

#### About the editors

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**Frances Pene** was born in England and obtained her tertiary qualifications at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne and London University. She has spent all her working life in Fiji. For many years she was a secondary school teacher of English in schools across Fiji, after which she moved into the field of teacher training, working for four years at the Fiji College of Advanced Education. Then came a career change and she is currently an editor at the Institute of Education, USP. She has authored and co-authored school texts, and edited many academic books and journals.

*Inclusive Education in the Pacific* is the sixth publication in the PRIDE Project's *Pacific Education Series*.

This latest publication is an outcome of PRIDE's eighth regional workshop held in Nadi, Fiji from 1st – 5th October, 2007. PRIDE worked in close partnership with five other development partners and the Fiji Ministry of Education in the planning, implementation and funding of this workshop on inclusive education.

The workshop was attended by a total of 44 people: regional participants from 13 Forum countries and Tokelau, resource persons, representatives from the seven partners and three observers.

The book contains 14 chapters, written by the workshop resource people, participants and presenters. The topics range from the philosophical underpinnings of inclusive education to practical guidelines for inclusive practices in schools, with a special focus on the education of children with disabilities.

Chapter 1 contains the opening speech of the workshop given by the Fiji Permanent Secretary for Education, Ms Emi Rabukawaqa. This is followed by a chapter that describes how the PRIDE Project is assisting countries to implement the sections of their education strategic plans that relate to the education of children and youths with disabilities. Chapters 3 and 4 draw on international literature on inclusive education and demonstrate two sides in the inclusive education versus special education debate.

Chapters 5 to 7 provide comprehensive coverage of the international and regional conventions concerning the education of people with disabilities, and guidelines for their inclusion in national education systems are covered in Chapter 6, narrowing down to the education of children and youths with vision impairments in Chapter 7.

The voices of two key inclusive education stakeholders—a parent and a disabled people's association—are provided in Chapters 8 and 9, followed by three case studies on the practice of inclusive education in Samoa, Tonga and Palau. The insights gathered by the workshop 'critical friend' and workshop evaluator are presented in Chapter 13. The final chapter is the workshop outcomes document. This includes specific suggestions for strategies to move inclusive education forward in the Pacific region at three levels: regional, national and school.

This book is intended primarily for providers, practitioners, academics, professionals, teacher educators, policy-makers, disabled persons' associations, NGOs and researchers engaged in the areas of inclusive education and the education of children with disabilities.



## Inclusive Education in the Pacific

# Inclusive Education in the Pacific

*Edited by  
Priscilla Puamau and Frances Pene*



The PRIDE Project  
Pacific Education Series No.6  
2009



The PRIDE Project is financed by the European Union and NZAID through the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and implemented by the Institute of Education at USP.

*Inclusive Education in the Pacific* is an outcome of a regional workshop held in Nadi, Fiji from 1-5 October 2007 in close partnership with the Fiji Ministry of Education and five other regional partners—PIFS, PREL, SPBEA, UNESCO and UNICEF. It was PRIDE's eighth regional workshop.

The workshop was attended by a total of 44 participants. They include 24 regional participants from 13 Forum countries and Tokelau—high level decision-makers and experts from national Ministries of Education working in the area of inclusive education, and key non-governmental stakeholders engaged in supporting inclusive education; resource persons; representatives from the seven partners and three observers.

The book contains 14 chapters written by the workshop resource people, participants and presenters. The topics range from the philosophical underpinnings of inclusive education to practical guidelines for inclusive practices in schools, focusing specifically on the education of children with disabilities. There are two chapters in which the voice of a parent and that of an NGO are heard; three case studies of inclusive education provision in Tonga, Samoa and Palau; and the workshop outcomes document containing strategies to advance inclusive education in the Pacific at the regional, national and school levels.

Inclusive education providers, practitioners, academics, professionals, teacher educators, policy-makers, disabled people's associations, NGOs and researchers in the areas of inclusive education and the education of children with disabilities will find this book useful.

# **Inclusive Education in the Pacific**

The PRIDE Project  
Institute of Education  
University of the South Pacific

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Edited by Priscilla Puamau and Frances Pene

# Inclusive Education in the Pacific



*Edited by*  
*Priscilla Puamau and Frances Pene*

Pacific Education Series No. 6

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Institute of Education  
University of the South Pacific  
2009

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Photographs: The photo on the title page was taken by Rachel Brindal, an AusAID volunteer at the Saleilua Primary School, Samoa. It shows Sina Eteuati, who was trained and employed under the PRIDE Inclusive Education subproject in Samoa, teaching a group of Year 4 students a song in sign language. The photo on the front cover was taken by Priscilla Puamau. It shows Tuilaepa Malielegaoi, Principal of Fugalii School, Luaiva Solomona, a teacher aide, and, in her lap, Luisa, a Year 1 student who is deaf. The other students are Year 1 students. The group photo on page 177 was taken by Agfa Photography.

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## Preface

This is the sixth publication in the Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of basic Education (PRIDE) Project's Pacific Education Series, published by the Institute of Education, University of the South Pacific.

The book is an outcome of the regional workshop on inclusive education (IE) that was a collaborative effort between the PRIDE Project, five other development partners—Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL), the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), the South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment (SPBEA), UNESCO and UNICEF—and the Fiji Ministry of Education. The workshop was held from 1st to 5th October 2007 in Nadi, Fiji.

Another exciting outcome of this regional workshop was the opportunity to influence policy. A list of recommendations was presented to the Forum Ministers of Education meeting held in Auckland in November 2007 which were endorsed and have subsequently been added to the Forum Basic Education Action Plan.

We are grateful to many people for making this book possible. First, we thank the local, regional and international resource people, participants and development partners—champions of IE—whose names are included at the back of the book. In particular, we acknowledge the expertise and input from Frederick Miller (PIFS), Setareki Macanawai (Pacific Disabilities Forum – PDF) and Penelope Price (international IE consultant), who provided much-needed guidance on the content and structure of the workshop. Many thanks also go to the development partners—Dr Visessio Pongi (UNESCO), Dr Richard Wah (SPBEA), Dr Helen Tavola, Ms Monica Fong and Mr Frederick Miller (PIFS), Mr Setareki Macanawai (PDF), Mr Kamrul Islam and Dr Nikhat Shameem (UNESCO), and Dr Tom Barlow and Dr Hilda Heini (PREL), who, together with PRIDE staff, formed the workshop organising committee. We also are grateful for the support that was provided by the Fiji Ministry of Education, particularly the Permanent Secretary, Mrs Emi Rabukawaqa, for her opening address; the Fiji PRIDE National Project Coordinator, Mr Filipe Jitoko; and Mrs Maresilina Tabalailai for organising our field visits to the Nadi Centre for Special Education and Nadi Sangam College. We

thank also the principal, teachers and students of these two schools. Ms Rebekah McCullough's input as critical friend and stand-in for resource person Penelope Price is also deeply appreciated. Penelope's invaluable contribution to the workshop is sincerely acknowledged, as she sent in her presentation when she found she could not attend due to unforeseeable circumstances. A special thank you also goes to all the panelists representing consumers, providers and professionals engaged in IE work, as well as all the regional participants.



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## **Portraits of the contributors**

### **Angeline Chand**

Angeline Chand was born and educated in Fiji and began her career as an advocate and lobbyist for people with disabilities in 1998. She has attended many national, regional and international workshops and meetings and served on many committees and boards. These include being Fiji's delegate to the World Blind Union from 2000 to 2008, being a board member of FemLink Pacific, being chair of the World Blind Union's Asia-Pacific Women's Committee from 1998 to 2002 and serving on the Fiji National Council for Disabled Persons from 2004 to 2006. She is currently Secretary and Vice-President Operations in the Fiji Disabled People's Association.

### **Fesi Filipe**

Fesi Filipe graduated from the University of the South Pacific with a BA GCED, majoring in Geography and History. She has taught for more than 27 years—14 years in secondary schools and 13 years at tertiary level as a teacher educator. Fesi is currently the Head of the School of Social Sciences at the Fiji College of Advanced Education. Her professional interests are curriculum development, especially the present internal assessment programme and the national curriculum framework the Fiji Ministry of Education's Curriculum Development Unit is currently implementing. Fesi has been involved in assessment and evaluation work for the Ministry of Education for the past decade. As the mother of an autistic child, Fesi has become very interested in special education and its current provision in Fiji.

### **Frances Gentle**

Frances Gentle is Lecturer in Vision Impairment at the University of Newcastle, Australia, which is affiliated to the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children's Renwick Centre. Prior to 2006, Frances was a vision support teacher for 11 years at St. Edmund's School for Students with Vision Impairment and Other Special Needs, Sydney. Frances has worked in the education and disability fields for over 20 years. In 1994-5 she taught at the American School in Japan, the Tokyo International Learning Centre for international students with special needs, and the Vocational Development Centre for the Blind in Tokyo. Prior to 1994,

Frances taught in regular and special educational settings in Sydney, within the government and Catholic education sectors.

Frances' professional qualifications include a Masters Degree in Special Education with Honours (Sensory Disability) from the University of Newcastle; a Bachelor of Education (Special Education) from the University of New England; and a Bachelor of Arts and Diploma of Education from Macquarie University.

Her current professional associations include Pacific Chairperson of the International Council for the Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI), Vice-Chair of the Australian Braille Authority (ABA), Immediate Past-Convener of the NSW Subcommittee of the ABA, ICEVI representative for South Pacific Educators in Vision Impairment, a member of the editorial committee of the *Journal of South Pacific Educators in Vision Impairment*, and a member of the ABA Examinations Board. Frances is also a member of the Round Table on Access for People with a Print Disability, the Australian Literacy Educators' Association and the Australian Association of Special Education.

### **Joyce Heeraman**

Joyce Heeraman is originally from Trinidad, an island nation in the Caribbean, where she grew up and obtained her teacher training and first degree qualifications. Joyce taught in primary and secondary schools in Trinidad and was also a lecturer for three years at the Government Teacher Training College before coming to Fiji. Her other qualifications, which were obtained from the University of the South Pacific, are a Certificate in English as a Second Language, a Diploma in Guidance and Counselling, a Post-graduate Diploma (Psychology), and an MA in Education.

Joyce taught in primary schools in Fiji for fourteen years before joining the University of the South Pacific in 1991, where she is a lecturer in the School of Education, Faculty of Arts and Law. Her areas of special interest are: learning disability, giftedness, intellectual impairment and psychometric assessment.

### **Malakai Kaufusi**

Malakai Kaufusi was the Inclusive Education Project Officer for the Ministry of Education, Women Affairs and Culture in Tonga. Funded by the Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of basic Education (PRIDE) Project, Malakai was recruited and contracted to draft the Ministry of Education's Inclusive Education policy. Born and raised in the United States, Malakai received tertiary degrees in Pre-Medicine and Psychology-Child Behaviour Disorders from Brigham Young University (Idaho) and the University of Utah in Salt Lake City. Malakai continued his post-graduate studies in social work at Portland State University in Oregon and the University of Nevada in Las Vegas. For over 20 years Malakai has worked with marginalised individuals and vulnerable populations in many fields of disability. He was the disability focal point for Tonga and was involved in regional United Nations expert meetings on disability and gender. His areas of interest include policy development for vulnerable populations, early intervention policy, monitoring and evaluation of social policy, and technology and multi media solutions for developing countries.

### **Donna Lene**

Donna Lene gained a Diploma in Primary and Special Schools, specialising in Hearing Impairment, from Mount Gravatt College of Advanced Education, Queensland, Australia, in 1982. In 2005, she was awarded a Graduate Certificate in Education, Leadership and Management and followed that with an MA in Education, Leadership and Management (with Merit), both from Newcastle University, NSW. In 2005, she was awarded best thesis in the Faculty of Education of Newcastle University.

Donna's work experience includes being an Australian volunteer at the school for the deaf, Loto Taumafai Society for People with Disabilities in Samoa, 1990-91. She later became President of the Society, a post she held from 2000 to 2004. Donna is currently Coordinator for the PRIDE subproject on the establishment of Sustainable Systems for Inclusive Education in the Samoa Ministry of Education Sport and Culture. A recent achievement is the merging of a segregated special school with a regular primary school to create an inclusive education setting, the Senese Junior Preparatory School, of which she is currently Principal.

In 2002-3, Donna mentored the President of the disability self help organisation *Nuanua o le Alofa* (Rainbow of Love) in Samoa, supporting him as co-chair of the disability action task force. She has also designed and implemented an interim United Nations Development Programme project: 'Empowering people with disabilities in rural settings'. This involved improving access to quality inclusive education for rural dwellers, the production of a sign language DVD to be used for community-based rehabilitation, and the establishment of an ICT<sup>1</sup> learning centre for children with a diverse range of learning needs. She also coordinated the Samoa Adult Disability Identification survey in 2002 and co-chaired a Disability Action Task Force that involved key non-government and government stakeholders.

Donna is author of *The Status of Women with Disabilities in Samoa*, published by Inailau Women's Leadership Network and Inclusion International, 2003. She is fluent in English, Samoan Sign Language, Signed English and Auslan, the Australian sign language.

### **Setareki Macanawai**

Setareki Macanawai, a Fiji Islander, was appointed the first Chief Executive Officer for the Pacific Disability Forum (PDF) in January 2007. Setareki graduated from Corpus Christi Teachers' College in Suva in 1985 with a Primary Teachers' Certificate and then studied at the Auckland College of Education in New Zealand, graduating with a Diploma in the Education of Visually Impaired Children in 1988. His first post was at the Fiji School for the Blind, the only special school for blind and vision-impaired children in Fiji. He worked there first as a teacher and then as principal between 1986 and 2001. He then joined the Fiji National Council for Disabled Persons in 2004 as its Executive Director. In December 2006 he resigned to join the PDF.

Setareki attended the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (UTC) for two semesters between 1993 and 1994. In 1998, he gained a Bachelor of Education (Special Education) and a Masters degree in Educational Administration (Honours) at the University of New England (UNE), Armidale, Australia. Setareki

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1. information communication technology

was awarded the Faculty Medal at UNE, and the Residential Scholar Award at UTC for meritorious academic achievement. In 2002, Setareki received the 6th Kazuo Itoga Memorial Foundation Award in Otsu, Shiga, Japan for outstanding contribution to disability development work in the Asian/Pacific Region.

Setareki is a leading disability advocate in Asia and the Pacific region, and has served on the committees of Disabled People's International (DPI), the World Blind Union and the International Council for the Education of People with Vision Impairment. He has presented papers at regional and international meetings organised by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, DPI, the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment and the Asia-Pacific Development Centre on Disability. He has also served as a member of the Programme Advisory Group for the Department for International Development's Disability Knowledge and Research Programme, and was external collaborator to the International Labour Organisation's Asia-Pacific review of the Asian-Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons. In 2002, he was Education Task Force Co-Coordinator for the Regional NGO Network on Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons.

### **Rebekah McCullough**

Rebekah McCullough was raised in Missouri, USA and gained a BS in Special Education and MA in Education from the University of Missouri, U.S.A. In the early 1970s, she was a special class teacher in Porirua, New Zealand, where she worked to promote the concept of mainstreaming (as it was called at the time). She returned to the USA in the mid-1970s and worked as a special class teacher in primary schools and as an early intervention teacher.

In 1982, Rebekah returned to New Zealand where she worked for Intellectually Handicapped Children (IHC), now called Intellectual Disability Empowerment in Action Services, training staff, families and supporters of those with an intellectual disability. She developed the Centre for Learning, the training and development arm of IHC. During this time she became involved in the work of the South Pacific Disability Council and volunteered in a number of Pacific countries.

In 1998, Rebekah established Sumac Consultants and worked within the Pacific Region in the disability sector for the next ten years. She has worked in partnership with key stakeholders, including people with disabilities, families and caregivers, teachers, health workers, government and non-government organisations to promote the rights and participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of their lives and societies. She has a special interest in inclusive education philosophy and practices and has worked in this area in several Pacific nations. She has compiled two booklets for UNESCO<sup>2</sup> on the topic of inclusive education in the Pacific and was a keynote speaker at the 32nd Pacific Circle Consortium Conference on this subject.

Rebekah is committed to advocating for the rights of marginalised people in our societies through education and development that maintains the integrity and values of those involved and by building on the strengths and capacities of all who will benefit.

### **Frederick Max Miller**

Frederick Max Miller was educated at St. John's College and went on to Corpus Christi Teachers' College. He taught at Cathedral Secondary School for 17 years, after which he completed a Masters degree in Health Science, majoring in Disability Services and Inclusive Education, at Deakin University in Melbourne, Australia. In 2000, he returned to Fiji and was Principal of Champagnat Institute for five years before joining the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat as their Disability Coordination Officer, working in the Policy, Coordination and Advice Programme.

### **Emi Salusaludrau Rabukawaqa**

Emi Salusaludrau Rabukawaqa gained a BA from Auckland University, New Zealand in 1971 and a Diploma in Secondary Teaching from Auckland College of Education the following year. In 1977 she was awarded an Associateship of the University of London.

Emi began her career as a teacher in 1973 at Adi Cakobau School in Fiji, specialising in social science. From 1975 to 1987 she was Senior Education Officer in the

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2. United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organisation



Fiji Ministry of Education, responsible for the design, development, teaching and evaluation of the geography and social science curriculum in secondary schools. Promotion to Principal Education Officer and then Chief Education officer followed, culminating in her appointment as Permanent Secretary for Education in 2007.

Emi serves or has served on numerous boards and committees—as a member (the Fiji National Training Council/Training and Productivity Authority of Fiji, the South Pacific Board of Educational Assessment, the University of the South Pacific (USP) Institute of Education Advisory Board, the USP Council, the Fiji College of Advanced Education and Lautoka Teachers' College Management Boards and the Fiji Broadcasting Corporation Board)—and as chair (the Fiji Institute of Technology Council, the Education Forum and the National Education For All Forum). Her publications include numerous social science curriculum materials for Fiji schoolchildren and teachers.

### **Emery Wenty**

Emery Wenty is the Director of Education for the Republic of Palau and the State Education Agency Federal Grant Coordinator for Palau. He also serves as the PRIDE Project National Coordinator and Education For All Coordinator. Mr Wenty has a BA degree in English and philosophy and a BSc degree in business administration, both from Fort Hays State University in Kansas, USA, as well as a master's degree in education supervision and administration from the University of Guam. Mr Wenty has served in the public education sector for 26 years, first as a classroom teacher, then as a school principal, and now as the Director of Education.

Mr Wenty's professional affiliations and memberships are many: he is the Founding President of the Association of Palau Principals, the Vice Chair of the Peleliu State Health Council and a member of several government groups—the Interagency Coordinating Group, the National Emergency Committee and the Sustainable Tourism Task Force. He chairs the Palau Education Master Plan Steering Committee and is Secretary/Treasurer of the Palau Red Cross Society.

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**Opening Address at the Regional Workshop on  
Advancing Inclusive Education in the Pacific  
Nadi, Fiji, 1 – 5 October 2007**

*Emi Rabukawaqa*

*Permanent Secretary for Education, Fiji Ministry of Education*

On this occasion of the coming together of participants from the fourteen Forum Island countries and Tokelau, in collaboration with the organisers and invited guests, I take this opportunity on behalf of the Government and people of Fiji to welcome you warmly to the Regional Workshop on Advancing Inclusive Education in the Pacific.

I wish to acknowledge the presence of representatives of the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat, Pacific Resources for Education and Learning, the University of the South Pacific, Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of basic Education, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, the South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment and the Fiji Ministry of Education and thank them for organising this workshop.

