spent 9 weeks with the Education Section of UNICEF Lesotho, working primarily on a Post-Disaster Needs Assessment of the education sector and on developing inclusive education material. Her dissertation research looked at the experiences of persons with intellectual/developmental disabilities in conflict and post-conflict contexts, especially in relation to their consideration in humanitarian assistance policy and practice. She has presented her dissertation research at international forums for the humanitarian sector on disability in humanitarian emergencies.

Sultan Barakat, Frank Hardman, Kathryn Rzeszut, and Brigitte Rohwerder have no personal, financial, or professional interests which would influence the conduct or outcomes of this systematic review.

**Biographical Summaries of Advisory Team Members**

- *Bette Chambers* - In her role as Professor and Director of the Institute of Effective Education (IEE) at the University of York, Professor Chambers has worked extensively on systematic review methodology, particularly in terms of reviewing research on educational programmes and practices. She will therefore provide additional support in terms of reviewing the developed methodology and protocol.

- *Ehsan Zia* – Mr. Zia, the CEO of TADBEER Consultancy, an Afghan research consultancy based in Kabul, is the former Minister of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD). He has more than thirty years experience in design and management of humanitarian, development and governance programmes and policies and has written extensively on Afghanistan. His consultancy firm specialises in providing research and consultancy services to policymakers including government, donors, and development agencies. Mr. Zia's extensive knowledge on the Afghan context will be valuable in synthesizing the review findings, ensuring there are no gaps in analysis or content and providing feedback during the drafting stage.

- *Khalid Aziz* – Mr. Aziz, the Director of the Regional Institute of Policy Research and Training (RIPORT), is based in Peshawar, Pakistan. He has extensive experience in policy related research in finance, economy, social protection and governance amongst other areas both in Pakistan and across the region. Mr. Aziz's experience and knowledge of the regional and country context will prove invaluable in synthesizing the review findings, ensuring there are no gaps in analysis or content and providing feedback during the drafting stage. This will not only relate to

the case study of low-cost private schooling in Pakistan but also to the wider findings about the region.

The authors will share responsibility for the conduct of the systematic review. Professor Barakat will maintain ultimate oversight the content while Professor Hardman and Ms. Rzeszut will undertake information retrieval and a significant proportion of data extraction and management with the aid of the research assistant.

- Content: Sultan Barakat and Frank Hardman
- Systematic review methods: Bette Chambers, Sultan Barakat, and Kathryn Rzeszut
- Statistical analysis (if relevant): Frank Hardman, Kathryn Rzeszut, and Brigitte Rohwerder
- Information retrieval: Kathryn Rzeszut and Brigitte Rohwerder
- Report Drafting Sultan Barakat, Frank Hardman, Kathryn Rzeszut, and Brigitte Rohwerder

This division of responsibilities shall not preclude one author from contributing to, backstopping and/or controlling for bias in those elements assigned to the other.

The Review Team has updated the timetable for this study to take into account unforeseen delays in the protocol process. The revised proposed timetable is as follows:

| **Timetable** (some review methods do not include these stages in this order) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Stage of review** | **Start date** | **End date** |
| Submit revised protocol (v3) | 31 July 2012 | 31 July 2012 |
| DFID/EPPI-Centre review of revised protocol | 1 August 2012 | 10 August 2012 |
| Searching for studies | 13 August 2012 | 14 September 2012 |
| Assessing study relevance | 17 September 2012 | 28 September 2012 |
| Extracting data from studies | 1 October 2012 | 26 October 2012 |
| Assessing study quality | 29 October 2012 | 16 November 2012 |
| Synthesising studies | 19 November2012 | 14 December2012 |
| Preparing draft report | 17 December 2012 | 11 January2013 |
| Disseminating draft report and peer review (allow 3 months) | 14 January 2013 | 12 April2013 |
| Revising report with peer review feedback | 15 April 2013 | 26 April 2013 |
| Submission for publication with the EPPI-Centre | 26 April 2013 | 26 April 2013 |

**Contact details**

Post-war Reconstruction and Development Unit
Derwent College, University of York
Heslington, York YO10 5DD, United Kingdom
+44 (0) 1904 322460
sultan.barakat@york.ac.uk /kathryn.rzeszut@york.ac.uk

Institute for Effective Education
Berrick Saul Building, University of York
Heslington, York YO10 5DD, United Kingdom
+44 (0) 1904 328166
frank.hardman@york.ac.uk

**Conflicts of interest (if any)**

Sultan Barakat, Frank Hardman, Brigitte Rohwerder, and Kathryn Rzeszut have no personal, financial, or professional interests which would influence the conduct or outcomes of this systematic review.

