

ARE MINIGRIDS SOCIALLY INCLUSIVE?

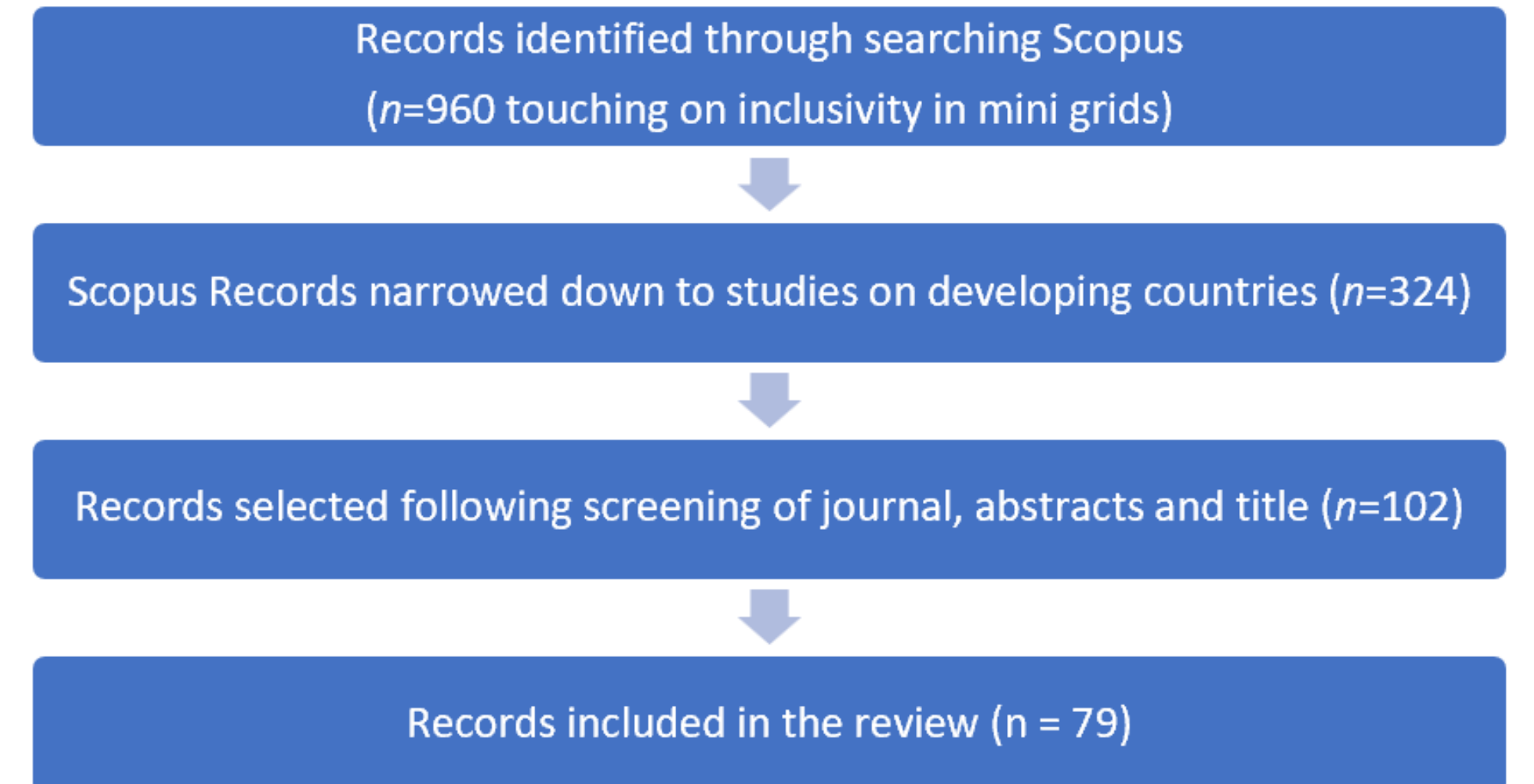
Authors: Onsongo, E., Onjala, B.; Kausya, M.; Baker, L.; Sesan, T; Bhattacharyya, S.

ABSTRACT

- ◆ Mini-grids play a transformative role in the Global South by providing electricity to marginalized communities, yet their inclusivity often masks underlying socio-economic disparities.
- ◆ Through a comprehensive literature review and analysis, this paper reveals gaps in inclusiveness and proposes policy recommendations to enhance minigrids' social impact.
- ◆ Main finding: There is a need for more democratic ownership and governance models for minigrid projects to ensure equitable access and empowerment.