I also acknowledge the presence of local, regional and international keynote speakers and resource personnel, from whom we anticipate not only information, but also refreshing and dynamic perspectives on advancing inclusive education in the Pacific.

The term *advancing* in the theme for the workshop challenges us to continue to press forward with purpose and commitment towards an inclusive education system in the Pacific region; one which welcomes and educates all children regardless of their gender, ability, economic situation, language, race and religious belief.

We understand that inclusive education is based on these key principles:

- that all children can learn
- that all children should have equal access to the same quality education opportunities
- that all children should have equal access and participation in regular schools
- that all regular schools should have facilities and staff to teach all learners
- that all children should share in the benefits of good quality education.

This morning I will be talking mainly about the situation in Fiji and I hope that you will be able to find differences and commonalities with your own situation. This very brief address is in three parts: the first part explores the concept of inclusiveness in society and affirms the notion that this concept is not a new one in the Pacific, the second part is an explanation of why the current education system is not inclusive, and the third part is about the progress that Fiji is making in this area.

Inclusive education is an intriguing concept in the context of our current largely exclusive system, but it is not a new idea in the Pacific. I say this because one of the defining characteristics of modern Pacific societies is their inclusiveness. We are very inclusive societies in the sense that everyone has a place—a traditional role to play in the community—and everyone is expected to participate in communal life and to have a share in the resources of the land, sea and rivers. Togetherness is

our philosophy of life and exclusiveness is an alien concept. There is no systemic exclusion of children or adults in our societies.

One of the concepts that may help to demonstrate just how deeply entrenched the notion of inclusiveness is in the worldview of Pacific peoples, is that of the *vanua*. The literal meaning of *vanua* is land. Among the equivalent words around the Pacific are *fanua* in Samoa, *fonua* in Tonga and *whenua* amongst the Maoris.

People of the Pacific know that *vanua* has spiritual, physical, social and cultural dimensions that define who we are. It is difficult for Pacific Islanders to imagine themselves as something separate from their *vanua*. It is this concept of *vanua* that binds everything and includes everyone. Indigenous Fijians, for instance, regard themselves as being an integral part of their land or *vanua*. All Fijians belong to an extended family unit which owns their portion of clan land collectively; and whether they live and work in a town or even in another country, they are included in the structure of their *vanua*.

*Vanua* is an embodiment of the Fijian world view of inclusiveness. When Fijians refer to their *vanua*, they identify it as the totality of their world: the people (*kainona*), the land (*qe*le), the rivers and creeks (*uciwai*), the coastline and headlands (*baravi*, *ucunivatu*), the fishing grounds (*iqoligoli*), the fruits of the land (*vuata*), the root crops (*vuaniqe*le), the mountains (*ulunivanua*) and their deities (*kalou vu*). They are also referring to their dialect, culture, traditions, songs and dances. The concept of *vanua* includes history, oral tradition, genealogy, geography, and the spiritual and social dimensions of the Fijian world. It provides affirmation and meaning. This is where Fijians belong and where they have worth and usefulness and where they find their identity and sense of purpose.

As in other Pacific Island societies, Fijian learning and education take place through participation in the ascribed roles in society. The largest Fijian social unit is called the *yavusa*, or clan. Within each clan are seven specific roles that are the traditional responsibilities of all the members of extended families. These roles are hereditary, and they include the roles of the chiefly families, the noble families, the chiefs'

heralds, the priestly families, the warrior families, the traditional carpenters and the traditional fishermen. Every Fijian is born into one of these groups of families, and part of the inclusive life-long learning in Fiji today is related to the learning of one's traditional role. In this inclusive system, no person may abdicate his or her traditional role. Everyone is included from birth to the end of one's life.

Education in the traditional Pacific setting is practical, participatory, useful and inclusive. Within Fijian society, every family has a role and all members of the family have a role which dictates how they contribute to family welfare: who tends the food garden, who goes out fishing, who collects firewood, who collects water from the river, who minds the baby, who eats first, who attends village gatherings, who does household chores and so on. All family members, old and young, are expected to contribute in varying degrees to communal development and prosperity and to the quality of family and communal life.

Pacific societies have similar world views and, as demonstrated by the Fijian example, there are deeply embedded values of inclusion in our societies. The concept of inclusiveness in education is, therefore, neither a new idea nor an unwelcome one for us. We are not re-inventing the wheel here today. Rather, we believe that we are in the exciting process of reclaiming the concept of inclusiveness in education that we have allowed to slip over the years. Together, we need to revisit the principles of life in our societies and find ways to reclaim these and to institutionalise them within the context of the current system of education.

During our colonial experience we became infatuated with the new ideals of education as a vehicle for individualism, competition and independence. Schooling was used as the avenue for people to become competitive individuals in a progressive world and, in allowing that to happen, we inadvertently created an education system that became exclusive. By its nature, it is unable to accommodate for long any child who cannot compete successfully on the same level as others. The schools we built reflect this colonial and post-colonial bias in education. They cater exclusively for the majority clientele—not for those children who enter the formal school system with physical, mental, social and economic disadvantages.

Over the years, many children have been deprived of an enabling education because of the exclusive nature of education in Fiji. The wastage factor of such an exclusive system in terms of manpower needs and quality of life for Fiji is immeasurable.

Unfortunately, our colonial legacy of modern education has also taken its toll on the value we place on inclusiveness. The need to access secondary and tertiary education uprooted many from their *vanua* in order to attend schools and look for employment in towns, often on another island. There was a concerted effort from educationists and employers to downgrade the traditional principles and values of life, the mother tongue, the culture, and oral tradition, and in their place to institutionalise English and western ideas so that all school children in Fiji have to learn a set of new values when they enter school. This is not a bad thing in itself, except that it suppresses the traditional value system that would have supported a more inclusive mind-set in education.

The outcome of this historical process is the institutionalisation of the principles of individualism and competition in our school system to achieve academic success. The traditional concept of working together for the common good is a misfit in this competitive and exclusive system. For learners with special needs, and for those who are disadvantaged in other ways, this mainstream school system does not quite fit them, and it is not designed to. Many disadvantaged students drop out of school and are unable to share in the benefits of education and to contribute effectively to their communities.

This is the system that needs to be re-invented. Many years ago, a successful business tycoon spoke on the subject of re-inventing education to educators in Washington D.C. He remarked that there are many worthy ideas around and that we have all been exposed to a thousand theories on how to improve education. He said that what we need is not just another idea, but a way to integrate these ideas into a new approach. This means, he said, that education has to be reinvented. Schools have to be reinvented. This is perhaps the most exciting challenge for educators in the Pacific today—how best to undo the mistakes that we made in education in the recent past so that we can start afresh with a system of learning where everyone has a place and where there is a place for everyone.



It is encouraging to see an emerging mind-set about special education in Fiji that is positive and informed. There is definitely a growing awareness of and advocacy about children with special needs in education circles here and in the community. Fiji is ready to advance the concept of inclusive education and to take on board any supporting measures. We are in a position to do three things straight away: revisit our current education policies to see what changes are needed, step up awareness and dissemination of information to support capacity-building in our schools and school communities, and strengthen advocacy to bring about a transformation of attitudes towards special needs students.

Today there are 17 segregated special schools in Fiji. We have gained much in terms of awareness and development of these special schools for special needs children. We have also been trying for the past 20 years to undo some of the practices that were limiting to children and teachers in the naming and categorising of our schools. As a result of this recent advocacy, the names of some of our schools have been changed. For example, what used to be the Suva Crippled Children's School is now the Hilton Special School. In Lautoka, what used to be the Lautoka School for Intellectually Handicapped Children was changed recently to the Sunshine Special School. These names are more positive and happy, and they reflect changing attitudes in our society. We are also removing negative terms and labels from special education: words like *crippled*, *deaf*, *dumb*, *blind* and *handicapped*.

We have made progress in other areas, too. In 1992, Cabinet approved inclusive education courses being taught at Lautoka Teachers' College (LTC) to ensure that all teachers who graduate from the College have the knowledge, skills and positive attitudes for teaching all children, including special needs children. One such course is *Teaching of Children with Special Needs for Regular Classrooms*.

As reported in the Fiji Education Commission/Panel Report 2000, the Heaven Project tested 50,000 children throughout Fiji from 1998 to 1999 and identified approximately 4,000 as having a hearing or vision problem. The Report also states that possibly as many as 5% of children have learning difficulties and an estimated 2% are gifted children. The course at LTC is designed to address this population of children in regular schools, and now has the title *Inclusive Classrooms*.

Perhaps the most important developments that will advance the concept of inclusive education in schools are international declarations, regional initiatives and national legislation. These initiatives are rallying points for inclusivity, access and equity. For Fiji, they include the Fiji Constitution, the Social Justice Act of 2001, the National Strategic Plans, the Ministry of Education Corporate Plans, the Fiji National Curriculum Framework and the Suva Declaration. Fiji is also part of the global initiative for Education for All, the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action, the Millennium Development Goals, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and several other global and regional initiatives that articulate and reflect the spirit of inclusivity, access and equity in education.

Fiji has been fortunate to have overseas support from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) who have provided support for in-service training, training of teachers abroad, community outreach to rural settings throughout Fiji and extensive consultations in the community. JICA has continued to send support staff from Japan and for many years has provided school buses for special needs children. It has also changed the image of our special schools by refurbishing classrooms, landscaping, painting, repairing, and providing furniture and playgrounds. The Fiji Education Sector Programme (FESP), AusAID and FESP EU have also assisted by funding in-service training for our teachers and sports days for special needs children.

Given the current status of special education, the drive towards a more inclusive education and the important lessons from our cultures, Pacific countries now need to move towards a more contextual approach to education. We need to be able to jettison the things that become obstacles to our progress and take on board those things that will help to advance our goals. We need to ride on this wave of thinking, given the fact that the UN Declaration of Indigenous Rights was adopted on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2007 after 22 years of debate. This milestone declaration is important for us and calls us to redefine ourselves and our contexts by reclaiming our values, our beliefs and our identities, and by making our own way in the world. In more pragmatic terms, the declaration will drive our policies and practices in education and in other spheres of life in this region.

In advancing an inclusive education system which welcomes and educates all children, regardless of their gender, abilities or disabilities, economic situation, language, race and religious beliefs, we need to strengthen our regional networks so that we can articulate our vision more clearly and help each other to find the best way forward for the Pacific.

With these thoughts, I now declare the 2007 Regional Workshop on Advancing Inclusive Education in the Pacific open, and may you have successful, enjoyable and fruitful deliberations.

## 2

### **Advancing Inclusive Education in the Pacific**

*Priscilla Puamau*

Inclusive education (IE), as stipulated in the PRIDE<sup>1</sup> benchmarks to review national education strategic plans, is concerned with policies and strategies that address ‘the teaching and learning of vulnerable and special needs students, including those from low socio-economic urban groups, those in remote and isolated areas, those with disabilities and school drop-outs and push-outs’ (The PRIDE Project, 2007: 3). Providing equal access to educational opportunities, increased participation and equitable outcomes for these categories of children and youths who are vulnerable to marginalisation and exclusion is a serious challenge that many Pacific Education Ministries/Departments of Education are grappling with.

This is against the backdrop of international and regional conventions and frameworks strongly advocating that education is a human right for all children. It is the grassroots push from local and regional IE stakeholders, coupled with

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1. PRIDE is the acronym for Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of basic Education. More information is available on: [www.usp.ac.fj/pride](http://www.usp.ac.fj/pride) and the Project’s online resource centre: [www.paddle.usp.ac.fj/](http://www.paddle.usp.ac.fj/).

advocacy in the international arena, that have brought IE issues to the forefront. Implicit in the IE agenda is the ideal that all schools need to be inclusive, learner-centred and child- and youth-friendly and are able to cater for the learning needs of all children and youths at school, irrespective of ability, ethnicity, gender, religion, geographical location or economic status. This necessarily means that current education systems need to transform their philosophy of teaching and learning, management and administrative structures, policies, strategies, resource and funding priorities, curriculum content, pedagogical approaches and assessment approaches. Mindsets and attitudes also will need to be transformed, as will teacher education and training programmes. In short, a total review and overhaul is needed if the education of all children philosophy is to be fully realised so that all learners can benefit from a good quality education and live worthwhile lives.

Inclusive education for many Pacific countries, called *special education* or *special needs* education has been largely interpreted as meeting the special needs of children and youths with disabilities and covers the physically handicapped, visually impaired, hearing impaired, those with speech defects, intellectual disabilities and the emotionally disturbed. Historically, the impetus, support, delivery and advocacy for IE has come, not through governments, but through non-governmental service providers, parents and community groups, disabled people's organisations and professionals working in the area.

In this chapter, I provide an overview of inclusive education as it appears in the Forum Basic Education Plan (FBEAP), PRIDE benchmarks and education strategic plans. I also discuss some IE subprojects supported by the PRIDE Project. This is followed by a description of the regional workshop where the ideas that made this book possible were generated. The final section is a summary of the book.

## **The PRIDE Project and Inclusive Education**

### **Inclusive education and the Forum Basic Education Action Plan**

The Forum Basic Education Action Plan (FBEAP) developed by the Forum Ministers of Education in 2001 did not mention IE. However, 'Children and Youth

with Disabilities’ and ‘Inclusive Education’ were added to subsequent meetings of the Ministers of Education so that it has become an integral part of FBEAP.

The proposed Pacific Education Development Framework recommended by the FBEAP Review Team to replace FBEAP for consideration by Ministers of Education at their meeting of March 2009 in Tonga, included ‘Students with Special Educational Needs and Inclusive Education’ as one of the eight cross-cutting themes (PIFS, 2009: 20-21). The three challenges mentioned relate to poor access, poor quality of provision, and lack of policies and institutional frameworks. In relation to the first, fewer than 10% of children and youths with disabilities are estimated to have access to any form of education. Poor quality of provision is evident in a lack of trained teachers and IE strategies, poor resourcing, lack of access in school environments, and inflexible curriculum and assessment procedures. Finally, in the area of policy and institutional framework, some countries still need to develop their policy framework for children and youths with disabilities. There is also the need to have early identification and intervention services, particularly for hearing and visual impairment; greater political commitment to legislate protection; and policy development and implementation.

Priorities and strategies suggested by the FBEAP Review to more effectively address the needs of children and youths with special needs include:

- establishment of Ministry coordinating structures at national level
- policy development for special needs and inclusive education
- capacity-building at all levels—addressing both short and long-term needs
- enhancing budgetary allocations for schools, TVET<sup>2</sup> and community development in IE strategic and approaches
- in-service education for classroom teachers and TVET trainers for working with different categories of the special needs population
- improving Ministry databases to identify and track special needs children in communities
- countries and Ministers to encourage the paradigm shift from the charity and medical models to social and rights-based models of disability
- encouragement of development partners to provide scholarships for training within the region in Special Needs Education and Inclusive Education (PIFS, 2009:20).

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## 2. Technical and vocational education and training

### **The PRIDE Project**

The PRIDE Project, an initiative of the Forum Ministers for Education, was designed to implement the Pacific vision for education encapsulated in FBEAP. Implementation of this project began in 2004 and is expected to end in December 2009. The Project is funded by the European Union and NZAID<sup>3</sup> and is implemented by the University of the South Pacific.

Its overall objective is:

To expand opportunities for children and youth to acquire the values, knowledge and skills that will enable them to actively participate in the social, spiritual, economic and cultural development of their communities and to contribute positively to creating sustainable futures ([www.usp.ac.fj/pride](http://www.usp.ac.fj/pride)).

The Project seeks to strengthen the capacity of each of the 14 Forum countries and Tokelau to deliver quality basic education through both formal and non-formal means in order to achieve its objective. The development of strategic plans for education in each country that blend the best global approaches with local values and ways of thinking is the expected key outcome. Support for the implementation of these national strategic plans is provided by the Project. Sharing of best practice and experience amongst countries is also an important project outcome, evidenced by the development of an online resource centre (see: [www.usp.ac.paddle](http://www.usp.ac.paddle)). Ministers for Education have defined basic education as all educational provision for children and youths, ranging from early childhood, through to primary, secondary and technical/vocational in both the formal and non-formal sectors. In fact, it is everything excepting higher or adult education.

#### **PRIDE benchmarks for review of education strategic plans**

The PRIDE Project has listed 'access and equity for students with special needs' as benchmark number 4 out of a set of 11 benchmarks to review education strategic plans. The principle for this specifically states that: 'In order to ensure access and

3. New Zealand Agency for International Development



equity, the Plan contains strategies for the teaching and learning of vulnerable and special needs students, including those from low socio-economic urban groups, those in remote and isolated areas, those with disabilities and school drop-outs and push-outs' (The PRIDE Project, 2007: 3). The indicators identified in the benchmark document are articulated as:

- a specific objective in the Plan referring to meeting the needs of vulnerable students, including the development of appropriate policies and/or legislation
- clear statements on strategies for the development of initiatives for marginalised communities and addressing gender disparities
- specific strategies for improving retention through partnerships with other sectors and agencies
- clear statements of strategies to improve educational opportunities for vulnerable students through more effective teacher training, improvement of infrastructure, resourcing and programmes.

### **Inclusive education in educational plans**

Most of the education strategic plans of PRIDE's 15 participating countries mention their intentions on the education of children and youths with disabilities. Examples are provided below to demonstrate how three countries have articulated their strategies to advance inclusive education.

In Tuvalu, under the broader objective of increasing student participation, inclusive education and special needs education are listed under the outcomes of access and equity. The strategies identified to achieve these outcomes are:

- Develop Inclusive Education policy
- Implementation of IE policy
- Identify appropriate diagnostic tools to identify students with learning needs
- Programmes in place to assist students with learning needs
- Professional development to enable teachers to identify and support students with special needs.

(Tuvalu Department of Education, 2006: 11)

Other countries that are in the process of developing their inclusive education policies include Fiji and Vanuatu. Solomon Islands and Kiribati will be developing their IE policy in the near future. Special education programmes in the Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands and Palau in the Northern Pacific are supported by the US special education grant programme. In addition, Palau has its own public law on special education. Other countries that have IE policies include Cook Islands, Samoa, Tonga and Papua New Guinea (PNG). Tokelau has an IE policy articulated within their National Curriculum Policy Framework.

Vanuatu interprets inclusive education as ‘education for the disabled’ and makes the point that the Government has had little to do with the education of children and youths with disabilities within the education system, mainly due to ‘insufficient financial resources’ (Vanuatu Ministry of Education, 1999: 138). The four actions planned for the years 2000 – 2010 are listed below.

1. The Government will appoint an officer in the Ministry of Education with specific responsibility for the development of policies and programs for the education of the disabled at all levels of the education system, and to be the official representative of the Government to the Vanuatu Society of Disabled People.
  2. The Government will officially incorporate components about the needs and education of the disabled into the curricula of all programs of Vanuatu Teachers College.
  3. The Government will designate one primary school in Port Vila and one in Luganville as the national centers for education of the disabled. It will also assign resources to make it possible for these schools to provide effective education of the disabled.
  4. The Government will devote capital resources and make physical provision for the disabled in all new schools constructed from 2000 on, and in all existing schools when any major project of renovation is implemented.
- (Vanuatu Ministry of Education, 1999: 139)

One of the 17 policy areas identified for further policy development and action by the Government of Tonga is Special Education. The Tonga Education Policy

Framework 2004 – 2019 (Tonga Ministry of Education, 2004: 35-36) clearly stipulates that government policy response would be reflected in the following strategies:

- Undertaking a review of special education provision in Tonga
- Conducting a baseline survey to ascertain the nature, number and extent of children with special needs both in and out of school
- Establishing a central database with detailed information about those people (children and adults) who have special learning needs
- Providing assistance for special needs children in existing schools through:
  - \* a special needs component in all pre-service teacher training
  - \* providing teachers of children with special needs with professional development opportunities and targeted in-service training
  - \* training of teacher aides
  - \* reviewing the school curriculum to ensure it caters adequately for children with special learning needs, and making available appropriate learning materials and equipment for special education
  - \* provision of incentives to improve the qualifications of teachers in the special education field
  - \* supporting classes for adults with special needs in the community.