**Acknowledgements**

The authors would like to acknowledge the support of the UK Department for International Development (DFID) in initiating this systematic review process and in commissioning this particular review. They would also like to thank the staff of the EPPI-Centre for their support during the protocol development process, particularly Carol Vigurs for her guidance throughout the study.

**Appendix 2: List of Potential Studies to Include**

Alderman, H., Orazem P., and Paterno, E. (2001) 'School Quality, School Cost, and the Public/Private School Choices of Low-Income Households in Pakistan', *The Journal of Human Resources,* Vol. 36, No. 2, pp. 304-326.

Alderman, H., Jooseop, K. and Orazem, P. (2003) 'Design, Evaluation, and Sustainability of Private Schools for the Poor: the Pakistan urban and rural fellowship school experiments', *Economics of Education Review,* Vol. 22, pp. 265-274.

Asadullah, M. N. (2005) *The effectiveness of Private and Public schools in South Asia*. Mimeo

Andrabi, T., Das , J. and Ijaz Khwaja, A. (2006) *A Dime a Day: The Possibilities and Limits of Private Schooling in Pakistan*. World Bank.

Andrabi, T., Das, J. and Ijaz Khwaja, A. (2002) *The Rise of Private Schooling in Pakistan: Catering to the Urban Elite or Educating the Rural Poor?* Working Paper, Harvard University, March 2002.

Batley, R., Hussain, M., Khan, A. R., Mumtaz, Z., Plamer, N., and Sansom, K. (2004) *Pakistan. Study of Non-state Providers of Basic Services*. Commissioned by Policy Division, DFID, UK.

Fennell, S. (2007) *Tilting at windmills: Public- Private partnerships in Indian Education Today*, RECOUP Working Paper 5.

James, E. (1991) 'Public Policies Toward Private Education: An International Comparison', *International Journal of Educational Research*, Vol. 15, pp 359– 376

Jimenez, E. and Peng Tan, J. (1987) 'Decentralised and Private Education: The Case of Pakistan', Comparative Education, Vol. 23, No. 2, pp. 173-190

Kim, J., Alderman, H. and Orazem, P. F. (1999) 'Can Private School Subsidies Increase Enrollment for the Poor? The Quetta Urban Fellowship Program', The World Bank Economic Review, Vol. 13, No. 3, pp. 443-465

Niaz Asadullah, M. (2009) 'Returns to private and public education in Bangladesh and Pakistan: A comparative analysis', Journal of Asian Economics, Vol. 20, pp 77–86

Rose, P. (2006) 'Collaborating in Education for All? Experiences of Government Support for non-state provision of basic education in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa', *Public Administration and Development*, Vol. 26, pp 219–229

Rasool Memon, G. (2007) 'Education in Pakistan: The Key Issues, Problems and The New Challenges' *Journal of Management and Social Sciences,* Vol. 3, No. 1, pp 47-55

Srivastava, P. and Walford, G. (Eds) (2007) *Private Schooling in Less Economically Developed Countries: Asian and African perspectives.* Symposium Books.

Sigsgaard, M. (2009) *Education and Fragility in Afghanistan: A Situational Analysis*. INEE, UNESCO and IIEP.

Tooley, J. (2007) 'Could for-profit private education benefit the poor? Some *a priori* considerations arising from case study research in India', *Journal of Education Policy*, Vol. 22, No. 3, pp 321–342

Turrent, V. (2009) *Expanding Support for Education in Fragile States: What Role for the Education for All – Fast Track Initiative?* CREATE Monograph No. 30.