METHODOLOGY

- ◆ **Keywords for material collection:** •minigrid, mini grid, offgrid, off grid, decentral, electric, sustainable, inclusi, poverty, gender, productiv, household, Business, enterprise, welfare, supply chain, employment, labour, labor, livelihood, income, energy justice, socio technical
- ◆ **Timeframe:** 1988 - 2022
- ◆ **Descriptive analysis:** Authors, year of publication, journal/publication name, region/ countries, discipline
- ◆ Coding of papers by researchers

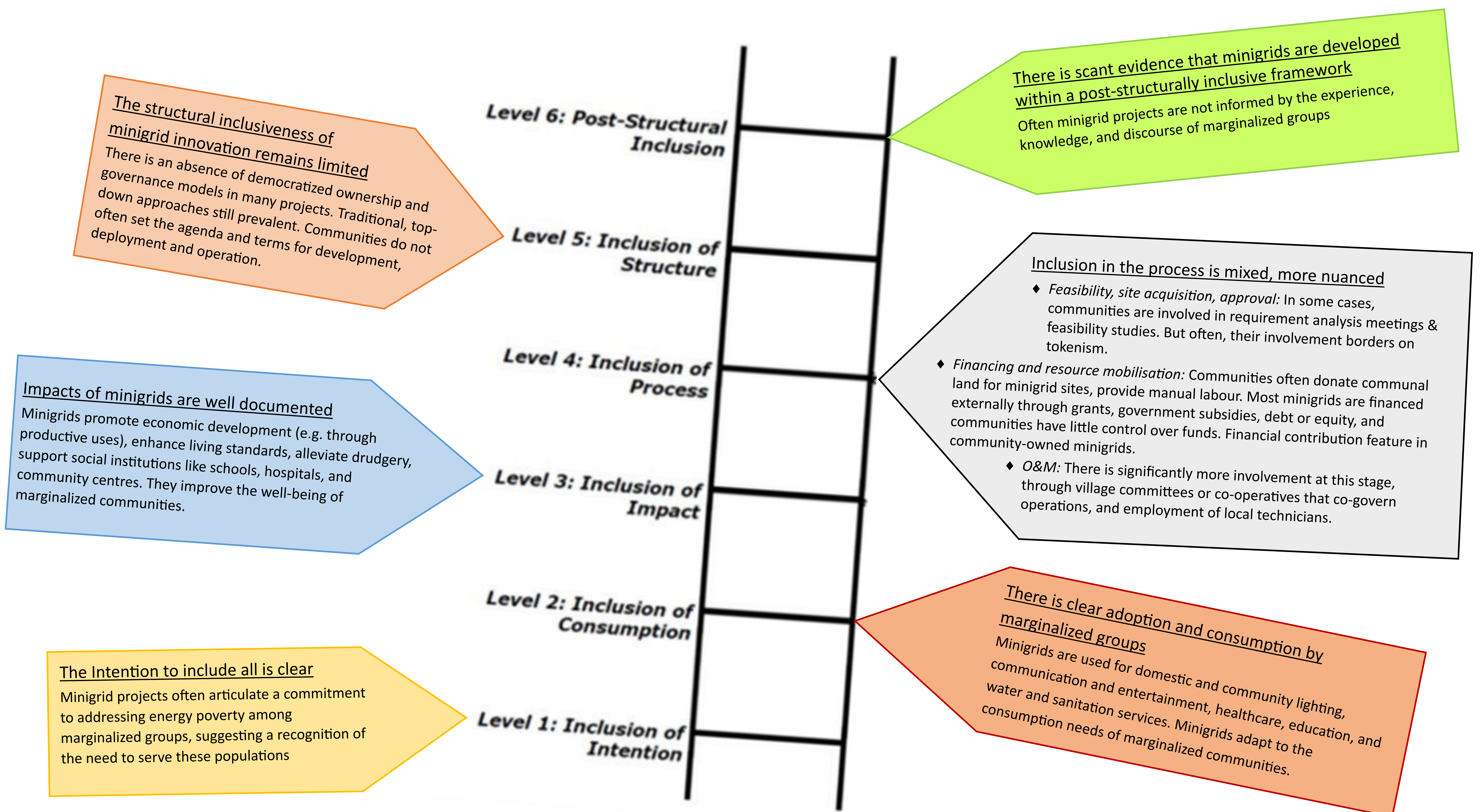


THEORY

- ◆ We analyse the literature through the lens of the Ladder of Inclusive Innovation, applying both the market-oriented liberal-individualist stance and equity-centered social-collectivist stance to understand inclusivity

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

- ◆ Minigrids demonstrate strong market orientation by providing accessible energy solutions but often fall short in addressing deeper socio-political dimensions of exclusion.
- ◆ While some initiatives show promise in community engagement, overall participation in planning, decision-making, and governance remains limited.
- ◆ Minigrids have yet to fully bridge income and gender disparities within beneficiary communities, often exacerbating existing inequalities.
- ◆ Positive impacts on community welfare and economic opportunities are noted, yet the distribution of these benefits is uneven across different societal strata.



CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◆ Develop policies that support hybrid financing models, blending public, private, and community resources.
- ◆ Foster community ownership models to enhance local engagement and benefit sharing.
- ◆ Encourage capacity building and technical training for marginalized groups to ensure equitable participation in minigrid initiatives.
- ◆ Explore innovative governance structures that integrate market-driven efficiency with community-based decision-making processes.

© Sustainability, Inclusiveness and Governance of Mini-Grids in Africa (SIGMA) Project. Contact—Prof. Subhes Bhattacharyya, s.c.bhattacharyya@surrey.ac.uk

Visit: <https://www.sigma-gcrf.net/>