Examples of what countries are doing in the area of IE are provided in the next section. All these subprojects are aligned to the education strategic plans of the four countries which have elected to use PRIDE funds on IE.

#### **Inclusive education and PRIDE subprojects**

As part of support to its 15 participating countries, the PRIDE Project provides subproject funding for countries to implement their education strategic plans. Of the 140 subprojects, 7% are in the area of inclusive education in the following countries: Cook Islands, Vanuatu, Tonga and Samoa. There is also a regional subproject on IE which is aimed at providing a Pacific regional non-award *Certificate of Orientation and Mobility in the Pacific*.

Following on from the detailed strategies articulated in the Tongan Education Policy Framework in the section above, Tonga has focused its assistance from

PRIDE exclusively on early childhood education and inclusive education for children and youths. Its integrated approach to IE begins with the development of an IE policy, capacity-building and training of IE teachers/trainers, the resourcing of an IE centre, and a pilot IE project at one school where 23 children with disabilities are mainstreamed into a primary school. PRIDE funding has enabled the IE following activities to be met:

- appointment of an Inclusive Education Supervisor to oversee subproject implementation
- a baseline disability identification survey for children and adults with disabilities
- training of community members in each island group on disability issues and inclusive practices, and on how to conduct the survey
- turning the findings of the survey into a report with recommendations on how to improve access to education for people with disabilities in Tongan society
- development of a centralised database for children, youths and adults with special needs
- carrying out a pilot of an IE classroom
- provision of resources for the IE centre
- capacity-building of teachers and teacher aides.

Cook Islands' two IE subprojects, the first complete, the second ongoing, are concerned with improving the quality of trainers for a special education centre and involves the non-formal sector. The main aim of these subprojects is to provide support to the community-run Creative Centre for people with disabilities through the capacity-building of Centre staff to better meet the learning needs of students. The first subproject engaged with both ICT<sup>4</sup> and youths and adults with disabilities and included recruiting a consultant who worked with the two trainers at the Centre over a three-week period, modeling new ideas across a range of areas with an emphasis on the use of ICT in supporting the learning of the students. This *train-the-trainer* model included the development of a training programme, training of the two Centre trainers and the development of individual education plans (IEPs) for each of the Centre students.

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4. information and communication technology

The second subproject continues from the previous *train-the-trainers* project with the Creative Centre. The initial project allowed for the capacity-building of trainers at the Creative Centre to develop and implement IEPs for the Creative Centre users. The purpose of the second subproject is to extend that capability both through observation of and participation in best practice and through more formal learning towards a recognised qualification. The completion of this project will allow the Creative Centre to register as a private learning centre with the Ministry of Education and therefore receive financial support towards staffing and operations in order to give the Centre a level of financial certainty as it plans for its future.

Vanuatu's IE subproject is concerned with the development of an IE policy. Part of the strategy to accomplish this is a planned study tour to tertiary and other institutions engaged in IE programmes in PNG by two Ministry of Education staff and a third person from the non-government organisation (NGO) sector. The development of the inclusive education policy will require a short-term local consultant and will involve nation-wide consultation and awareness-raising, which will include meetings and consultations with donors and stakeholders.

Following the study tour, analysis will be conducted on the most appropriate method to:

1. develop the Inclusive Education Policy, including scoping for special education
2. introduce sign language training in the Vanuatu Institute of Teacher Education and disability organisations
3. outline any training and capacity-building opportunities.

Samoa's IE subproject is concerned with the development of a sustainable IE system, and its linkage to the national education strategic plan is discussed in more detail in Chapter 11. The five components of Samoa's IE subproject are:

1. *universal accessibility guidelines for all schools and public buildings*

The final draft is now ready and will go to the planning and urban management authority board for endorsement.

2. *professional development at the national level*

At least five workshops have been completed to support children with special needs: hearing, sight, physical disability and intellectual disability. There has also been a national workshop on writing individual education plans.

3. *a media campaign for access to information by the public about disability via TV advertisements*

The IE subproject coordinator, Donna Lene, described these ads as ‘good value for money’ since the TV stations still ran ads even though the funding had stopped. There were three ads, two funded by PRIDE and one by another donor. There is also radio talk back, even in Savaii, the other main island, through the government radio station.

4. *a pilot IE programme in three primary schools (two grade 1; one grade 4)*

In this component, the teacher aides are selected carefully for training and are family members. This rolled out in January 2008, with two (family member and member of youth group) people from each of the three sites selected to work with deaf children. A boy in one of the three schools has already received a hearing aid with plans in place for the other two children to get hearing aids soon (health and education connections). The IE subproject coordinator is working to get teacher aides established into the organisational structure of the MoE.

5. *recording stories with significant change where documentation and evidence gathering is an important component*

In our discussion about the impact of the IE subproject in Samoa, Donna had the following to say: ‘It explores ways the MoE can work creatively with NGOs. The PRIDE Project has added value by helping the Ministry of Education engage with other NGOs, such as the Early Intervention Service. There is now close collaboration and support for families and communities’.

Another benefit that Donna mentioned was that the subproject ‘provided opportunities at a high policy level such as through the universal accessibility guidelines with greater harmonising and institutional strengthening’. Institutional strengthening through the Institutional Strengthening Project funded by ADB<sup>5</sup>,

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5. Asian Development Bank

AusAID<sup>6</sup> and NZAID assisted with school buildings, which is a component of the PRIDE IE subproject. Another benefit Donna saw lay in IE becoming a ‘hot topic’ and the creation of specific disability networks.

Donna added that IE in Samoa has grown because teachers and parents have been the catalysts for change. The teachers have started a process with their specific knowledge and confidence, building on what the MoE has already done. The six UNESCO<sup>7</sup> toolkit booklets have been translated into Samoan and these were used as resources at the IE workshops and the training of teacher aides.

Another benefit that Donna identified is that parents have been empowered to be advocates for their own children. As teacher aides, the three relatives (two mothers and sister) have advocated for rights in IE and this is something new. The support by parents has seen a growth of the network.

Another impact that Donna identified is that schools have broadened their values and are valuing difference. There is a change in teaching styles with the focus shifting to the visual—and this is not just for deaf children. Another advantage has been that children with disabilities can be educated in their own village, in their own community.

An indirect impact has been the concept of sign classes ‘under the mango tree’ where a teacher aide, also a member of the women’s village community, has been training the women in sign language. There is a snowballing effect evident; for example, where there is training in DVD/computer training, a sign language DVD is piggybacked to this.

Another indirect effect is the transformation in the teacher aides. The sister of one of the three children with a hearing impairment who is part of the pilot programme dropped out of school but when she was drawn into the IE teacher aide programme and trained, the transformation was remarkable. She, a school drop-out, is now actually training qualified teachers!

6. Australian Agency for International Development

7. United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organisation

A regional subproject entitled the Pacific Regional Train-the-trainer Certificate Programme in Vision Impairment was submitted by the Pacific Disability Forum. The main aim of this subproject is the provision of a Pacific regional non-award *Certificate of Orientation and Mobility in the Pacific* (O&M), delivered in partnership with the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment and in collaboration with the Royal Institute of Deaf and Blind Children, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

The proposed course aims to train 16 mobility instructors from 12 Pacific countries to directly support the development of mobility skills of children and youth with vision impairments. The focus areas of the training course will be instruction in the long cane and 'sighted guide techniques'. Trained mobility instructors will then be able to work in their home countries with teachers, parents and children with vision impairments. As a result of this training, blind and severely vision impaired children and youth will develop the mobility skills needed to travel to school with a level of independence, to physically access school classrooms and playgrounds and to independently move around their local community.

### **Regional Workshop on Advancing Inclusive Education**

This book is an outcome of a regional workshop on 'Advancing Inclusive Education in the Pacific' which was held in Nadi from 1 – 5 October in Nadi, Fiji. It is the second in a series of workshops where the University of the South Pacific, through the PRIDE Project, has collaborated in partnership with six other organisations: Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Pacific Resources for Education and Learning, UNESCO, UNICEF, the South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment and the host government, in this case the Fiji Government/Ministry of Education. The workshop, with PRIDE taking the lead coordination role, is also the PRIDE Project's eighth regional workshop.



### **Workshop Objectives**

The four workshop objectives were:

1. to understand the visions, experiences, practices and challenges of inclusive education globally and in Pacific countries;
2. to identify key strategies needed for wider implementation of inclusive practices and their implications for children with disabilities in Pacific Island countries;
3. to discuss, explore and investigate future national and regional strategies and actions aimed at strengthening inclusive education within the framework of the Education for All initiative;
4. to recommend the way forward with regard to charting a new direction for inclusive education at the national level in Pacific Island countries.

### **Workshop Outputs and Outcomes**

A significant outcome of this workshop was the presentation of an outcomes document prepared by the workshop partners to the Forum Ministers of Education at their meeting in Auckland in November 2007. The document (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2007:3-4) noted that key areas that needed to be addressed at the national level included policy, collaboration, research, budget/finances, implementation of policy and training as well as school level initiatives. The Ministers of Education were invited to:

1. note the progress for inclusive education at the regional and national level and support the current paradigm shift from the charity and medical models to social and rights-based models of disability
2. note the actions required in the Biwako Millennium Framework and the BMF Plus Five as a basis of advancing inclusive education at the policy level of Forum Island countries
3. endorse an integrated approach to inclusive education that recognises all children's right to education
4. endorse the use of the UNESCO toolkit on inclusive education as the basis for promoting the philosophies of inclusive education in Forum Island countries.

These recommendations and endorsed were noted by the Ministers.

Another significant outcome of the regional workshop is this book which is written by the resource people and participants.

An important output of the workshop was the development of an outcomes document which was prepared by a subcommittee at the workshop. This document is included as the final chapter of this book.

### **Participants**

A total of 24 regional participants from 14 Forum countries, including Tokelau, attended the workshop. The Federated States of Micronesia, despite our best efforts, was not represented. The participants, up to two per country, were high level decision-makers or experts from the Ministry of Education working in the area of inclusive education and key NGO stakeholders involved in supporting IE. In addition, 12 Fiji participants attended at different times throughout the week.

The resource people included representatives of the seven partner organisations, three observers, a critical friend, three international keynote and three regional speakers (See Attachments A and B for the full list of participants at the workshop and the group photograph).

### **Programme**

Participants at the workshop had a full programme. Keynote addresses (presenting global and local perspectives to IE) provided the conceptual, theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of inclusive education. Panel discussions were organised so that the voices of consumers, providers and professionals could be heard, and case study presentations enabled individuals and professionals involved in inclusive education delivery and practice to share their experiences with workshop participants. Time was also set aside for a lot of group work and a visit was also organised to a centre for children with disabilities and a regular secondary school, which had mainstreamed children with disabilities. The principal of a mainstream secondary school, two deaf children and their teacher were able to share their experiences with the participants.

## **Overview of Book**

The twelve chapters in the book range from the philosophical underpinnings of inclusive education to more practical guidelines for inclusive practices in schools, with a specific focus on the education of children and youths with disabilities. One chapter provides a voice for a parent of a child with a disability and another chapter comes from the perspective of a non-governmental organisation. Three case studies are also provided: from Tonga, Samoa and Palau. The final chapter contains the workshop outcomes document which formed the basis for a paper presented by the workshop partners to the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat for presentation to the Ministers of Education at their November 2007 meeting in Auckland, New Zealand. The recommendations were subsequently noted and endorsed by the Ministers.

Emi Rabukawaqa provides an insightful opening address in Chapter 1, where she makes the point that inclusive education is not a new idea in the Pacific. On the contrary, she argues, Pacific societies are inclusive societies because everyone has a place in society through the traditional role people have in the community. She emphasises that there 'is no systemic exclusion of children or adults in our societies'. Rabukawaqa argues that it is 'the colonial legacy of modern education' that has historically institutionalised the principles of individualism, competition and desire for academic success. It is this process that has seriously disadvantaged learners with special needs because the mainstream school system is not designed to meet their needs. Providing the Fiji example, she goes on to note that it is international declarations, regional initiatives and national legislators, as well as donor funding support, which has advanced IE and 'are rallying points for inclusivity, access and equity'.

In Chapter 3, Frederick Miller provides a Pacific perspective to inclusive education, noting that IE is 'is concerned with providing appropriate responses to the broad spectrum of learning needs in both formal and non-formal settings'. Drawing on the international literature on inclusive practices, and arguing from a social justice perspective where equitable access and equal educational opportunities are more important than the issue of placement, Miller notes that there are compelling

arguments for change in the education of children with disabilities to occur in the Pacific from the current segregated setting to a more flexible, inclusive one to the extent that special education and special educators be eliminated as a system of provision. Ultimately, he argues, it is political will that will pave the way for strategic and operational legislation that focuses on the full implementation of inclusive education for children and youths with disabilities.

Like Frederick Miller, Joyce Heeraman in Chapter 4 draws on the international literature in her discussion of inclusive education but in contrast to Miller, Heeraman contends that special education still has a significant role to play in the Pacific. She notes that ‘responsible inclusion’ should be a key consideration, especially when the education of children with severe and profound disabilities is considered. She argues that full inclusion for children with diverse needs is possible provided ‘the including school has the appropriate resources, access and staff expertise to provide quality education for all’. She then discusses the way forward towards inclusion under the following headings: state-wide support, teacher training curricula, examination-driven school curriculum and partnership with stakeholders.

In Chapter 5, Setareki Macanawai gives an overview of and historical background to disability services in the Pacific, noting in particular that the targets and actions of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific’s Decade for Disabled Persons 1993 – 2002 were instrumental in positive developments in the area of disability services in the 1990s. The adoption in 2002 of the *Biwako Millennium Framework for Action* has moved the thinking and action from a charity-based approach towards an inclusive, barrier free, rights-based perspective. Macanawai notes that the work of United Nations agencies, development aid partners and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat has positively moved the disabilities agenda in the Pacific, culminating in the establishment of the Pacific Disabilities Forum (PFD) in 2007. The PFD is the regional voice, providing a representative and coordinating mechanism on disability and is a powerful force on disability issues in the Pacific and international arenas.

Penelope Price, in Chapter 6, provides a comprehensive coverage on international and regional mandates concerning persons with disabilities since 1945, before discussing in some detail eight guidelines for their inclusion in school systems. The eight topics covered include: catalysts for creating change in national education systems; laying the foundation through policy, legislation and budgetary resources; providing education, administering and implementing policy and collaborating with partners; structuring and re-structuring the school system; pre- and in-service training of teachers; designing data collection processes and monitoring and evaluating progress; participating in the education process—the collaborative role of organisations of people with disabilities, families and community members; and listening to children.

Chapter 7 by Frances Gentle addresses the topic of including children and youth with vision impairments in mainstream education settings in the Pacific region. Gentle discusses the prevalence and causes of vision impairments in the Pacific before providing some important key principles and standards for the education of these children. Definitions of some common terms and eye conditions are provided at the end of the chapter.

The next two chapters by Fesi Filipe and Angeline Chand give voice to two key stakeholders in the inclusive education endeavour—of a parent of an autistic child and a disabled people’s association. In Chapter 8, Filipe shares her story of the challenges her family faced and how they coped with caring for and educating their intellectually impaired child. Chand, in Chapter 9, discusses the work of the Fiji Disabled People’s Association, a non-governmental organisation, articulates the challenges faced and provides some suggestions for moving IE forward.

Chapters 10, 11 and 12 provide a snapshot of IE practice in three Pacific countries: Tonga, Samoa and Palau. These case studies demonstrate that the approach different countries take to IE at the national level are context-specific and culturally derived.

In Chapter 13, critical friend Rebekah McCullough shares her interpretation of what the three emerging issues are in inclusive education in the Pacific. These insights she gleaned from the presentations, deliberations and conversations at the regional workshop on IE which is the focus of this book. She defines these three issues as: education is a right for *all* children; Pacific cultures and inclusive education; and the special education versus inclusive education debate. She then discusses what the next steps might be and concludes with the analogy of a Pacific canoe as a way forward.

The final chapter—the workshop outcomes document—contains three levels of strategies that participants need to pursue on their return to their home countries if the philosophy and ideal of the education of all children and youths is to be realised. Nine policy level strategies are suggested for the regional level. At the national level, the suggestions include 12 policy suggestions, eight for collaboration, four under research, three under budget and seven implementation suggestions. Eleven strategies at the school level are also provided. In the final part of Chapter 14 is a section on the need for a regional definition of IE, with the conclusion that countries need to make known their position on their definitions of these terms: *inclusive education, mainstreaming, special education, special schools, integration, mainstreaming, segregation, special units and specialised classrooms*.

## **Conclusion**

Three things are clear: first, the definition of inclusive education is highly variable in the Pacific. Second, the debate around inclusive education and special education will continue for some time in the Pacific as it has done internationally. And third, the education of children and youths with disabilities is only the tip of the iceberg in the IE discourse as the broader definition of the *all* in the generic definition of inclusive education encompasses more than children with disabilities.

What of the specific learning needs of other categories of children and youths who are disadvantaged and marginalised and whose needs are not adequately met by education systems in the Pacific? What of the students who fail national examinations and have to leave school as a result? What remedial measures are

taken at school level and what national policies exist to address the special needs of the ‘below average’ students? What of the drop-outs and push-outs? How will their needs be met? What about the gifted child? How are his/her special needs met? What about access, equitable provision and participation in a good quality education for children who are disadvantaged because of poverty and physical isolation? Unfortunately, it was not possible to discuss these issues at the inclusive education workshop because the emphasis was on inclusive education for children with disabilities.

The aim of advancing inclusive education in the Pacific so that the diversity of needs of all learners through their equitable access and participation in quality learning are met by education systems has enormous policy and budgetary implications. If countries are to embrace this inclusive, all-embracing philosophy as a key tenet of their education delivery, what is called for is an education revolution—everything and everyone must be transformed. And this must begin with a transformation in minds, hearts and attitudes about inclusive education ideology, process and practice. At the highest policy level, political will must mandate that a quality education for all is mandatory and this needs to be backed by policy directions and financial resources. At the centre of inclusive education is teacher education and training. There needs to be a change in pedagogical practices to make teaching and learning more inclusive. Increased advocacy and public awareness campaigns must be added to the equation. The content and processes of learning and its assessment will also need to be closely scrutinised so that, at the end of the day, national education systems do not fail students.

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### 3

## Inclusive education: a Pacific perspective

*Frederick Miller*

### **The meaning and implications of inclusion**

People of the Pacific are urged to note that inclusive education, as defined by UNESCO<sup>1</sup>, is 'a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning ... and reducing exclusion within and from education' (Booth, 1996 cited in UNESCO, 2003:7). The objective is to support education for all, with special emphasis on removing barriers to participation for children with disabilities and for out-of-school children. The statement notes that the overall goal is a school that adapts to the needs of all learners and where all children can participate and be treated equally—it is thus imperative that the word *all* effectively includes children with disabilities.