**Appendix 3: Study characterisation tool**

## DFID Systematic Review Question 29:
## What is the evidence about the sustainable scale-up of low-cost private schools in South and West Asia, in particular in Afghanistan and Pakistan?

# STUDY CHARACTERISATION TOOL
# Concept 1: Low-Cost Private Schools

| | |
|---|---|
| **Coder:** | ○ Sultan Barakat<br>○ Frank Hardman<br>○ Brigitte Rohwerder<br>○ Kathryn Rzeszut<br>○ Other:_____ |

| Section 1: General Study Information | |
|---|---|
| **1.1 In what year was the primary document published?** | |
| **1.2 Type of document:** | o Book<br>o Book Chapter<br>o Government Report<br>o Technical Report<br>(reports by non-government research firms, e.g. Mathematica)<br>o IO/NGO Report<br>(e.g., UNICEF, World Bank, Poverty Action Lab)<br>o Journal<br>(peer reviewed)<br>o Dissertation<br>o Conference Paper<br>o Progress Report/Project Evaluation<br>o Other _____ |
| **1.3 Type of study:** | o RCT<br>o Non-experiment/Descriptive quantitative<br>○ Descriptive qualitative<br>○ Other_____ |
| **1.4 Who conducted the study:** | ○ Independent researchers<br>○ Academics<br>○ Donors<br>○ Evaluation team contracted by donors<br>○ Combination _____ |
| **1.5 Methodology used:** | ○ Desk review<br>○ Field research<br>○ Interviews with donors and beneficiaries<br>○ Quantitative surveys<br>○ Qualitative methods (classroom observation, etc.)<br>○ Other: _____ |
| **1.6 In what country did the study take place?** | |

| | |
|---|---|
| **1.7 Economic classification of country:** | ○ High Income<br>○ Upper Middle Income<br>○ Lower Middle Income<br>○ Low Income |
| **1.8 General classification of country:** | ○ Fragile<br>○ Conflict-Affected<br>○ Neither<br>○ Other:_____ |
| **1.9 Study setting:** | ○ Urban<br>○ Rural<br>○ Mixed<br>○ Other:_____ |
| **1.10 Other information provided on the context of the study** | |
| **1.11 To which concept does the study relate?** | ○ Low-cost private schools<br>○ Sustainable scale-up (Go to Section 3) |
| **Section 2: Information Specific to Low-Cost Private Schools** | |
| **2.1 What was the type of private school?** | ○ Fee-paying, for-profit, low-cost<br>○ Fee-paying, for-profit, low-cost with scholarships available<br>○ Fee-paying, for-profit, low-cost with government vouchers<br>○ Fee-paying, for-profit, low-cost with government subsidies<br>○ IO/NGO or charity funded<br>○ Private company funded<br>○ Religious<br>○ Other:_____ |
| **2.2 In which of these education indicators has the private school seen an increase?** | ○ Graduation rates<br>○ Test results<br>○ Accessed by disadvantaged groups<br>○ None<br>○ Not Mentioned<br>○ Other:_____ |
| **2.3 In which of these education indicators has the private school seen a decrease?** | ○ Graduation rates<br>○ Test results<br>○ Accessed by disadvantaged groups<br>○ Other:_____<br>○ None<br>○ Not Mentioned |
| **2.4 In which of these education indicators has the private school seen no change?** | ○ Graduation rates<br>○ Test results<br>○ Accessed by disadvantaged groups<br>○ Other:_____<br>○ None<br>○ Not Mentioned |