It is in this definition that we see that inclusive education seeks to address the learning needs of all children, with a specific focus on those who are vulnerable to marginalisation and exclusion. At the core of inclusive education is the fundamental

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1. United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organisation

right to education for all. From the adoption of the principle of inclusive education at the Salamanca World Conference on Special Needs Education held in Spain in 1994 and its affirmation at the World Education Forum, the challenge of getting all children into school has been put on the political agenda in many countries. In the Pacific, it is reflected in the Forum Basic Education Action Plan and in commitments to achieving Education for All. This has helped to focus attention on a broad range of children who are not in school or may be marginalised within the education system.

Inclusive education is concerned with providing appropriate responses to the broad spectrum of learning needs in both formal and non-formal educational settings. It advocates for changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures, policies and strategies. At the heart of inclusive education is the vision to transform the education system so it can provide improved quality and worthwhile education for all learners. Our schools in Pacific Island countries can only be inclusive when they are working towards full participation and equality. This can be achieved by respect for differences, respect for different learning styles, variations in methods, open and flexible curricula and welcoming every child. In other words, inclusive schools are learner-centred and child-friendly. It is fitting to note that there are innovative pilot projects being conducted along these lines in Vanuatu and Solomon Islands through the support of UNICEF<sup>2</sup> and in Samoa through UNESCO support.

It is inevitable that inclusive education is seen by many as being limited to providing education for children with disabilities in a regular school setting. However, educational partners are promoting a much broader view of inclusive education, one which encompasses all children who are excluded on grounds of gender, ability, ethnicity, language, geographic location and poverty. Getting all children into school is just the first step towards completing the primary level education cycle. In many countries, failure to increase retention rates and poor levels of achievement in low quality schooling environments continue to show that claims of improved access are insufficient as evidence of progress in the education system.

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2. United Nations Children's Fund

Inclusion may also be seen as a continuing process of increasing participation, and segregation as a recurring tendency to exclude difference. In this sense inclusion and segregation are not fixed states or educational placements. Schools are continually working towards inclusion and resisting segregation. They will find themselves at different stages, sometimes possibly taking wrong turns, on the road to inclusion.

Inclusive schooling implies that all children, regardless of the severity of their disability and the nature of their needs, should be taught in the regular class in the neighbourhood school (Jenkinson, 1997). Inclusive education is not synonymous with integration or mainstreaming, nor is it concerned only with the education of students with disabilities (Mittler, 1995). The philosophy underlying inclusive education is that schools have the responsibility to meet the needs of all children, and the teachers should be able to differentiate and adapt curriculum and instructional strategies to suit the differing needs and abilities of each child in the classroom (Jenkinson, 1997).

For inclusive education to become a reality in the Pacific we need to eliminate any continuum of service, including special education and special educators, as a system of provision. This would require the redeployment of special education staff and resources to mainstream schools, where they will be employed not only for the benefit of students with disabilities but also in a supportive role across the whole curriculum. The inclusive schools movement should seek to enhance the social skills and community participation of people with severe disabilities, thereby changing the attitudes of both teachers and students towards disability.

We need to keep in mind that inclusive education brings together different forms of education. It is rights-focused and can be considered the ultimate educational outcome of the principle of normalisation. It begins with the premise that every individual has the right to participate in the mainstream of society and enjoy the same privileges, benefits and opportunities as his or her own peers. It is child-focused and founded on the principle that all children, regardless of disability, are capable of learning and should be given the same opportunities to achieve, through learning, to the best of their abilities.

Teachers who have taught in an inclusive classroom say the philosophy of inclusion hinges on helping students and teachers become better members of a community by creating new visions for communities and for schools (Jenkinson, 1997). It is about membership and belonging to a community and involves all kinds of practices that are ultimately practices of good teaching. These principles are generally consistent with the values on which many Pacific cultures are based. What our teachers in the Pacific should do is to think about children, develop ways to reach them all, and implement the values of inclusion as a way of providing more options for children. It requires structuring schools as communities where all children can learn. However, there is no recipe for becoming an inclusive teacher or an inclusive school. Inclusion is all about enlightenment, developing an awareness of the rights, aspirations and needs of those with disabilities, and of fostering good will towards them in the community generally—particularly in those who have traditionally had little or no contact with persons with disabilities.

### **Policy and practice**

According to Wedell (1993) the degree of inclusion in each country has been determined by a large number of ideological policies, as well as by financial and conceptual factors. Its scope is limited by the amount of support available within individual schools. Mittler (1995) proposed that inclusion is, therefore, a challenge for schools, and requires a need for curriculum review in terms of access for all children. While the philosophy of equitable education for all children relies on a movement towards greater inclusion of students with a disability in regular schools, there appears to be a gap between such a policy and its practice (Joachim, 1998). In contrast to findings which suggest that there is a trend towards inclusion of students in regular schools in recent years (Bauer & Shea, 1989), the proportion of students being segregated as opposed to integrated has been found by some researchers to be on the increase.

It has also been proposed that a change in emphasis from the rights perspective to one of outcomes might, in future, result in a return to more traditional placement policies for children with a disability (Ward, 1993). Inclusive educational practices have received varying degrees of commitment from educators in the international

arena. Inclusive approaches have been advocated in Italy, Spain, Denmark, the United Kingdom, France and Sweden, whereas Germany and the Netherlands have taken a conservative segregated approach (Daunt, 1991). In the USA, the inclusion of children with disabilities in the regular schools has been endorsed, and the 1975 Public Law 94-142 has legalised the structure needed to implement the policy of integration.

We need to keep in mind that inclusive education is a process that involves students, teachers, parents, the school community and the local community. It involves learning and development for everyone who is part of the school community. It involves discussion, examination of relevant issues and decision-making based on the benefits for all concerned. These practices are also deeply rooted in Pacific cultures. Pacific cultures have a long and proud history of understanding that learning is about gaining knowledge and understanding of knowing what to do to sustain cultural continuity. Learning is practical and related to shared values and beliefs. In addition, relationships among people are core values in Pacific cultures. Relationships are important because they identify individuals and groups and provide a framework for working together. The roles that individuals play within their family and community assist in developing positive skills and social responsibility.

The process of inclusive education is a natural fit with Pacific culture. It reinforces the importance of working together to share information, to solve problems, to make decisions and to take action. The many roles and responsibilities played by the wide range of people involved in the education process will help ensure the continuing development of a healthy and vibrant school community.

### **The arguments for segregation**

If we are going to be advocates of inclusive education we need to ask the question: Why segregate children with disabilities from the mainstream education system? Jenkinson (1997), when referring to this, mentions the advantages of segregation that are related not only to practical and economic measures, but also to the perceived effects on the education of children with disabilities. Disability does not

exist in isolation. It implies that a person is disabled from undertaking, without assistance, certain activities that are part of the day to day life of most people. In the educational context, a disability implies that a student has special needs beyond those of the majority of students, which are not entirely met by the normal curriculum in the regular classroom, but may require some form of special education.

In the Pacific, education for students with disabilities has been provided in segregated schools or institutions often designed to cater for a specific category of disability. Many of these organisations originated from the practice of voluntary associations setting up their own schools to meet the special needs of these students. However, the practice has been maintained as governments have increasingly assumed responsibility for the education of these students. Several advantages were seen in segregated education for students with a disability. These advantages related not only to practical and economic factors in the provision of special education, but also to the perceived effects on the disabled and non-disabled children of educating both groups in segregated settings.

First, it is argued that, because children with specific disability are congregated together in one school, it is more economical to provide special instructional methods, aids and equipment seen as necessary for their education. Similarly, specialist staff can be concentrated in one area to serve the needs of a particular disability. In furthering this argument Jenkinson (1997) noted that this has enhanced the development of professional expertise in specialised areas of disability, such as hearing impairment or mental retardation. A further economy is achieved by the fact that ancillary services such as speech therapy and physiotherapy can be provided on the same premises, rather than being dispersed over schools covering a wide area or necessitating the withdrawal of a child from school to attend a specialist centre for treatment. Paramedical staff can often work in close collaboration with the educational team in the special school.

A second major advantage claimed for segregated education is that students with disabilities can benefit from the smaller classes in special schools or units. As a

consequence, they can receive more attention, and instruction can be pitched at a level appropriate to their needs, rather than at a traditional age-grade level that caters for the majority of students. It is also argued that the segregated special school is more supportive and less threatening to students with disabilities than the regular school, and that students with disabilities will feel more secure among others with a similar disability. Finally, it is argued that placing students with disabilities in the regular school would disadvantage non-disabled students by making undue demands on teaching and other resources.

### **The movement towards inclusion**

With this in mind we need to look at inclusive education and the need to reconsider and reform school curriculum in order to cater for all children, rather than the previous emphasis which focused on the need for the child with a disability to fit into the regular classroom. Terms such as normalisation, mainstreaming, integration, de-institutionalisation have been used to describe the practice of including children with disabilities in the regular classroom.

Inclusion incorporates the notion of social justice and considers the education of students with a disability to be an issue of equity, rather than simply one of placement. The movement towards inclusive rather than segregated education has resulted from considerable worldwide emphasis placed on the rights of all children, regardless of disability, to receive appropriate and equal educational opportunities. Since the 1960s, the emphasis has changed from one of protection of children's rights to that of autonomy, and from a welfare perspective to one of justice.

In the past years there has been a considerable change in philosophies regarding children with disabilities. Jenkinson (1997) emphasises that this normalisation process is a physical and social inclusion of developmentally disabled individuals into the mainstream of community. From this emphasis, it seems that, although inclusion is based on the normalisation philosophy, it is more an ideological commitment than an empirically validated solution to educating students with special needs. It is providing for diverse groups of students within specialised curriculum areas, which requires a rethinking of educational philosophy.

### **Pacific education in flux**

Education in the Pacific is in the midst of tremendous change brought about by the current review of systems and practices. It has now been faced with greater challenges, as skepticism towards education of children appears to be increasing, with higher demands from Pacific citizens for higher academic standards and greater accountability for improving educational performance. At the same time it is hampered by insufficient funding, overburdened teachers, low salary scales and the persistence of outdated instructional approaches. Though there are signs of development and change, its direction is still uncertain in the sense of policies for all of those who have the fundamental right to receive good quality education.

### **The needs of children with disabilities**

Among all these issues, people are still asking the question: Where do students with disabilities fit into the picture? The Special Education Unit in Fiji's Ministry of Education states that children with disabilities need the companionship of their age peers; they need the same experiences of achievement and opportunities to grow into adolescents and adults who have interesting and satisfying lives. Above all they need self-respect and a sense of belonging. To achieve this, these children need a great deal of support, often beyond that provided in most classrooms.

### **Who can make inclusion happen?**

Apart from this, disability is a concept that usually arouses emotions in us. By the time a child reaches school age, many parents have become involved with an often-confusing range of services designed to address the needs of their son or daughter who has a disability. To their emotional strain may be added conflicting advice about educational options from a number of sources, some of whom have vested interests in perpetuating their own form of separate educational provision. In some countries there is no policy for special education and this is a hindrance to the development of the whole process. There seems to be a dilemma as to who should be involved and who has the authority to make things move according to the needs of this contemporary world of education.



In almost all Pacific Island countries, governments maintain education standards through accrediting schools, recruiting teachers, developing curriculum, providing teaching materials, and providing external examinations. Governments also encourage school attendance by rural and poor children through measures like the free tuition scheme for primary schools and per capita grants and remission of fees for secondary students. There is a high degree of community participation in the delivery of education services, which is a strength of the system that needs to be maintained. This involvement includes religious groups.

Change with reference to the importance of inclusion in the educational context is necessary. There are compelling arguments already in Pacific for a need to change from the current segregated setting to a more flexible, inclusive one. As seen in the literature on inclusive practices in developed countries such as the USA, England, Canada and Australia, inclusion is widely accepted and is flexible, giving people a chance to be educated equally without discrimination on the basis of disability. The literature clearly indicates the need for people with disabilities to be included in the regular education system in recognition of their value and human dignity.

For change to occur in Pacific countries, there is a need to draw from the literature discussed above which identifies the need for strategies to be formulated to influence key players in recognising the importance of inclusive education for individuals, families and society as a whole. We need to be encouraged to note that communities need to understand the importance of changing attitudes and values. They need to be aware of the rights of children with disabilities and those who are marginalised to have full participation and equality in education. It is important for the teachers' unions to be aware of this and the changes that are expected for inclusive educational programmes. There is a need for governments through Ministries of Education to be informed via strategic advocacy programmes and policy development to support the introduction of inclusive education. There will surely be changes in the system and these are to be expected. Therefore Cabinet papers are to be formulated on the basis of positive advantages of inclusive educational practices.

## **4**

### **Inclusive education and the role of special education**

*Joyce Heeraman*

‘When does treating people differently emphasize their differences and stigmatise or hinder them on that basis? And when does treating people the same become insensitive to their difference and likely to stigmatise or hinder them on *that* basis?’ (Minow, 1990: 20)

#### **Introduction**

The movement towards inclusive education has reached the shores of Pacific Island countries (PICs), and is embraced wholeheartedly by many educators, non-government organisations, parents, caregivers, governments and other interested persons. Local and regional governments and international funding agencies are putting their heads and funds together to promote inclusion in this part of the world. To this end the regional workshop ‘Advancing Inclusive Education in the Pacific’ was held in Nadi, Fiji from 1 – 5 October, 2007. What came out clearly at the workshop was that all participants keenly felt that human rights should

be respected, and no one should be denied his/her human rights. Many felt that denying students education in a regular/general/mainstream school was denying them their basic human rights. Some interesting comments and questions were made by workshop participants in their discussions and conversations. Some of these are given below and discussed in this chapter.

- We don't say special education, we say inclusive education.
- Inclusion is too broad. We might neglect students with disabilities.
- Students with disabilities should be the main focus.
- We don't do special education, we do inclusive education.
- Inclusion ... one school at a time... one child at a time.
- Special education supports inclusive education.
- We must be careful not to throw out the baby with the bath water.
- Special education refers to methodology, inclusive education to educational placement.
- So what happens to the special schools, do we close them down?
- We just started special education, now we are hearing about inclusive education ... tell me, where do we start? What is it all about?

Some universally known conventions, declarations, frameworks and blueprints developed over the last five decades and endorsed by many countries have paved the way for inclusion. In this chapter, I first give a brief overview of these, and then examine the terms special education, inclusive education, integration and mainstreaming. Lastly, I discuss the role of special education in these changing times, and propose a way forward towards quality education for all.

### **A historical overview**

Paving the way for inclusion are: the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), the *UN Convention on the Rights of The Child* (1989), the *World Declaration on Education for All* (1990), the *UN Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities* (1993), and the *Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education* (1994). Lastly, the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*, which was adopted in December, 2006, requested that governments ensure that: 'effective individualized support measures are provided

in environments that maximize academic and social development, consistent with the goal of full inclusion' (United Nations, 2006: Article 24, 2e).

In the USA, the Education for all Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (since renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) 'requires public schools to make available to all eligible children with disabilities a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment appropriate to their individual needs' (PL 94-142, 1975). This Act had far-reaching effects on other countries, and many have also moved towards general education for persons with disabilities.

### **The terminology**

Sometimes, the terms *integration* and *inclusion* are used synonymously or interchangeably. For some people, regular schools with one class, unit or resource room, where students with diverse learning needs receive their education (time spent there depending on needs), is regarded as an inclusive school. For others, inclusion means full-time education in regular schools and classrooms for persons with diverse learning needs and disabilities. The concept *mainstreaming* is also confused with *inclusion*, and these two terms are used synonymously as well. These terms are discussed below.

#### **Integration**

Foreman (2008) defines integration as 'a student's attendance at or participation in activities at a regular school'. An example in Fiji is the Suva Special School, which enrolls students with intellectual impairments, behavioural problems and learning disabilities and has an integration programme. Selected students are taken to a nearby regular school for sports and other club activities in the afternoons. The rest of the time is spent in the special school. Foreman also regards as integrated a student who attends a regular school, but is usually in a separate unit or class. Such a class is referred to as an integrated class.

#### **Mainstreaming**

Mainstreaming refers to the selection and placement of students from special

schools into regular schools. These students would have demonstrated that they can cope with work in regular schools, and keep up with their peers. Friend and Bursuck (2002: 3) define mainstreaming as follows: ‘Mainstreaming is the term for placing students with disabilities in general education settings only when they can meet traditional academic expectations with minimal assistance, or when those expectations are not relevant [to academic outcomes] (for example, participation in recess or school assemblies for opportunities for social interaction)’.

### **Inclusion**

While there is no internationally accepted definition of inclusion (Mitchell, 2005), the term advocates the education of students with diverse needs to the ‘maximum extent appropriate’ in the classroom he/she would normally attend (if there were no disabilities). This would involve bringing support services to the student in a regular classroom, rather than the student having to go to a special school/facility to access these services. Also, there is no pressure for the student to keep up with classmates. The only requirement is that the student will benefit from regular school placement.

According to Giorcelli (1995 cited in Foreman, 2008:14), ‘inclusion is based on the philosophy that schools should, without question, provide for the needs of all the children in their communities, whatever the level of their ability or disability’.

The *Salamanca Statement*, which was adopted at the Salamanca World Conference on Special Needs education in 1994, describes inclusive education thus:

[C]hildren and youth with special educational needs should be included in the educational arrangements made for the majority of children (UNESCO, 1994:6)... inclusive schools must recognize and respond to the diverse needs of students, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curricula, organizational arrangements, teaching strategies, resource use and partnerships with their communities (ibid: 11,12).

The review of relevant literature suggests that the issue of inclusive education is a controversial one, about which researchers, educators, theorists and parents hold very strong, differing viewpoints. Some advocate full inclusion, described by the Wisconsin Education Association Council (2007) as: ‘all students, regardless of the type or severity of their disabilities, be taught in regular classrooms full time. All necessary and appropriate services must be provided for the student in a regular school classroom’.

Stainback and Stainback (1984), who are advocates for full inclusion, suggest a merger of regular and special education into one unified system. They feel that meeting the educational needs of all students does not warrant a dual system, that a dual system is inefficient. In a later publication, they state categorically that: ‘An inclusive school or classroom educates all students in the mainstream. This means that all students, including students with learning and physical disabilities, at-risk, homeless, and gifted are included in integrated, general education classes ... no students, including those with disabilities, are relegated to the fringes of the school by placement in segregated wings, trailers, or special classes’ (Stainback & Stainback, 1992: 34).

There are others, however, who think that some children would not benefit from full inclusion. One such is Kauffman (1989:3), who suggests that the policy of inclusion is driven by the unrealistic expectation that money will be saved. He feels that trying to force all students into inclusion is just as coercive and discriminatory as trying to force all students into a special education setting.

These two viewpoints are described by Cigman (2007) as ‘radical inclusionists’ and the ‘moderate position’.

### **The role of special schools**

Associated with the inclusion issue, is the controversy and confusion regarding the role of special schools, special education and special education teachers. Full inclusionists seem to regard special education as an embarrassment, an old way of thinking, one to be tossed out. Cigman (2007: xix) sums this up as follows:

‘The radical inclusionists want to close all special schools and put all children in the mainstream.’ Moderate inclusionists, on the other hand, think that special education still has a role to play.

At this point it would be worth defining special education, as there appears to be differing views on this term, judging by my informal conversations with educators, parents and interested persons. Foreman (2008), in his preface to *Inclusion in Action*, stated: ‘The authors of this book have a strong view that *special education* (emphasis added) is about good teaching’. More specific definitions of special education (from the Internet) encapsulate the concept and goals of special education: a) catering for the individuality of the student in terms of pedagogy and resources, and b) developing self-sufficiency and potential.

*Special Education: Internet definitions*

1. Special education is one of the most misunderstood concepts in schools. Special education services provide instruction in a way that is changed (modified) from the standard expectations of the classroom. Material may be changed in content or delivery of instruction, based on a student’s need.<sup>1</sup>
2. Special Education is the individually planned and systematically monitored arrangement of teaching procedures, adapted equipment and materials, accessible settings, and other interventions designed to help learners with special needs achieve the greatest possible personal self-sufficiency and success in school and community.<sup>2</sup>

There seems to be agreement that special education aims to develop the potential of persons with diverse needs to meet his/her maximum potential (Hunt & Marshall 2002; Winzer 1993).

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1. [www.familiesonlinemagazine.com/school/ed-terms.html](http://www.familiesonlinemagazine.com/school/ed-terms.html)

2. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special\\_education](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special_education) Accessed 13 October 2008.

According to Hunt & Marshall (2002: 5):

**Special Education** is the educational programme designed to meet the unique learning and developmental needs of a student who is exceptional. What is special about special education is the unique nature of each individual and the accompanying design of an educational programme specifically planned to meet that person's needs. Special education is not limited to a particular "special" place; most special educators believe that it should take place in the most normal, natural environment possible.

Winzer adds that special education can take place in a variety of settings, not necessarily in a special class.

Special education is founded on the proposition that all children can reach their full potential given the opportunity, effective teaching and proper resources. Hence, special education may be undertaken by different personnel in different settings. One child may be in a special classroom with a specially trained teacher; another may be in a regular classroom with adapted or modified instruction presented by the classroom teacher.

According to Baker (2005), in June 2005, Baroness Warnock, special education needs pioneer regarded as the architect of inclusion, changed her views on the concept of inclusion. She came to believe that, though it may have been right at the time, inclusion has been taken 'too far, driven by political correctness rather than a judgment of what is always best for the child' (Baker, 2005).

Speaking at the 2006 annual Wales Education Lecture held by the General Teaching Council for Wales, Baroness Warnock said that special education had long been a victim of vocabulary. In the past, those with special education needs were labelled 'mentally disabled', put away in special schools and sometimes shunned by society. Recent efforts to combat this through a policy of inclusion caused problems, as schools were often ill-equipped to deal with children with complex and multiple



disabilities. She recommended establishing special units within mainstream schools or a special school located in the same campus as a mainstream school. The best way forward, she said, would be to have Trail Blazer schools, some of which have been established in the UK. These are known as Specialist Special schools. Currently there are twelve such schools, but it is envisaged that within the next few years there will be about 60. Each of these schools concentrates on a particular disability or group of disabilities, cognitive, behavioural, autistic and so on. Baroness Warnock said, 'They not only educate children with these disabilities ... but also send out teachers to 'share their expertise', presumably with the mainstream teachers and classroom assistants who are called on to accommodate pupils with these disabilities in their own schools' (GTCW, 2006).

Another moderate inclusionist, Singer (2005: 20), advises caution in getting rid of special schools for 'fear that we would be throwing out the baby with the bath water'.

The *Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action*, though strongly advocating inclusion, also recognises that inclusive classes may not be appropriate for some children, and that special schools or special classes may be more beneficial for them:

Assignment of children to special schools – or special classes or sections within a school on a permanent basis – should be the exception, to be recommended only in those infrequent cases where it is clearly demonstrated that education in regular classrooms is incapable of meeting a child's educational or social needs or when it is required for the welfare of a child and that of other children (UNESCO, 1994: 12).

Regarding special schools and staff of well established special school systems, the *Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action* states:

Such special schools can represent a valuable resource for the development of inclusive schools. The staff of these special institutions possess the expertise needed for early screening and identification of children with disabilities.

Special schools can also serve as training and resource centres for staff in regular schools. Finally, special schools or units within inclusive schools – may continue to provide the most suitable education for the relatively small number of children with disabilities who cannot adequately be served in regular classrooms or schools. Investment in existing special schools should be geared to their new and expanded role of providing professional support to regular schools in meeting special educational needs. An important contribution to ordinary schools, which the staff of special schools can make, is to the matching of curricular content and method to the individual needs of pupils' (UNESCO, 1994: 12,13)... 'Owing to the particular communication needs of deaf and deaf/blind persons, their education may be more suitably provided in special schools or special classes and units in mainstream schools ... (ibid: 18).

Advocates of moderate or responsible inclusion are in agreement with the above views expressed in the *Salamanca Statement*. Advocates for responsible inclusion are usually educators with many years of classroom teaching experience. They know from first-hand experience that even within diversity there is diversity, so children with the same diversity cannot be catered for in exactly the same way. For example, in all kinds of disability (e.g. vision, hearing, behaviour, physical), there are levels: mild, moderate, severe and profound. The more severe disabilities are known as low incidence disabilities, because they occur less often and numbers are low (Hunt & Marshall, 2002; Kirk, Gallagher, Anastasiow & Coleman, 2006). Children with low incidence disabilities require more specialised pedagogy, as they need to acquire skills, such as learning Braille or their country's sign language, which most general education class teachers and schools cannot provide (Hatlen, 2000; Warnock, 2007). Mild levels of disability are known as high incidence disabilities because they occur more often and numbers are high. Most children with high incidence disabilities can be included in general education classrooms and can be effectively taught by teachers who have appropriate training to use effective pedagogy and other accommodation for them.

### Teacher training in special education

Research findings show that lack of teacher training in special education is a hindrance to inclusion, and that such training is essential for successful inclusion to take place (Subban & Sharma, 2006; Anderson, Klassen & Georgiou, 2007; Peters, Johnstone & Ferguson, 2005). The (Australian) Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committee Report (2002) has this to say:

The need for improvement arises from the fact of wholehearted community acceptance of the need to bring into mainstream schools students who would once have been separated into special schools or units. The successful implementation of such a policy requires supplementary training of teachers to deal with new classroom demands. While the committee is aware of the diverse pressures applied to schools, to school systems and to the teaching profession, it nonetheless appears inexplicable that something as fundamental to the operations of the school and the dynamics of the classroom should have been subject for so long to an obvious skills gap and to a virtual training vacuum.

Other academics and researchers have made it clear that teachers need to have training to use inclusive pedagogy in their classrooms (van Kraayenoord, 2007; Gibb, Tunbridge, Chua and Frederickson 2007; Peters, Johnstone & Ferguson, 2005).

Research also found high levels of anxiety amongst teachers who had little or no background or education in educational principles and practices for students with disabilities when asked to participate in inclusion exercises. This indicates a strong need for teacher training providers to break down rigid dichotomies between regular and special education training in tertiary institutions (Lindsay, 2004; Peters, Johnstone & Ferguson, 2005).

This paper supports the view of those who advocate responsible inclusion. This view is in agreement with the recommendations of the *Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action* which recognises that the majority of the world's children can be educated in inclusive classes, but that there are a few for whom full inclusion is

not the best option. Each country needs to be clear about what is possible in its particular context, and work towards that. Full inclusion is appropriate for street children, migrant populations, child workers, girls (who are denied education in some societies), war casualties, marginalised minority groups, children from poor families, children with linguistic or religious differences, the gifted and talented, as well as for children with disabilities or different learning needs, **provided that the including school has the appropriate resources, access and staff expertise to provide quality education for them.**

Developed countries which practice inclusion have classroom support in the form of teacher aides, teacher assistants, itinerant specialist help, consultants, interpreters, well-equipped classrooms, appropriate resources, equipment, co-teaching with special education teachers, paraprofessional input, and so forth. In developing countries, however, it is just the teacher in a class the entire school day; classes are often large and classrooms small, and teachers lack the appropriate training for teaching children with diverse learning needs. Simply placing these students in regular classes and not having the staff with expertise or resources to cater for them will be mainstream dumping, and staff will have the role of child minders or glorified babysitters. These children's potential will never be developed, whatever that potential may be. Without such expertise, general education schools will not be able to develop these students' potential, but will churn out students with minimum achievement, leading to low-paid job opportunities and so perpetuate the cycle of poverty from which people with disabilities are desperately trying to break.

The life of the deafblind woman, Helen Keller, illustrates the importance of appropriate, specialised pedagogy for persons with high support needs. Before her tutor, Anne Sullivan, came to the rescue, Helen could not even feed herself. With Ms Sullivan's specialised tuition, Helen's full potential was eventually developed, and she became internationally renowned as an author and activist.

In the British Journal of Special Education's SENCo-Forum (BJSE, 2002:151), some educators stated that, without appropriate teacher training for inclusion, some children were being 'offered as sacrificial lambs on the altar of 'inclusion'...'

## **Pacific Island countries: the way forward towards inclusion**

### **State-wide support**

The onus is on the governments of these island nations who have publicly and internationally endorsed inclusion to make inclusion a reality, which is possible for the majority of children. This could be done by providing funding and resources to regular schools which have included students with diverse needs.

Teachers in regular schools are the ones who are expected to implement inclusion, so awareness programmes, in-service workshops and training in special needs education should be available for them at all levels: pre-school, primary, secondary and tertiary. Full scholarships to study in the area of special needs at university should be allocated by governments so that students can acquire training at tertiary level. These graduates can be resource persons in their schools. At least one graduate in each school can be the target for the next ten years.

### **Teacher training curricula**

An examination of the curricula at teacher training and university level would show an emphasis on subject or academic content. These curricula need to be revisited, revised or restructured to include more courses on pedagogy for inclusive classrooms. The benefit is clearly seen in the study undertaken by Loreman, Sharma, Forlin and Earle, who investigated the training of international pre-service teachers preparing for teaching in inclusive classrooms. The study was conducted in three universities in Australia and Canada. The results showed that pre-service teachers who were offered this kind of ‘additional training and/or experience with people with disabilities’ (Loreman *et al.*, 2005:1) developed more confidence and had more positive attitudes towards implementing inclusive practices. This led the research team to conclude that:

... pre-service programmes should consider the *mandatory inclusion* [emphasis added] of these aspects in their programmes, especially as the practice of inclusive education becomes more prominent in schools ... (*ibid.*:30).

In a review of the Indian literature on inclusion, Singal (2005:331-349) found that there was a paradox, in that though states were on the one hand pushing for mainstreaming for students with disabilities, on the other hand teacher preparation programmes were classified separately, as either general education or special education. Singal's other findings are given below.

- In BEd and MEd programmes, special education is an optional paper, the content is theoretical, and no practical experience is given.
- The majority of the training programmes focus on issues relating to a single disability.
- Because of the inadequacy of educational training programmes, teachers who are willing to work with children who have learning and other disabilities lack the necessary training to do so.
- The current propositions and arguments for inclusive education have still remained at 'the level of theory and no concrete steps or processes have been undertaken or systematically developed'.

A perusal of the BEd programmes at the University of the South Pacific, developed for training teachers to teach in primary and secondary schools locally and regionally, show a similar pattern. Of the 13 courses in the primary teacher education programme, only 50% of one course, namely ED 319 *Professional issues in education*, has special education content. From 2009, this course will become optional.

Students taking the secondary education programme (which consists of 27 courses) have hitherto been able to take ED 319 as part of their programme. However, from 2009, in a restructuring and course rationalising process, ED 319 has been removed from the programme, so students will graduate without any knowledge of identifying, much less dealing with, diversity when they enter the teaching profession. This will be a great handicap for them, particularly for those in the pre-service degree programme, and it will negatively affect the school students in the schools they teach in.

### **Examination-driven school curriculum**

Most PICs follow a national curriculum, with emphasis on good external examination results. This puts pressure on schools to enroll students who are likely to pass exams and improve the image of the school, as many stakeholders judge schools by their pass-rate. Examinations are based on good cognitive functioning abilities and so there would be some reluctance to include students who are perceived to hold back others or who would eventually fail external exams.

This emphasis on external examination results does not take into consideration students who have diverse abilities, and their need to be assessed using different assessment protocols. This is another area that needs to be restructured in order for inclusion to be implemented, not only in Fiji schools, but also in other PIC schools. The essence of inclusion is that diversity is accepted and made welcome in an inclusive setting. Thus the environment, pedagogy, resources and assessment have to be adapted to suit the person with different needs, rather than expecting the person to fit into the existing structure.

### **Partnership with stakeholders**

It is important to involve parents in placement decisions for their children. They should be included as partners in their children's education. They may have fears and concerns for their child's safety in an inclusive environment. They need to have a choice regarding where their child should be educated, so options should be available. Birrell (2005: 3-4), states that his 11-year-old daughter is:

.... blind, unable to walk or talk and in need of 24 hour care, with daily seizures and the constant need of medical supervision, yet we came under intense pressure to send her to an entirely unsuitable school within our borough ... it is worth heeding the advice of Baroness Warnock to stop reciting the mantra of integration and start trying to provide a stimulating education for all children. *All parents want is choice, after all* (emphasis added).

Educators also have concerns about inclusion, and need to express them. They need to be included in decision-making as their school moves towards inclusion.

Collaboration and partnership at many levels are necessary for inclusive education to be successfully implemented. Loreman *et al.* clearly sum this up, based on research evidence as follows:

... To be successful, inclusion requires commitment from governments, teacher-training institutions, schools, the school community, and most importantly, from individual teachers. As we move towards more inclusive educational systems, teacher-training institutions will become pivotal in ensuring teachers have the skills and attitudes they need (Loreman *et al.*, 2005: 2).

### **Conclusion**

Questions we need to ask ourselves are: What can all stakeholders in PICs learn from research on inclusive education in various parts of the world? Who has a part to play in the implementation and facilitation of inclusive classrooms in PICs? Should teacher education providers blunder along, promoting the same old subject content-laden curricula, with the focus on general education pedagogies? Or should the focus be on the global agenda, which is preparing teachers to work with confidence in inclusive classrooms?

These are questions all teacher education providers need to consider seriously in the interests of promoting the human rights of all children, with or without disabilities, to an appropriate education.

Governments in PICs have a responsibility to get involved in moving the agenda for inclusive education forward. This can be done by providing funding and training in special education in the form of in-service workshops and awareness programmes. Governments and other scholarship providers can also provide scholarships at degree level for studying special education, the cornerstone of which is individualisation and pedagogy for diverse learning needs.

Teacher training colleges in PICs which offer certificate and diploma programmes need to revisit their curricula, and ask themselves the above questions in the restructuring of their curricula.



In moving towards inclusion, local factors must be considered: culture, resources, attitudes towards inclusion by educators and parents, teachers' perceptions of their efficacy in inclusive classrooms, and so on. Lastly, special education and special education teachers have a valuable role to play in the process of inclusion, and this resource should be utilised.

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## **5**

### **Disability in the Pacific**

*Setareki S. Macanawai*

#### **Introduction**

It is widely known that disability services were introduced to Pacific Island countries between the 1960s and 1980s. Much of the initial thrust came from civil society organisations, church groups and concerned individuals within the private sector wishing to address the needs of children with disabilities. Subsequently, numerous single and cross-disability non-governmental organisations were established in the Pacific region. These organisations focused on delivery of services and were managed by non-disabled persons, adopting the view that persons with disabilities must be cared for, spoon-fed, protected and segregated. Persons with disabilities were regarded as recipients of goodwill and unable to make their own choices or determine their own destiny.

The strong extended family system in most Pacific Island countries encourages family members to look after their less fortunate relatives. The association of a disabling condition with ancestral curse, parental misdeeds, witchcraft, shame and fear keeps persons with disabilities isolated, neglected, dependent and poor.

Furthermore, the struggling economies of these island nations inhibit governments' attention to the presence, needs and concerns of their disabled populations, minority groups in most cases, their needs being outweighed by national priorities and agendas.

In the 1990s, however, some positive developments in the area of disability services began to emerge in the Pacific as governments and disability-related organisations undertook measures to implement the targets and actions of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific's (UNESCAP) Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993 – 2002. The Decade was proclaimed with a view to giving fresh impetus to the implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons beyond 1992. The theme and goal of the Decade is the promotion of the full participation and equality of people with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific region. The Agenda for Action of the Decade was developed to provide a framework consisting of the following major policy areas under which efforts would be required to achieve the goal of the Decade:

- national coordination
- legislation
- information
- public awareness
- accessibility and communication
- education
- training and employment
- prevention of causes of disability
- rehabilitation services
- assistive devices
- self-help organisation
- regional cooperation.

Of the twenty UNESCAP Pacific Island member states, thirteen became signatories to the Proclamation on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons. Some Pacific Island countries did not sign the Proclamation. One such was Papua New Guinea (PNG). However, PNG took an active part in some Decade activities. Others that did sign, such as the Marshall Islands, Tuvalu, Federated States of Micronesia, Palau and Niue, took little or no action.

By resolution 58/4 in May 2002, the decision was taken by governments of the UNESCAP region during a meeting held in Bangkok, Thailand to extend the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons for another Decade, from 2003 – 2012. In October 2002, a high-level Intergovernmental Meeting to Conclude the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons was held at Otsu, Japan. Representatives from Fiji and neighbouring island nations of Samoa and Cook Islands played a very prominent role at the meeting, along with a representative from the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.

The highlight of this meeting was the adoption of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action (BMF). This is the policy document to guide decision-making and action to achieve an inclusive, barrier-free and rights-based society for persons with disabilities in countries of the UNESCAP region by 2012. To clarify these terms, an inclusive society means a society for all, including persons with disabilities. A barrier-free society means a society that is free from physical and attitudinal barriers, as well as social, economic and cultural barriers. A rights-based society means a society based on the concept of human rights, including the right to development.

This regional disability framework encourages governments to implement the paradigm shift from a charity-based approach to a rights-based approach, and to move towards the human rights perspective, especially the perspective of the right to development for persons with disabilities. Sections 14 and 15 of the BMF are given below.

14. To promote the goals of an inclusive, barrier-free and rights-based society for persons with disabilities in the Asian and Pacific region, the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action, is guided by the following principles and policy directions:

(1) Enact and/or enforce legislation and policies related to equal opportunities and treatment of persons with disabilities and their rights to equity in education, health, information and communications, training and employment, social services and other areas. Such legislation and policies should include persons with all types of disabilities, women and men, and

people in urban and remote and rural areas. They should be rights-based and promote inclusive and multisectoral approaches.

(2) Include disability dimensions in all new and existing laws, policies plans, programmes and schemes.

(3) Establish or strengthen national coordination committees on disability which will develop and coordinate the implementation and monitoring of the policies concerning disability, with effective participation from organizations of and for persons with disabilities.

(4) Support the development of persons with disabilities and their organizations and include them in the national policy decision-making process on disability, with special focus on the development of women with disabilities and their participation in self-help organizations of persons with disabilities as well as in mainstream gender initiatives.

(5) Ensure that disabled persons be an integral part of efforts to achieve the millennium development goals, particularly in the areas of poverty alleviation, primary education, gender and youth employment.

(6) Strengthen national capacity in data collection and analysis concerning disability statistics to support policy formulation and programme implementation.

(7) Adopt a policy of early intervention in all multisectoral areas, including education, health and rehabilitation, and social services for children with disabilities from birth to four years.

(8) Strengthen community-based approaches in the prevention of causes of disability, rehabilitation and equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities.