| | |
|---|---|
| **2.5 Which of these activities has the school been able to perform?** | ○ Attract and retain teachers<br>○ Maintain low fees<br>○ Find suitable premises<br>○ Find sustainable long-term funding<br>○ Implement long-term sustainable business model<br>○ Other:_____ |
| **2.6 Is the school the first choice of parents?** | ○ Yes<br>○ No<br>○ Not Mentioned |
| **2.7 Has the school been able to retain pupils?** | ○ Yes<br>○ No<br>○ Not Mentioned |
| **2.8 Does the school have government certification?** | ○ Yes<br>○ No<br>○ Not Mentioned |
| **Section 3: Information on Interventions Examined in Studies** | |
| **3.1 In which part of the education sector was the intervention implemented?** | ○ Pre-school<br>○ Primary<br>○ Secondary<br>○ Tertiary<br>○ Teacher Training<br>○ Education reform<br>○ Curriculum<br>○ Other:_____ |
| **3.2 Provide a brief description of the intervention:** | |
| **3.3 Who implemented the intervention?** | ○ Government<br>○ Donor<br>○ NGO<br>○ Community<br>○ Other:_____ |
| **3.4 What type of intervention was it?** | ○ Private led<br>○ Public-private partnership |
| **3.5 How long did the school/intervention remain open?** | ○ Less than a year<br>○ 1-3 Years<br>○ 3-5 Years<br>○ More than 5 years<br><br>(Specific Length of Time:_____) |
| **3.6 Which vulnerable groups were addressed in the study and/or the intervention?** | ○ Female participation<br>○ Disabled children<br>○ Marginalised castes<br>○ Children from families living below the poverty line<br>○ Children from displaced or refugee families<br>○ Other:_____ |

| | |
|---|---|
| **3.7 What challenges to development are mentioned in the study?** | ○ Conflict<br>○ Natural Disasters<br>○ Funding<br>○ Attendance<br>○ Access<br>○ Development<br>○ Security<br>○ Poverty<br>○ Other:_____ |
| **3.8 What aspect of programme delivery was impacted by these challenges?** | ○ Access<br>○ Provision<br>○ Quality<br>○ Other:_____ |
| **3.9 What were the outcomes of the intervention?** | |
| **Section 4: Information Specific to Scale-Up of Interventions** | |
| **4.1 Is scale-up of the intervention addressed in the study?** | ○ Specifically addressed<br>○ Broadly addressed<br>○ Not addressed |
| **4.2 What type of scale-up is discussed?** | ○ Increasing beneficiary/pupil numbers<br>○ Opening more schools/interventions<br>○ Increasing access to disadvantaged groups<br>○ Other:_____ |
| **4.3 Briefly describe the scale-up mechanism/process:** | |
| **4.4 How large is the scale-up?** | ○ Small (0-50 beneficiaries/pupils affected)<br>○ Medium (51-200 beneficiaries/pupils affected)<br>○ Large (201+ beneficiaries/pupils affected) |
| **4.5 In what year did the scale-up begin?** | |
| **4.6 Over what length of time did the scale-up occur?** | ○ A year or less<br>○ 1-3 years<br>○ 3-5 years<br>○ More than 5 years |
| **4.7 What was the outcome of the scale-up?** | |
| **4.8 Was the scale-up considered successful?** | ○ Yes<br>○ No<br>○ Other: _____ |
| **4.9 How has the scale-up been received by the impacted community?** | ○ Positive<br>○ Negative<br>○ Not Mentioned |
| **Section 5: Study's Conclusions** | |
| **5.1 What were the study's main conclusions?** | |
| **5.2 What, did the study conclude, were the intervention's main areas of success?** | |

| | |
|---|---|
| **5.3 What, did the study conclude, were the intervention's challenges?** | |
| **5.4 What were the study's recommendations for further action, if any?** | |

**Appendix 4: Study quality appraisal tool**

## DFID Systematic Review Question 29: What is the evidence about the sustainable scale-up of low-cost private schools in South and West Asia, in particular in Afghanistan and Pakistan?

## STUDY QUALITY APPRAISAL TOOL

| | |
|---|---|
| **Coder:** | ○ Sultan Barakat<br>○ Frank Hardman<br>○ Brigitte Rohwerder<br>○ Kathryn Rzeszut<br>○ Other:_____ |