(9) Adopt the concept of universal and inclusive design for all citizens, which is cost-effective, in the development of infrastructure and services in the areas of, inter alia, rural and urban development, housing, transport and telecommunication.

## PRIORITY AREAS FOR ACTION

15. Further efforts need to focus on priority areas where progress was found inadequate and action was lagging during the implementation of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002. By resolution 58/4, Governments in the region defined the priority policy areas as:

- (a) Self-help organizations of persons with disabilities and related family and parent associations;
- (b) Women with disabilities;
- (c) Early detection, early intervention and education;
- (d) Training and employment, including self-employment;
- (e) Access to built environments and public transport;
- (f) Access to information and communications, including information, communications and assistive technologies;
- (g) Poverty alleviation through capacity-building, social security and sustainable livelihood programmes.

(<http://www.unescap.org/esid/psis/disability/bmf/bmf.html>)

Increased participation by various governments of the region in UNESCAP-organised disability-related meetings, seminars and workshops has had significant impact on the policy-makers as they focused their attention on the plight, needs and situations of persons with disabilities. People with disabilities themselves were being involved in such meetings and related disability planning, policy and decision-making. During this same period, the international disability movement caught the attention of leaders of those disabled persons organisations (DPOs) which have been actively operating in some Pacific Island countries, such as Fiji and Solomon Islands. Their collective efforts in promoting and advocating for equality, empowerment and participation of people with disabilities soon gained momentum as other Pacific Island countries established their own national DPOs to be the voice and representative of people with disabilities living in their countries.



Being deeply rooted in the charity and medical models, disability services in the Pacific are now experiencing significant pressure from the disability movement led by DPOs, as well as current global trends and practices in the disability sector. A paradigm shift from charity and medical models to social and rights-based models of disability is both necessary and inevitable if Pacific Island countries are to provide equal opportunities, greater recognition and better treatment of their citizens with disabilities, as well as to comply with the recently adopted United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons policy framework, and disability-related instruments adopted by some United Nations agencies such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO), UNESCO<sup>1</sup> and UNICEF<sup>2</sup>. The situations of persons with disabilities are also expected to improve as more development partners begin to recognise the need for disability-inclusive development, combined with the commitment of leaders of Pacific Island governments to the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action towards an inclusive, barrier-free and rights-based society for persons with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific.

### **Current status**

#### **The regional context**

According to Wilkinson (2005), people with disabilities in Pacific Island countries are among the poorest and most marginalised members of their communities as they are uncounted, unheard and their rights to development, full participation and equality are not upheld. They lack education, employment and livelihood opportunities, and have no or limited access to support services which lead to their economic and social exclusion. Lack of awareness and understanding in the wider community has meant that people with disabilities and their families face prejudice, discrimination and rejection in their daily lives.

This view was shared by government representatives from twelve Pacific Island countries (PICs) who attended the UNESCAP 7th Special Body on Pacific Island

1. United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organisation

2. United Nations Children's Fund

Developing countries in Bangkok, Thailand in May 2002. The assessment of achievements made by Pacific Island countries during the first Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993 – 2002, showed that Pacific Island countries lagged behind in the implementation of the Decade's Agenda for Action. This lack of progress is attributed to lack of information, distance and cost of travel, poorly performing economies and lack of commitment by governments. Citing a UNESCAP Issues Paper presented in 2003, Nowland-Foreman and Stubbs (2005) in their review of the NZAID<sup>3</sup> Pacific Regional Disability Programme, reported that Pacific Island countries had made progress in a number of the priority areas, particularly with national coordinating committees, legislation, information, public awareness, education, prevention of causes of disability, rehabilitation, self-help organisations of people with disabilities, and regional cooperation. Little progress was made in the areas of accessibility, training and employment, and assistive devices. The UNESCAP review highlighted the following areas where further progress was necessary:

- coordination and support of services and programmes provided by non-government organisations (NGOs) and community and self-help organisations
- legislation to address the rights and needs, including access and equity issues, of people with disabilities
- updated information for advocacy and for the purposes of the planning and implementation of services for people with disabilities
- access to the built environment and to appropriate means of communication, especially in schools
- public awareness-raising targeting many sectors
- education for children and youth with disabilities who are widely denied this right in Pacific Island countries
- access to education, training, employment and income-generating activities to alleviate poverty for people with disabilities
- preventative and early identification services

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3. New Zealand Agency for International Development

- persons with disabilities playing a key role in the formulation of national policy on all issues that affect their lives directly
- strengthening national and regional networks of NGOs, regional organisations, UN agencies and other multilateral organisations.

As noted earlier, the primary catalysts for developing responses to disability issues in Pacific Island countries in the last four decades have been local, national and international NGOs such as the Red Cross, the Christian Blind Mission of Germany and Sight Savers of the United Kingdom. Donor governments such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United Kingdom, provided the much-needed financial support. Much of the effort of these local and national NGOs target the education and rehabilitation needs of children and adults with disabilities in the Pacific. Examples include the Red Cross Centres in Tuvalu and Tonga; the Vanuatu Society for Disabled People; the Society for the Blind– Prevention, Rehabilitation and Education for the Blind and the Loto Taumafai of Samoa; and the various disability service providers in Fiji and Papua New Guinea. A few governments in the subregion have established legislation and policies, and have implemented programmes to support the full and equal participation of people with disabilities in Pacific Island communities and to promote their rights to development.

With disability awareness gaining momentum in the region, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat began to show keen interest and explore effective ways of engaging in this emerging social issue. Miller (2007) commented that disability was not on the agenda of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) until 2002 when the then Prime Minister of Vanuatu, the Honourable Edward Natapei, raised the issue for the first time at the 2002 Pacific Islands Forum meeting held in Suva, Fiji. This move was prompted by the recommendations adopted by the UNESCAP 7th Special Body on Pacific Island Developing Countries Meeting in Bangkok in May 2002. The PIF Education Ministers' meeting held in Suva in December 2002 also considered the issues in basic education for children and youth with disabilities, resulting in the inclusion of this concern in the Forum Basic Education Action Plan. Further, an issues paper relating to disability in the region was presented at the Pre-Forum Session of the Forum Officials Committee in Auckland, New Zealand in August 2003, resulting in disability finding its place in the 2003 Pacific Islands

Forum communiqué. This contained the endorsement of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action (BMF) 2003 – 2012 by our PIF leaders, which provided a lasting mandate for regional work in the area of disability. They acknowledged that immediate priorities for Pacific governments should be to address policy that would dismantle barriers and improve access and coordination for persons with disabilities. Honouring its commitment to this sector, the PIF Secretariat (PIFS) organised a Pacific regional workshop on disability in Nadi, Fiji in 2005. The establishment of the Disability Coordination Officer position at PIFS in 2006 was a clear indication of the support of our Forum leaders to their commitment. The participation of the regional non-governmental organisation on disability, the Pacific Disability Forum (PDF) in the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific's Working Groups on Health and Population, as well as Human Resource Development, provides valuable opportunity where disability dimensions of issues discussed can be raised and considered.

The efforts of some United Nations organisations through their Pacific offices to address disability issues in the region must also be mentioned. As alluded to earlier, the UNESCAP Pacific Operation Centre (UNESCAP/POC) has been actively promoting the Decade of Disabled Persons through its Agenda for Action between 1993 and 2002, and now the BMF and Biwako Plus Five for the period 2003 to 2012. Some countries in our region such as Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands were able to develop (or are in the process of developing) their national policy on disability with the technical assistance of the UNESCAP/POC Regional Advisor on Social Development and Planning. The UNESCO Pacific Office has also given its valuable contribution in terms of addressing the issue of inclusive education for vulnerable groups, including children with disabilities, as evident in this workshop and a similar event held in Samoa in November 2005. The UNESCO Pacific Office also funded and collaborated with the Fiji Disabled Peoples' Association in June 2006 to organise a regional training workshop on accessible ICT<sup>4</sup> for persons with disabilities to be held in Nadi, Fiji. Both the ILO and UNICEF Pacific Offices have supported disability development in the region in the areas of training

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4. information communication technology

and employment, as well as among children and youth with disabilities, and the United Nations Development Programme, through its Regional Rights Resource Team, has also actively promoted the equal treatment as well as recognition and protection of the rights of persons with disabilities.

**The disability movement as a social movement for change**

Persons with disabilities now realise that neither politics nor charitable or voluntary organisations are addressing their interests appropriately, that the problem of disability is externally located, and that society's discrimination against them is a human rights issue. Hence, there is a real need for people with disabilities to be mobilised in the realisation that the problems they face are not theirs alone, and that the solutions to their problems are attainable by cooperating and collaborating with other people who are facing the same difficulties with a common goal of improving the conditions and quality of their own lives. Although there was a time when it was perfectly reasonable for people with disabilities to be segregated and incarcerated into miserable institutions, they are now more conscious of their human worth, value and dignity and are therefore demanding dramatic changes in policies and models of service delivery. The disability movement is about people with disabilities controlling their own lives with the support they need, and upholding the value that disability must not be looked at in parts but in totality.

In March 2000, several DPOs in the Pacific that are members of Disabled People International (DPI) established a sub-regional office in Suva, Fiji in order to strengthen their self-help initiatives at the national level through leadership training as well as information exchange across countries in Oceania. As a result, national DPOs were established in Cook Islands, Kiribati, Samoa, Papua New Guinea, Tonga and Vanuatu. Fiji and Solomon Islands have national DPOs and, with effective collaboration with Disabled Peoples' International Asia/Pacific Regional Office, the other countries were able to witness the formation of their own national DPOs. With the support of Inclusion International, a Pacific Disability Development Network was established a year later among organisations of and for people with disabilities. The Network initiated surveys to collect accurate data concerning persons with disabilities in some countries: Cook Islands, Samoa and

Kiribati. Thus, the picture of the situation of people with disabilities in Pacific Island countries was becoming increasingly clearer. The combined efforts of national DPOs and other service providers in the Pacific led to a meeting in Nadi, Fiji in December 2002, at which the idea of setting up a Pacific-based regional organisation on disability was discussed.

**The regional voice, representative and coordinating mechanism on disability**

As early as 2002, at the Oceania Disability Advisory Support Committee Training Seminar in Nadi, Fiji, leaders of persons with disabilities and participants from PICs began to quietly articulate their desire for an interim committee to spearhead an effort to unite persons with disabilities in the Pacific under a South Pacific federation of persons with disabilities. It was at this meeting that the Pacific Disability Forum (PDF) was born.

In 2003, at the Regional Leadership Training Seminar for women with disabilities held in Suva, Fiji, where a majority of participants came from PICs, this sentiment was again expressed by a number of seminar participants. In the following months the interim PDF Executive Committee attempted to form such a sub-regional federation with the emergence of an opportunity for funding. However, priority shifts in funding allocations within the office of donors in the Pacific continued to put a halt to this initiative, so it continued as a loose organisation.

The DPI Oceania Sub-region Office which was established in Suva, Fiji in 2000 to support DPOs in Pacific Island countries played a pivotal role in organising these two training seminars as well as servicing the PDF listserv. By 2004, at the inaugural PDF meeting in Fiji, the members once again began to discuss earnestly the possibility of making PDF a formal organisation and establishing a regional office to coordinate the development of such a federation in the Pacific. This proposal was formally included in the draft of its Constitution and a shell plan to be presented to the annual general meeting at the end of 2004. The PDF Council, faced by unexpected funding constraints, mandated priority shifts which, once again, placed the development of a new regional office at a much lower priority than originally proposed.

In 2005, further consultations were held at a meeting jointly organised by PIFS, UNESCAP and ILO Pacific Offices, PDF and DPI Oceania. It was at this time that NZAID commissioned two consultants to review what existed in the area of disability in the Pacific region. The review presented strong recommendations that would give the NZAID Pacific Regional Health Programme a clear, strategic direction for assistance in the area of disability development in the Pacific region for the next five years. It was at this stage that some confirmation of support funding from NZAID was forthcoming and the dream of establishing a regional organisation drew closer to being realised. PDF was seen at this point to be well placed as a partner to NZAID in this noble task.

This notwithstanding, the year-old call and the aspirations of persons with disabilities of the Pacific Island nations for a regional organisation which can speak with one voice and articulate their concerns and demands to the rest of the region and the world remains, simmering away like magma lying within the womb of the many volcanoes dotting the region. The vast distances separating Pacific Island countries makes the frequent participation of member representatives in regional gatherings of PDF extremely expensive. Thus, the needs, problems and perspectives of persons with disabilities in this part of the world are rarely, if at all, adequately addressed in regional gatherings. Yet these persons with disabilities are most in need of assistance and attention, given their age-old isolation from mainstream efforts at rehabilitation and the ongoing struggle for equalisation of opportunity. In addition, the young governments and struggling, tiny economies of the region often contribute to the lack of adequate service for persons with disabilities.

The establishment of the PDF regional office in Suva, Fiji in January 2007 with requisite resources provided by NZAID to co-ordinate and promote development efforts in the region has increasingly become a vital step towards securing representation and ensuring participation of Pacific persons with disabilities in the regional fora of the United Nations regional inter-governmental bodies, the governments of the region, and regional non-state actors, or NGOs. This regional office can orchestrate the organisation and support the development of a federation of persons with disabilities in the region. Such a federation, in turn,

can serve as a framework for the dissemination and appropriate application of information, resources and projects to persons with disabilities of these island nations. Finally, persons with disabilities in the Pacific, speaking with one voice through a federation as a regional block, cannot be lightly ignored in regional and international forums.

### **Conclusion**

Generally, there are two different ways in which individuals and societies respond to the situations of people who appear to be in need. These represent two different approaches to living. One approach has to do with the formal world of systemic ways to help people and the other has to do with the informal world of personal responses from within the context of historical traditions, personal autonomy and social responsibility. What is important in relation to disability is that we recognise the necessity to gain real insights into the struggle of persons with disabilities as they strive for a barrier-free and inclusive society. These insights will help us appreciate the value of justice, equality, participation, choice and autonomy for persons with disabilities. The ways in which they have struggled to translate previously devalued personal characteristics into a positive source of identity is to be admired. How we relate to people with disabilities is influenced to a large extent by our past experience and encounters with such persons and the way in which we define disability. Our definitions of disability are important in that they may be part of, and further legitimate, our assumptions about disability and the discriminatory practices we have against such persons.

To a person with a disability, being disabled involves experiencing discrimination, vulnerability and abusive assaults upon his/her self-identity and esteem. In the minds of such people, to be disabled is to be discriminated against, which often results in social isolation and restriction. Individuals with disabilities want to be comfortable in who they are as disabled persons and, in their opinion, the pursuit of empowerment and self-determination is about having the self-respect and the self-confidence to challenge the system that discriminates against them. Since they want their basic human rights to be recognised, there is a refusal on their part to accept the deficit and dependency role which has powerfully shaped disability services, policies and practices.



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## 6

### **Guidelines to include children with disabilities in school systems**

*Penelope Price*

#### **Introduction**

People with disabilities and those of us who have been concerned with their rights, especially the rights of disabled children, find it hard to understand why it has been so difficult to achieve a situation where disabled children, like all other children, are required and expected to go to school. It seems obvious that if education is compulsory, then it is compulsory for all children. And that if education is the responsibility of governments, then the education of children with disabilities is also the responsibility of governments.

There are international mandates dating back to 1945 proclaiming the right to education for all people. In 1945 the Conference of Allied Ministers of Education in their *Draft Proposals for an Educational and Cultural Organisation of the United Nations* stated their belief in ‘full and equal opportunities for education for all’

and set the scene for UNESCO<sup>1</sup> initiatives on Education For All, now commonly referred to as EFA, which have been developed since then (UNESCO).

The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 proclaims that: ‘Everyone is entitled to all rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration *without distinction of any kind*’ (Article 2, emphasis added) and that one of the rights is the right to education (Article 26) (United Nations).

So why, after a period of 60 years, are we still working to achieve a situation where there is widespread acceptance of education as an inalienable right for children with disabilities? Many barriers and obstacles are cited as reasons for this goal being so difficult to achieve, but the primary reason throughout most of these decades has been ignorance, prejudice, and mistaken assumptions about what is needed to bring change into the system. Even where the right to education has been accepted, there appears to be an implicit assumption that there is a ‘hierarchy’ of rights, and that the rights of children with disabilities have to wait until the rights of all other children have been achieved.

### **Global and regional mandates**

The gradual change in attitudes towards education has been brought about by both global and regional mandates.

#### **Global mandates**

- |      |                                                                                   |
|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1989 | The Convention on the Rights of the Child                                         |
| 1990 | The UNESCO Jomtien World Conference on ‘Education for All’                        |
| 1993 | Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities |
| 1994 | The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action                                  |
| 2000 | The UNESCO Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All                        |
| 2000 | The Millennium Development Goals                                                  |
| 2006 | The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities                         |

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1. United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organisation

*The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)* upholds the rights of children with disabilities to free and compulsory primary education on the basis of equal opportunity, with protection from all kinds of discrimination, including discrimination on the basis of disability. It also requires that children with disabilities have access to and receive education in a manner conducive to the child's *achieving the fullest possible social integration and individual development*. It is the most widely ratified human rights treaty in the history of the United Nations, and has been ratified by all Pacific Island governments. Immediately after signing this convention in 1997, the Cook Islands developed a Special Needs Education policy, adopted by the Ministry of Education in 2000, as a direct response to honour this ratification.

### *The UNESCO Global Programme of Education for All*

The goal of the UNESCO EFA programme was to achieve universal primary education. The Jomtien World Conference in 1990 developed a Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs. Although the major focus was on providing educational opportunities designed to meet basic learning needs in a flexible manner, responding to the needs, culture and circumstances of learners, there was no focus on the situation of children with disabilities who were largely excluded from education, apart from limited provision in some countries by non-government organisations (NGOs). Ten years later the *Dakar Framework for Action* was developed in response to the results of the global 2000 EFA assessment. Numbers of children in school had risen, with many countries reporting that they were approaching full primary school enrolment for the first time. At the same time the number of out-of-school children was cited as 113 million (UNICEF, 2004). This was probably an under-estimation, given that data on many groups of excluded children, including children with disabilities, were not collected.

The Framework established six goals to achieve education for all by 2015. These focus on expanding early childhood care and education, with special reference to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children; ensuring that all children have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education, with emphasis on girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minority

groups; and ensuring appropriate learning and life skills programmes for all ages. In addition, there was a target set for adult literacy, the elimination of gender bias and a focus on improving all aspects of the quality of education. A call was made for inclusive approaches to ensure a broad vision of EFA, and the need to address the poor and disadvantaged, groups which presumably include children with disabilities although they are not specifically named, unlike many other minority and out-of-school groups.

Meetings of EFA coordinators in connection with the Mid-Decade Assessment in the Pacific and other regions in Asia, have focused on reaching the unreached and out-of-school children, with specific reference to children with disabilities. The findings from a research study into the progress of four countries in including children with disabilities into their school systems is presented in the second part of this chapter. Samoa was the only Pacific country of the four countries studied.

Both the *Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities* and the *Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education* strongly supported the principle of educating all children, including children with disabilities, in the national education system. The *Standard Rules* called for: a clearly stated policy, understood at the school level and in the wider community; curriculum flexibility and adaptation; on-going teacher training and support to teachers; and adequate, accessible and appropriate support services to be provided to meet the needs of persons with disabilities in mainstream schools.

The *Salamanca Statement*, resulting from the UNESCO World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality, held in Spain in 1994, called for a policy shift which would require all schools in the regular school system to become inclusive schools. This approach was seen as necessary to advance the commitment to *Education for All* by ensuring that it means *all* children, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. Schools must take into account this wide diversity. The *Statement* called on governments to take policy, legislative and implementation measures to transform national education and build a system of inclusive schools. It provided guidelines for

action to ensure changes at the level of school management, training of teachers, curriculum flexibility and the development of support services. It also emphasised the importance of the role of parents and the community.

Salamanca provided the shift in thinking from integration to inclusion, from accepting children with disabilities and other difficulties into the school system as long as they fitted into the system, to a policy of accepting all children, with their individual strengths and weaknesses, and their right to education, with the full understanding that it is the school systems that must change to meet the needs of all children.

The Salamanca focus on an inclusive orientation was seen as the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all. Unfortunately, however, the discriminatory attitudes and failure to consider the groups of children who are still not receiving an education has continued into the twenty-first century.

In 2000 the Millennium Development Goals were declared but with no reference to persons with disabilities and other significant minority groups in the framework. With a target date of 2015, the second goal is to ensure that children everywhere will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling, and that girls and boys will have equal access to all levels of education. Nowhere is there any reference to persons with disabilities who are arguably the largest minority discriminated against in terms of access to school at any level. Without a concerted effort to alter the situation of children with disabilities in terms of education, the goals will not be met.

### *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*

It was the failure of the global community to include persons with disabilities in all development initiatives, as well as discrimination at the national and local level, that led to the move in 2001 to draft a specific United Nations (UN) convention to uphold the rights of persons with disabilities. The results have been dramatic and on 13 December 2006 the UN General Assembly adopted the *Convention on the*

*Rights of Persons with Disabilities.* This Convention was negotiated in record time, with record participation, and was signed on its opening day by a record number of countries. It was the first Convention, which, during the drafting process, allowed the participation of civil society and the International Disability Caucus. The Seoul Declaration, adopted on 8 September 2007 at the conclusion of the Disabled People International (DPI) World Assembly, stated that the Convention reflected the language and vision of disability rights as viewed by persons with disabilities. “The Convention is not just about persons with disabilities, it is by us and for us and [for] all of humanity. In other words, our rights, our convention, but for all.’ The slogan of DPI is ‘Nothing about us without us!’ The Declaration went on to say that the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* is ‘a core international human rights treaty, [and] shall be the foundation for all laws, policies and practices addressing the rights of persons with disabilities’ (Seoul Declaration, 2007).

Although to date the Convention has been signed by only one Pacific Island country, it is anticipated that over time it will be widely signed and ratified, and will guide future policy and development for persons with disabilities, together with the regional mandate already adopted by Pacific leaders.

Article 24 of the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* is on education. It not only recognises the right to education for persons with disabilities, but also requires that States Parties provide education at all levels, including lifelong learning, in an inclusive education system, with the goals of developing the talents, personality, creativity, physical and mental abilities of all persons with disabilities to their fullest potential. The main provisions of Article 24 are listed below.

- Governments must provide education for persons with disabilities in inclusive education systems at all levels.
- Persons with disabilities may not be excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability.
- Children with disabilities may not be excluded from free, compulsory primary education, or from secondary education, on the basis of disability.
- Persons with disabilities must be able to access an inclusive, quality and free

primary education and secondary education on an equal basis with others in their local communities.

- The inclusive education system must provide reasonable accommodation of the individual's learning requirements.
- Persons with disabilities must receive the support required to facilitate their effective education within the general education system.
- Effective individualised support measures must be provided in environments that maximise academic and social development, consistent with the goal of full inclusion.

Additional provisions include the requirements by States Parties to do the following.

- Enable persons with disabilities to learn life and social development skills to facilitate their full and equal participation in education. Measures specified focus particularly, but not exclusively, on the needs of children who are blind, deaf and deafblind, and include: (a) facilitating the learning of Braille, alternative modes, means and formats of communication, orientation and mobility skills, peer support and mentoring; (b) facilitating the learning of sign language and the promotion of the linguistic identity of the deaf community and (c) ensuring that education is delivered in the most appropriate languages and modes of communication for the individual.
- Train professional teachers and staff, including teachers with disabilities, who work at all levels of education, ensuring that such training incorporates disability awareness, appropriate modes and formats of communication, educational techniques and materials to support persons with disabilities.
- Ensure that persons with disabilities are able to access general tertiary education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning without discrimination and on an equal basis with others. Reasonable accommodation is required to be provided by States Parties.

*(Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006).*

This Convention will lead to an expansion of inclusive education approaches within national education systems and an increase in the number of children and adults with disabilities who are able to access education, particularly in developing countries, where the number of children not in school has been estimated to be as high as 90 per cent of children (UNICEF, 2004). It will also impact on the quality



of education and the capacity of education systems to respond appropriately and effectively to the diverse needs of persons with disabilities. A further benefit should be an increased global concern with monitoring the situation of persons with disabilities, particularly children with disabilities, in terms of their access to education, and their inclusion in the assessment of progress towards the achievement of such international programmes as the *UNESCO Education For All* framework and the Millennium Development Goals.

### **Regional mandates**

Mandates which focus exclusively on the rights of persons with disabilities are a response to a situation in which the rights of this group of people have been systematically ignored or denied by the societies in which they live. Global mandates which implicitly, but not explicitly, include their rights often do not achieve the same results for disabled people as they do for non-disabled people. Attitude change is a slow process and a culture of prejudice, discrimination and exclusion takes time to transform.

The most significant regional mandate, which continues to influence policy and services for persons with disabilities in Pacific countries and in Asia, is the *Biwako Millennium Framework for Action (BMF): Towards an Inclusive, Barrier-free and Rights-based Society for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific (2003-2012)* (UNESCAP, 2002). Adopted at a UNESCAP<sup>2</sup> high-level meeting to conclude the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002 held in Otsu, Japan in 2002, the BMF was endorsed by the Pacific Forum Leaders in August 2003. In December 2002, after the Otsu meeting, the Forum Education Ministers adopted three key recommendations from the third priority area of the BMF: early detection, early intervention and education. The first related to achieving access to primary school education for children with disabilities; the second was to review and strengthen regional teacher training opportunities; and the third was, in collaboration with donors, to develop a regional programme to develop capacity that will provide inclusive education for children with disabilities.

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2. United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Priority area 3 of the BMF is in complete accord with the rights contained in Article 24 of the recently adopted *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* and also the *Salamanca Framework*. In addition, it addresses the critical need to detect children with disabilities in their infancy and to provide appropriate early intervention services, with full support to their families. It also expands on the right to receive education in inclusive settings, and calls on governments to pass legislation, with enforcement mechanisms, to mandate education for children with disabilities, and to develop policy and national education plans where the education of children with disabilities is explicitly included. In addition there is reference to budgetary requirements, the necessity of data collection and the setting of five-year targets, by which progress in including children with disabilities can be monitored. It calls for measures to improve the quality of education for all children. It emphasises the importance of collaboration between all partners in the educational process and for close consultation with families and organisations of persons with disabilities. Finally, it calls for the strengthening of regional cooperation to facilitate the sharing of experiences and to support the development of inclusive education initiatives. This workshop on 'Advancing Inclusive Education in the Pacific' is a perfect example of an activity to achieve this aim.

The UNESCAP High-level Intergovernmental Meeting on the Midpoint Review of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2003-2012, was held in Bangkok, in September 2007. The Pacific region represents a third of the UNESCAP membership, and has played a significant role in supporting the disability initiatives which were started with the first Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities in 1993. In the evaluation of achievements at the end of the first Decade, progress in Pacific countries was uneven, with many countries becoming involved in the Decade very late in the time frame. However, during the first half of the second Decade, the Pacific region led the way with a coordinated regional approach and a very strong agenda to achieve the goals and targets of the *Biwako Millennium Framework for Action*. The key partners have been the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat (PIFS) and the Pacific Disability Forum (PDF), which represents organisations of people with disabilities in Pacific countries.

Item 4 on the agenda of the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting was *Strengthening the Implementation of the Biwako Millennium framework for Action in the Pacific Sub-region*. The paper presented reflected the findings of a Pacific expert group meeting held by UNESCAP in Nadi in March 2007. At this meeting, progress towards achieving the goals of the BMF was reported and Pacific priorities set for the second half of the Decade. In the area of education, the priorities considered most pressing were in the areas of identifying children with disabilities early and providing early intervention, which gives these children the chance of benefiting from education when the opportunity to go to school is, or becomes, available. The need to increase access to school for children with disabilities is a priority of the highest order, and requires transformation of education systems to make them inclusive, with emphasis on appropriate and relevant teacher training to ensure that teachers are qualified to teach children with a diverse range of abilities within the regular school system.

Multiple barriers prevent the full participation of children with disabilities in education. Lack of information, combined with discriminatory attitudes towards persons with disabilities at all levels of society, has contributed to the continued neglect of their right to education. This partly explains the minimal rate of progress that has been made towards the enrolment and participation in the education process of children with disabilities. The factors are complex and extend beyond the boundaries of the school and classroom.

While accurate data are not available for many countries in the Pacific, disability surveys carried out in partnership with Inclusion International in some countries has made a significant difference to the information that is available. It is conservatively estimated that less than 10% of children with disabilities in developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region are in school (UNESCAP, 2002). Those children with disabilities who are attending school are almost all enrolled in special schools. There is some natural resistance to changing this system, and progress needs to be made slowly, with careful preparation to ensure that the move to inclusive schools is successful for both students and teachers. Guidelines are needed to help school systems prepare for the necessary changes. The UNESCO document

*Moving Forward: Towards Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities in the Asia-Pacific Region* is discussed in the next section.<sup>3</sup>

### *The UNESCO Project*

In 2004 the Assessment Information and Monitoring Systems Unit of UNESCO Bangkok developed a project to identify necessary and effective steps for including children with disabilities in national EFA action plans and strategies and to develop guidelines for action for use in regional and national capacity-building to promote the goal of full inclusion of children with disabilities in the EFA process, including the monitoring process. The goal of the UNESCO project was, firstly, to analyse the complex inter-play of factors which result in exclusion and, secondly, to obtain detailed information about education systems in selected countries where a specific commitment has been made to include children with disabilities in schools and in the national education process, and to look at how this has been achieved.

Case studies were conducted in four countries to document and analyse the processes, problems, solutions and outcomes of effective education policies and practices. A review process was then undertaken, with more than 50 stakeholders participating in a Writers' Review Meeting, which enabled country level verification of the results. Stakeholders included representatives of parent organisations and organisations of persons with disabilities, teachers from regular and special schools and special education units, head teachers and principals, Ministry of Education officials and administrators, officials of educational statistics and monitoring sections, university lecturers engaged in teacher education, representative of regional and local NGOs engaged in promoting and providing inclusive education, and community members. Discussion groups were held on a range of topics which had been the subject of investigation during the in-country process. These were held on the basis of country level as well as professional and other primary affiliations. The outcome was a series of recommendations for actions considered necessary to

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3. The author wishes to acknowledge reference to the AIMS Unit UNESCOBKK draft document: *Moving Forward: Towards Inclusion for Children with Disabilities in the Asia-Pacific Regions*. 2007 UNESCO, AIMS Unit, Bangkok, in press.

improve the opportunity and quality of education for children with disabilities in the education systems of the region. The recommendations addressed every level of the education system and highlighted the importance of collaboration and inter-dependence between school systems, parents, disability advocates and communities. The four countries selected for study were Brunei, Samoa, Thailand and Viet Nam. The research into the Samoan context was undertaken by Rebekah McCullough.

The lessons learned from the case studies and the recommendations from the Review Meeting of stakeholders have been transferred into the document entitled *Moving Forward: Towards Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities in the Asia-Pacific Region*. The document begins by identifying the problem and setting out the rationale for the focus on the education of children with disabilities. This is followed by an analysis of eight aspects of the education system and the ways in which it must change to allow the full inclusion of children with disabilities. Each aspect has a critical role to play in transforming the education system. The eight topics are listed below.

1. creating change in national education systems – what are the catalysts?
  2. laying the foundations for including children with disabilities in national education systems: policy, legislation and budgetary resources
  3. providing education, administering and implementing policy and collaborating with partners
  4. structuring and re-structuring the school system
  5. training teachers: pre- and in-service training and education for regular and specialist teachers
  6. designing data collection processes; monitoring and evaluating progress
  7. participating in the education process: the collaborative role of organisations of people with disabilities, families and community members
  8. listening to children.
- (UNESCO, 2007)

These eight topics are now discussed in more detail.

## **1. Creating change in national education systems – what are the catalysts?**

It is important to identify catalysts for change and to take action to encourage this process. Pressures for change are complex and can come from many sources.

### *International and regional mandates*

The international and regional mandates discussed earlier are examples of catalysts for change. They are particularly effective when the responsible agency, such as UNESCAP or UNESCO, engages in a framework of capacity-building and support to governments and other stakeholders. This has been the case with the UNESCO workshop on Inclusive Education, held in Samoa in 2005, and the meetings of Pacific EFA coordinators held in 2006 and 2007. The emphasis on out-of-school children in the sessions in preparation for the Mid-Decade Review of the EFA framework has required governments to focus on the groups of children who are not yet being reached by education. A catalyst for action by governments is often the realisation that they will not achieve the goal of full primary education unless they address the needs of children with disabilities and other excluded groups.

### *Non-government organisations activities in education for children with disabilities*

Non-government organisations are often the first to provide education for children with disabilities when they are excluded from the regular school system. Special schools, small-scale grass-roots projects and pilot projects have many benefits. They help to change attitudes and to create a more favourable environment for children with disabilities to be accepted, both in schools and in the community, and provide support to local communities and schools where children with disabilities are beginning to be included. It is important that they maintain good communication with Ministry of Education officials so that awareness is created within the Ministry that children with disabilities can benefit from education and also to show examples of successful inclusion of children with disabilities in regular community schools. It is important to work in partnership with Ministry of Education officials to ensure that the programme will become part of education policy and be expanded to other schools and provinces, and eventually throughout the whole system.

In Samoa, as in other Pacific countries, NGOs have played an important role, providing education for a range of children with disabilities for more than 25 years. Their advocacy to government resulted in an agreement that a strategy should be developed whereby government would assume responsibility for their education over time, and that NGOs, parents and representatives of organisations of persons with disabilities would become members of the Special Needs Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Education.

### *Advocacy*

Advocacy by organisations of parents of children with disabilities, and by organisations of people with disabilities is a very important mechanism for changing the education system to make it more willing and more capable of including children with disabilities in schools and making sure that the schools meet their educational needs. In many countries special schools have been established by organisations of parents working in partnership with NGOs. In other countries parents have been instrumental in encouraging governments to include children with disabilities in regular pre-schools, primary schools, secondary schools and universities. Palau is an example of a country where the inclusion of children with disabilities was influenced by parent advocacy.

## **2. Laying the foundations for including children with disabilities in national education systems: policy, legislation and budgetary resources**

Policy, legislation and the specific allocation of budgetary resources are all essential components that lead to change. Where policy is developed but not implemented there is a clear indication of lack of real commitment to ensuring that children with disabilities will have their right to education taken seriously. Policy, backed by legislation, provides the strongest statement of serious intent on the part of government to make the necessary changes to the education system, requiring schools to accept all children, including children with disabilities, and requiring parents to take responsibility for sending their children to school.

## **Policy**

Important factors for consideration in policy development include:

- the need to understand and accept that education is a human right for all children
- the current educational provision for children with disabilities—the extent to which education is provided by government or NGO, and whether it is in a system of separate schools or moving towards a system of inclusive education in regular classes
- the attitudes to persons with disabilities in the wider community and in school communities
- the preparedness of schools to undertake the changes that are necessary to make schools inclusive and capable of providing quality education that enables all students to achieve good learning outcomes, and the articulation of strategies to achieve this
- the strength of organisations of persons with disabilities and parent organisations and the willingness of governments to consult widely with them, and with other relevant community agencies and organisations, harnessing their expertise to guide the development of strategies to achieve inclusive schools.

The underlying philosophy for the policy on inclusive education should be to move the school system from a separate system to one which includes all children. The goal should be the development of schools which have teachers competent to adapt their teaching to cater for diverse abilities and disabilities of students. A flexible school should adapt to the needs of the child rather than insisting that the child fit into the pre-existing school structure with minimum modifications.

A policy for the education of children with disabilities should be part of mainstream national education policy, and children with disabilities should be specifically named in policy documents, as required by the BMF. Any pre-existing strategic plans for children with disabilities should be incorporated into national EFA action plans.



Ministries of Education should formulate educational policy and planning in consultation with families and organisations of persons with disabilities, and should develop programmes of education which enable children with disabilities to attend their local pre-school, primary or secondary schools. Policy implementation needs to prepare the school system for inclusive education, with the clear understanding that all children have the right to attend school and that it is the responsibility of the school to accommodate differences in learners.

Planning should be long-term, in a series of 5-year plans with specific systematic action-oriented implementation strategies for each time period. The long-term time-frame is necessary to make structural changes to the system, and to achieve adequate levels of teacher training to make sure that children included in regular schools receive quality education that is appropriate to their particular needs. The time-frame will allow stakeholders to understand that the changes will be made on a gradual basis. This will reduce any anxiety felt by those working in the schools.

Policy should promote effective partnership between Ministries of Education and other education providers, such as NGOs, parents and organisations of people with disabilities, while acknowledging that the primary responsibility for the education of *all* children lies with government. National policy should include strategies for finding out-of-school children, and should also find out why these children are not in school, so that strategies to overcome some of the barriers, which may include a sense of shame and embarrassment, financial constraints, and difficulty with transport, can be developed.

The *Cook Islands National Policy and Action Plan for Special Needs Education* provides a good example. The policy established closer links between the special classes and the regular schools to encourage the placement of children with disabilities in regular schools. Support was provided to the classroom teachers by teachers with special training. A programme of in-service training was set up to prepare teachers in regular classes to teach children with different abilities. The pre-service teacher training curriculum for regular teachers was modified to include the teaching strategies needed for teaching children with a wider range of abilities. In time,

this will make regular class teachers more competent and less reliant on support teachers.

### **Legislation**

The shift from persons with disabilities being viewed as *objects of charity* to *subjects of rights* is clearly seen in international law and is beginning to be reflected in national law. It is now widely accepted that the rights of persons with disabilities should be protected and promoted through general, as well as specially designed, laws, policies and programmes.

This transition has implications for national governments in terms of new and old legislation. The right to education is enshrined in most constitutions. In countries which have re-written their constitutions within the last decade, it is more common to find concepts of equality of rights and non-discrimination on grounds which may include disability as well as gender and race. This is the case in South Africa (1996) and Fiji (1997). In the Constitution of Thailand the right to education and other services provided by the state was specifically guaranteed to persons with disabilities (1997) (UNESCO, 2007: 45).

### *National Education Acts*

Many countries are still in the early stages of making this transition and patterns of legislation in different countries reflect the uneven provision. During this period of transition, it may be necessary to adopt a twin track approach to ensuring the rights of persons with disabilities. This approach calls for both general and specific legislation to recognise, protect and promote the rights of such persons. In relation to education, this means that the right to education of children with disabilities, and the special provisions necessary for their full and successful participation, would be contained in national education policy documents and in education legislation.

The policy would not be prepared as a 'special' education policy for children with disabilities, but would form part of the mainstream national policy and legislation, which would contain sections on any particular provisions for other groups which

may require special attention, such as children from ethnic and language minorities, nomadic or street children.