| Question | Responses | Points |
|---|---|---|
| **Section 1: Sampling** | | |
| **1.1 Were steps taken to improve the rigor of the study sample?** | ○ Yes, a thorough attempt was made (4)<br>○ Yes, several steps were taken (3)<br>○ Yes, a few steps were taken (2)<br>○ Yes (1)<br>○ No, not at all (0)<br>○ Not stated (0)<br>○ Cannot tell (0) | |
| **1.2 Was the study's sampling size appropriate, well-reasoned, and justified given the study's topic and research question?** | ○ Yes, it was very appropriate (4)<br>○ Yes, it was somewhat appropriate (3)<br>○ Yes, it was slightly appropriate (2)<br>○ Yes (1)<br>○ No, not at all (0)<br>○ Not stated (0)<br>○ Cannot tell (0) | |
| **1.3 Were attempts made to obtain a diverse sample?** | ○ Yes, a thorough attempt was made (4)<br>○ Yes, several steps were taken (3)<br>○ Yes, a few steps were taken (2)<br>○ Yes (1)<br>○ No, not at all (0)<br>○ Not stated (0)<br>○ Cannot tell (0) | |
| **1.4 Were the characteristics of the sample important to the understanding of the study context and research findings?** | ○ Yes, they were very important (4)<br>○ Yes, they were somewhat important (3)<br>○ Yes, they was slightly important (2)<br>○ Yes (1)<br>○ No, not at all (0)<br>○ Not stated (0)<br>○ Cannot tell (0) | |

| Section 2: Data Collection | | |
|---|---|---|
| **2.1 Were steps taken to improve the rigor of the collected data?** | ○ Yes, a thorough attempt was made (4)<br>○ Yes, several steps were taken (3)<br>○ Yes, a few steps were taken (2)<br>○ Yes (1)<br>○ No, not at all (0)<br>○ Not stated (0)<br>○ Cannot tell (0) | |
| **2.2 Were the data collection tools piloted and/or validated** | ○ Yes (1)<br>○ No (0)<br>○ Not stated (0)<br>○ Cannot tell (0) | |
| **2.3 If the data was qualitative, was the data collection comprehensive, flexible, and sensitive enough to provide a thorough and complete description of the research topic?** | ○ Yes, a it was thoroughly comprehensive (4)<br>○ Yes, it was somewhat comprehensive (3)<br>○ Yes, it was slightly comprehensive (2)<br>○ Yes (1)<br>○ No, not at all (0)<br>○ Not stated (0)<br>○ Cannot tell (0) | |
| **2.4 If the primary basis of the study was field research, was an appropriate amount of time allotted for a thorough data collection period?** | ○ Yes, more than enough time was allotted (1)<br>○ Yes, sufficient time was allotted(2)<br>○ Yes (1)<br>○ No, not at all (0)<br>○ Not stated (0)<br>○ Cannot tell (0) | |
| **2.5 Did the study employ more than one method of data collection?** | ○ Yes (1)<br>○ No (0)<br>○ Not stated (0)<br>○ Cannot tell (0) | |
| **2.6 Were steps taken to mitigate potential barriers such as language and cross-cultural differences?** | ○ Yes, a thorough attempt was made (4)<br>○ Yes, several steps were taken (3)<br>○ Yes, a few steps were taken (2)<br>○ Yes (1)<br>○ No, not at all (0)<br>○ Not stated (0)<br>○ Cannot tell (0) | |
| **Section 3: Data Analysis** | | |
| **3.1 Were steps taken to increase the rigor of the data analysis?** | ○ Yes, a thorough attempt was made (4)<br>○ Yes, several steps were taken (3)<br>○ Yes, a few steps were taken (2)<br>○ Yes (1)<br>○ No, not at all (0)<br>○ Not stated (0)<br>○ Cannot tell (0) | |
| **3.2 Was a methodology described or can one be discerned?** | ○ Yes (1)<br>○ No (0) | |
| **3.3 Was the data analysis methodology systematic?** | ○ Yes (1)<br>○ No (0)<br>○ Cannot tell (0) | |
| **3.4 Did the analysis explore diverse perspectives?** | ○ Yes (1)<br>○ No (0) | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **3.5 Did the analysis seek to rule out alternative explanations for the research findings?** (In the case of mostly qualitative research, this can be accomplished through the search for negative cases or exceptions, providing preliminary results to research participants, independent data review, or reflexivity.) | ○ Yes (1)<br>○ No (0)<br>○ Not stated (0)<br>○ Cannot tell (0) | |
| **Section 4: Study Findings** | | |
| **4.1 Were steps taken to increase the rigor of the data analysis?** | ○ Yes, thoroughly grounded (3)<br>○ Yes (2)<br>○ Yes, somewhat grounded (1)<br>○ No, not at all (0)<br>○ Not stated (0)<br>○ Cannot tell (0) | |
| **4.2 Was enough data presented to demonstrate how the authors arrived at their findings?** | ○ Yes (1)<br>○ No (0) | |
| **4.3 Did the presented data fit the interpretation and support claims about the data patterns?** | ○ Yes (1)<br>○ No (0)<br>○ Cannot tell (0) | |
| **4.4 Did the presented data illustrate the findings?** | ○ Yes (1)<br>○ No (0)<br>○ Cannot tell (0) | |
| **4.5 If the data is qualitative, were the quotes indentified in such a way that it was clear that they originated from more than one or two people?** | ○ Yes (1)<br>○ No (0)<br>○ Cannot tell (0) | |
| **Section 5: Breadth and Depth of Study Findings** | | |
| **5.1 Does the study cover a range of issues?** | ○ Yes, there is good breadth and depth (3)<br>○ Yes, there is good breadth, but little depth (2)<br>○ Yes, there is good depth, but little breadth (1)<br>○ No, there is little breadth or depth (0) | |
| **5.2 Are the perspectives of the research participants fully explored in breadth (the contrast of two or more p** | ○ Yes, there is good breadth and depth (3)<br>○ Yes, there is good breadth, but little depth (2)<br>○ Yes, there is good depth, but little breadth (1)<br>○ No, there is little breadth or depth (0) | |
| **5.3 Does the study develop theoretically and/or conceptually?** | ○ Yes (1)<br>○ No (0)<br>○ Cannot tell (0) | |

| Section 6: Measurement of Study Quality | | |
|---|---|---|
| **6.1 What weight would you assign this study in terms of its reliability and trustworthiness of its findings?** | ○ High (3)<br>○ Medium (2)<br>○ Low (1) | |
| **6.2 What weight would you assign this study in terms of the usefulness of its findings in terms of this review?** | ○ High (3)<br>○ Medium (2)<br>○ Low (1) | |
| **6.3 What weight would you assign the match between the study aims and findings and the aims and purpose of its synthesis** | ○ High (3)<br>○ Medium (2)<br>○ Low (1) | |
| **6.4 What weight would you assign the study's conceptual depth?** | ○ High (3)<br>○ Medium (2)<br>○ Low (1) | |
| **6.5 What weight would you assign the study's explanatory power?** | ○ High (3)<br>○ Medium (2)<br>○ Low (1) | |
| **6.6 What weight would you assign this study's ability to contribute to the formulation of a theory related to the sustainable scale-up of low-cost private schools in South and West Asia, particularly in Pakistan and Afghanistan?** | ○ High (3)<br>○ Medium (2)<br>○ Low (1) | |
| **Study's Total Quality Assessment Score:** | | |
| **Study's Ranking (out of total # of studies):** | | |

First produced in 2012 by:

Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre (EPPI-Centre)
Social Science Research Unit
Institute of Education, University of London
18 Woburn Square
London WC1H 0NR

Tel: +44 (0)20 7612 6367

http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/
http://www.ioe.ac.uk/ssru/

The **Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre** (EPPI-Centre) is part of the Social Science Research Unit (SSRU), Institute of Education, University of London.

The EPPI-Centre was established in 1993 to address the need for a systematic approach to the organisation and review of evidence-based work on social interventions. The work and publications of the Centre engage health and education policy makers, practitioners and service users in discussions about how researchers can make their work more relevant and how to use research findings.

Founded in 1990, the Social Science Research Unit (SSRU) is based at the Institute of Education, University of London. Our mission is to engage in and otherwise promote rigorous, ethical and participative social research as well as to support evidence-informed public policy and practice across a range of domains including education, health and welfare, guided by a concern for human rights, social justice and the development of human potential.

The views expressed in this work are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the EPPI-Centre or the funder. All errors and omissions remain those of the authors.

This document is available in a range of accessible formats including large print. Please contact the Institute of Education for assistance:

telephone: +44 (0)20 7947 9556 email: info@ioe.ac.uk