Thailand's National Education Act (1999) is an outstanding example. The principles and special provisions that apply to the education of children with disabilities in the national education school system are specified in the legislation. They include the equal right of children with disabilities to 12 years of free and compulsory education, and confirm that it is illegal for them to be out of school or for a teacher to refuse to teach them. It states that early intervention services are to be provided from birth and it establishes teacher training requirements, individualised assessment, assistive devices, and teaching aids and support to teachers (UNESCO, 2007: 48).

A clear and comprehensive statement of policy, with provisions specified in the education law would provide a framework for developing minimum national standards for the inclusion of children with disabilities in national education systems. These could be amended as the capabilities of the system expand.

#### *Enforcement of legislation*

If children with disabilities are to receive their entitlement to education equally with all other children, active enforcement of legislation, with penalties for non-compliance, is necessary. Enforcement should be undertaken by means of encouragement, with awareness-raising activities and the provision of information, rather than relying on punitive penalties. This applies to parents and families, who need to be informed of their children's right to attend school and of their obligation to give them this opportunity. Schools, too, should be encouraged to work with students, community leaders and community groups to find children who are not going to school, and to encourage them to attend. Incentives in terms of extra resources or community awards may be effective.

Samoa provides an example where there is no specific legislation mandating education for children with disabilities and although the Education Amendment Act of 1991-1992 made education compulsory for all children, the number of

children identified in a survey undertaken in 2000 indicates that there was little or no enforcement for children with disabilities. Progress has been made since 2000 (UNESCO, 2007: 47).

### *Regional support*

International and regional agencies can play an important role in assisting governments to develop comprehensive policies and action plans, and then draft and enact strong and effective legislation to promote increasingly inclusive education for all children. ESCAP Pacific Operations Centre, PIFS, Inclusion International and the PDF are some of the agencies that have been active in Pacific countries in this regard.

### **Budgetary resources**

Lack of financial resources is always cited as one of the major constraints to change, but it must be addressed if governments are to honour their obligation to provide education to all children, including those who are currently excluded. It is understood that this is a real issue of concern in many Pacific countries and that assistance from donor agencies may be required for a concerted regional initiative towards inclusive education, with a focus on children with disabilities.

In the UNESCO study, recommendations from stakeholders, including government representatives themselves, called for:

- a dedicated budget for inclusive education with a specific allocation for children with disabilities
- an increased budget in the early stages of starting an inclusive education approach, so that necessary supports can be put in place to make sure the outcomes are positive and the learning experiences are successful
- included in the budget should be an allocation dedicated to developing a system of support and resource facilities for the teachers
- a strong focus on teacher training, which builds the capacity for long term benefit and sustainability. Pre-service training is not necessarily an extra cost but will require change in content and some specialisation within regular training to prepare all teachers in regular schools with the skills and expertise

to teach children with diverse abilities in any class. More specialised training for teachers who will act in support roles will be necessary, and increased in-service training will prepare schools and teachers for the changes needed to effectively include children with disabilities. Training must include methods needed to change the tasks and role of special school teachers.

Many complex decisions about the way in which children with disabilities will be included in schools all have resource implications. These include such issues as whether children with disabilities must be individually identified, assessed, and their support needs determined, with a specific budget allocated for this purpose, as in the Thailand model. Separate data, monitoring and evaluation enables government to know what progress they are making towards getting children with disabilities into school.

In Samoa, the Ministry of Education provides a budget for the inclusion of some children in Special Education Units attached to local primary schools. This is a relatively new initiative. The Ministry of Education budget incorporates expenses for additional special needs teachers within the standard allocations for teaching staff, and a separate special education budget to cover additional costs such as school visits and special teaching materials. Budgeting for other Special Needs Education Units will be included in the future in the Corporate Services Division budget when the currently operating Special Needs Education Units are functioning well and others are opened. Additional funds for accessibility will be included in the next ten-year plan. School fees can also be used for this purpose. The Ministry of Education provides support to NGO special schools by means of annual grants on the basis of the number of children enrolled (UNESCO, 2007: 59).

A coherent and coordinated system of funding and resource allocation is necessary, with administrative safeguards to ensure that resources are used for the purposes for which they were intended, particularly in decentralised systems.

Each country needs to determine the model most appropriate for moving towards the goal of having all children in school and learning in classrooms with teachers who have the skills to teach them, irrespective of their abilities or disabilities.

Funding constraints may mean that implementation is progressive, but clearly articulated five year plans should be funded to move towards quality education for all children. It may be better to have more gradual progressive implementation, well-funded and successful, than failure due to inadequate resources and poor administration and implementation.

The need for donor assistance was foreshadowed by the Pacific Ministers for Education at their meeting in 2002, when the education goals and targets of the BMF were adopted. The role of the Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of basic Education Project is an example of donor initiatives in action, with support to this 2007 Workshop on Advancing Inclusive Education in the Pacific, to the development of a policy on inclusive education in Tonga in 2007, and to the development of a sustainable IE system in Samoa.

### **3. Providing education, collaborating with partners, and administering and implementing policy**

The decision to provide inclusive education may require Ministries of Education to assess the current situation in terms of the range of services being offered by different agencies, and to develop a plan for the national education system to gradually assume responsibility for the education of all children. The transition period is very important, and administration and implementation strategies need to be very clear and closely monitored. Communication needs to be established with all partners and collaboration in planning and implementing change undertaken with sensitivity.

#### **Expanding the national education system**

The challenge for governments when they make a commitment to providing education for *all* children on an equitable basis is how to expand the national education system so that it can cater for the large number of previously out-of-school children. It may also be necessary to work with NGO partners in special schools which may have been providing education to small numbers of mostly urban children with disabilities. Some special schools may be under the responsibility

of ministries other than the Ministry of Education, such as Ministries of Social Welfare. Ministries of Health and Community may provide early identification and intervention services for infants and young children with disabilities. Community-based programmes may play a role in finding out-of-school children and helping families place them in special or regular schools.

The expertise of NGO providers and special school personnel and teachers should be used during the process of developing more inclusive schools. They can act as advisers to the Ministry and as resource teachers and support personnel in the regular school system. They can also play a role in on-the-job training for teachers in regular classrooms, providing experience in special classes and advising in regular classes.

### **Collaborating across sectors**

In many developing countries there are a number of partners engaged in providing some aspect of education. Services grow at different speeds in response to need and to changes in attitudes, both internally and externally. Until governments, through their Ministries of Education, take responsibility for the education of all children, these different services can, and often do, operate without any overall coordination. This can result in gaps in services, duplication, wastage of resources and frustration for many who may be trying to access some form of education.

Once a national goal for the inclusion of all children in education has been adopted, coordination and collaboration across all sectors becomes essential if an effective school system is to be developed to implement national policy and action plans. The collaboration needs to include all relevant government ministries and NGO agencies engaged in delivering services, but also all stakeholders with a vital interest in the students who will have access to different levels of education, and the way in which the services will be made available. Foremost among these groups are parents and families of children with disabilities, their organisations, and organisations of persons with disabilities.

The formation of national coordination councils on disability, as recommended in the BMF, is a very important step to facilitate communication, consultation and coordination. Responsibility for the process of inclusion should also be clearly established within the Ministry of Education. In Samoa, administration is the responsibility of the Special Needs Coordinator.

In Tonga, during the process of developing an inclusive education policy, there has been extensive and on-going consultation and collaboration with the Curriculum Development Unit, the Teacher Training College and the Paediatric Unit in the Ministry of Health. More extensive collaboration with the NGO centres for the education of children and adults with disabilities would enable the Ministry of Education to benefit from their experience and expertise.

#### **Administering and implementing policy – making it happen**

Good administration is the key to the successful achievement of educational goals and objectives laid out in the national education policy. It is the means by which policy is translated into action to ensure that children throughout a country are getting into school and receiving education of good quality.

When dramatic changes to policy take place, such as the Thailand Education Act of 1999, it is important that the system is prepared for the changes. An education and awareness-raising campaign is necessary at all levels of the system to overcome resistance and negative attitudes. These are usually based on ignorance and lack of familiarity with the issue. Full commitment is needed at the top of the administrative system if implementation measures are to be put in place and monitored with energy and enthusiasm.

Administrative structures and lines of responsibility need to be clear. Policy needs to be clearly stated and communicated from central to decentralised level, so that parents of children with disabilities understand what their rights are and schools understand their obligations. The detailed implementation measures and the role of the support systems and obligations of teacher education colleges must be clearly articulated and understood by all concerned.



#### **4. Structuring and re-structuring the school system at all levels**

##### *Early detection and early intervention services*

Early intervention services should be a priority in the move towards an inclusive education system. They provide the necessary support and training to parents and families in the early stages of their child's life. Parents and caregivers can play a crucial role in stimulating the early development of their child's potential and preventing the onset of severe secondary disabling conditions which can affect both physical and intellectual ability. Without early intervention, many disabled children will have a more limited capacity to benefit from education, if or when they have access to their local community school.

Early intervention is available in a number of Pacific countries. Fiji has centre-based and community-based services, run by the Ministry of Health, but working closely with regular and special schools. The early intervention service in Samoa was started in 2004. It operates from within one of the local NGO schools for children with disabilities, with a coordinator and field workers. The service does not extend to all parts of Samoa yet, but does operate on both of the main islands. It is a community-based home visiting programme for children from birth to seven years of age. The field workers also run support courses for parent groups and disability awareness training for community health workers and teachers in the schools. The Coordinator is a member of the Special Needs Education Action Council and the long-term goal is for the Ministries of Health and Education to take over responsibility for the early intervention programme. The Tonga Inclusive Education programme is in the process of planning comprehensive early intervention services in a partnership between the Ministries of Health and Education.

##### *Pre-school*

Pre-school education is not widely available in most countries of the region, but its availability is increasing. Again, it is most commonly provided by NGOs. It has a particular value for children with disabilities as it helps to develop social skills and gives them experience of being part of a group. This participation

provides invaluable preparation for school. Opportunities to take part in pre-school education are extremely limited for children with disabilities and need to be encouraged.

*Primary schools and special schools*

Special schools have been the most common form of education for children with disabilities in many Pacific countries, but there has been a move to more inclusive approaches. In Fiji, some children with disabilities have been integrated into regular classes over a long period, with support from the special schools and from the Special Education section in the Ministry. Initiatives in Samoa and more recently in Tonga have adopted an approach to inclusion that involves moving children into Special Education Needs Units (Samoa) or an inclusive classroom linked to a regular classroom (Tonga).

In Samoa the trained teachers were moved to regular classes and some of the Units ceased to function as planned. There was also lack of clarity about the role and functions of the Special Needs Education teachers, and the extent to which children with disabilities should be included in regular classes (see Chapter 11).

Tonga is currently developing an inclusive education policy and has started to include children with disabilities in one pilot primary school (see Chapter 10). The children are placed in what has been called an inclusive education class, with a teacher-in-training working with a trained Peace Corps volunteer. Here they do intensive work on the students' basic skills and communication. The class is linked to a regular class, where the children spend a large part of each day. It is not yet clear if this model will be gradually extended throughout the primary school system or if children with disabilities will go straight into regular classes when more teacher training and school preparation has taken place and a system of support to regular class teachers has been established. Already a school in Ha'apai is including children with disabilities directly into the regular class. Tonga is starting with children in Grade 1 but has not limited entry to any child seeking to come to school. There is further work to be done to identify children with disabilities who are not attending school, and close cooperation with the NGO 'Ofa Tui 'Amanaki Centre for Special Education will help this process.

Inclusive education purists will claim, rightly, that this is not full inclusion. But it may well be the first step that needs to be taken. It ensures that the children with disabilities are receiving the support that they need to learn, and that the regular class teachers are also supported in the early stages. It will be important for Tonga to plan carefully how it expands its inclusive approach to reach the whole system. Teacher training will be a critical component and this is already being addressed, as is curriculum reform.

#### *Support systems for regular schools*

A common thread in the case studies from all countries in the UNESCO study was the importance of having a system which provides support to children and families, schools and teachers where they are including children with disabilities in their classes. Support can take many forms and different examples will suit different situations. Three models are described below.

- A resource teacher with additional training and expertise placed within a school, available to help any teacher or child, usually working within the class room to upgrade the expertise of the class teacher, but may work with children on a withdrawal basis on either an individual or small group basis. If resource teachers become regular class teachers, their capacity to support many teachers and children throughout the school may be diminished. If all their work with individual children is done on a withdrawal basis, classroom teachers will not take responsibility for the children in their own classes, and will not improve in their skills and capacity to teach children with different needs.
- Special education centres or units are special support centres established within Ministries of Education to provide support to a number of schools. In the case of Brunei, the special education unit was responsible for supporting all schools. In Thailand, there were special education centres in each province and district to support schools in their area. The staff at these centres will usually have a high level of expertise and may have a team of resource people, particularly if the centre is responsible for early intervention programmes

as well as regular primary schools. Support and training to children and families, schools and teachers, are among their most important tasks, but they may be responsible for a wide range of tasks: finding out-of-school children, assessing them, arranging and supporting their entry into regular schools, sourcing assistive materials and devices and training teachers.

- A third model is where support is provided from within the school. A whole school approach is taken and as some teachers gain additional training and expertise these teachers will train others. This approach can be extended to other schools, where teachers from one school will train those at the next school, using a trainer-of-trainers model. Support will be provided to the school until the school becomes self-sufficient and may be in a position to train teachers in yet another school.

The provision of some form of support to regular schools and teachers will continue to be an important issue until pre-service training courses for all teachers automatically includes the knowledge and skills necessary to enable them to teach children with a wide variety of abilities in the regular school and classroom.

An interesting variation on the second model was provided from Samoa. It involved forming a link between an NGO-run special school and a regular primary school. It was the long term vision of the Principal that her special school would merge with a regular primary school and that the special school would then be used as a resource centre and a base for itinerant teachers and one-on-one teaching when necessary. This model has been successfully adopted in many countries. In other situations, the special schools have maintained their teaching role but have enrolled children with more severe disabilities who were previously not receiving any education.

### *Secondary education*

The *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* and the BMF call for the provision of education at all levels for children and youth with disabilities. The percentage of children with disabilities attending any form of

schooling is so low so there has been little attention placed on secondary school access. However, as the number of children in primary school increases, it is important to plan for post-primary education. The needs for adaptation of the curriculum, assessment procedures, and support to children and teachers is as necessary at secondary level as it is at earlier levels of education. Modification to teacher training courses should be implemented. Particular attention needs to be paid to appropriate pre-vocational training courses and work experience. Schools can work in partnership with communities to foster job opportunities for young people with disabilities when they leave school.

### *Tertiary education*

Barriers to tertiary education, particularly universities, need to be removed and a positive and proactive policy put in place to encourage students with disabilities to complete university and professional studies. Awareness of the needs and accommodations necessary to enable students with disabilities to access their studies effectively needs to be conducted with university personnel. Formal systems of support should be established with disability liaison officers on campus. Informal support networks should be encouraged. These are often formed spontaneously as non-disabled students assist their disabled peers to access the library and other sources of information and reference.

The University of the South Pacific has made progress in enrolling blind students, with advice and support from the Fiji Society for the Blind. Since their first blind student was enrolled in 2001, the University has taken steps to provide appropriate adaptive technology and to make buildings and lecture rooms accessible.

Although first steps towards inclusion are usually aimed at the primary school level, it is obvious that all levels of the system are interconnected and progress can be made at different levels of the system at the same time.

## **5. Training teachers – pre-and in-service training and education**

The challenge is to promote teacher education that results in a situation where all teachers in regular schools are qualified and competent to effectively teach all

children in inclusive educational settings. This will take time. Teacher competence is regarded as a key factor in developing quality education for all children, but is of critical importance in the achievement of successful educational outcomes for children and youth with disabilities. Teachers must be prepared to accept all children, to expect and celebrate diversity in inclusive schools. They need the knowledge, skills and expertise that will enable them to teach children with a wide range of abilities and disabilities within the regular classroom. Teachers need to understand that all children can learn, and to understand the variety of ways in which they do so. Children drop out of school because they experience the classroom as an unfriendly environment where they are unable to learn, or because they do not experience success or feel valued. The expectations of the teacher will affect the outcomes for the student. Teachers' ideas, attitudes and knowledge about the impact of a disability will affect the learner's academic potential and participation. There is a need for comprehensive pre- and in-service teacher education programmes which include methodology and techniques for teaching children with diverse abilities, the development of flexible curriculum, teaching and assessment strategies.

#### *Pre-service training*

A strategy to achieve the desired long-term change in school systems and ensure that all teachers have the commitment and capability to teach all children should be planned as soon as a decision has been made to introduce inclusive education. Programmes of teacher training will need to be reoriented towards inclusive education. The teaching methodology needed for this to succeed should be introduced into the training programme of all student teachers in the regular school system. It should include strategies for teaching children with a diverse range of abilities within classroom groups of students, and it should contain information about children with disabilities and other groups of frequently excluded students. A key component of the training will involve the development of positive attitudes towards a philosophy of inclusion and a commitment to the responsibility of upholding the right to education of all children in the regular school, including children with disabilities.

### *Specialist training*

During the transition period from a separate to an inclusive education system and after an inclusive system has been established, there will be a very strong and continuing need for teachers who have additional levels of expertise in teaching children with special needs and with particular disabilities. The role of these teachers will be to advise and provide support to the teachers in the regular schools as they develop their own expertise in teaching more diverse groups of children. They may work as resource teachers within a school, advising or demonstrating particular teaching strategies needed by children with more severe disabilities and skills (such as Braille and sign language) to blind and deaf children respectively. They may also work in support centres, providing expertise and assistance to a cluster of schools and to individual children and their families in determining the most appropriate school placement and teaching programme. Specialist teacher education programmes will be necessary to develop personnel with these skills and abilities.

### *In-service training*

Widespread in-service training is essential for preparing teachers for the changes which must take place as inclusive education is introduced into school systems. This training should involve awareness-raising and the development of positive attitudes and teaching strategies which are appropriate and effective for children with diverse abilities. There is also a need to generate a cooperative, problem-solving approach, which encourages teachers within a school to work together to find solutions and to share their experiences. Where some teachers in a school have received training, opportunities should be provided for in-school training of other teachers. Team-teaching practices can achieve the same result with transmission of skills. In-service training can take many forms and be provided in a range of settings. These can include short-term courses in teacher training institutions, training provided in special education or support centres, or in-school training. It can extend from one school to another, as expertise is gained in one setting and then transferred to another, with supportive training networks established across school districts.

A comprehensive system of teacher education is needed to ensure the widest coverage of training to develop the enthusiasm, commitment and expertise needed to ensure positive learning outcomes for all children and a high level of satisfaction for teachers. The process and goals of inclusive education must be clear. Inclusive education may be better for the emotional and social development of the child, but if it comes at the price of individual assistance when it is needed, that is unacceptable. Inclusive education is preferable to leaving children out of the system but the quality of the teaching will be the key factor that determines whether children with disabilities are given the opportunity to achieve quality learning outcomes as well. All training should have a strong practical component.

*A comprehensive teacher training plan*

A comprehensive teacher education programme should include pre-service education which prepares all teachers for inclusive education, with attitudes and skills which enable them to teach all children, irrespective of their characteristics, abilities and disabilities. Extensive programmes of in-service training are needed to achieve a rapid increase in the development of positive teacher attitudes and competencies that are the pre-requisites for successful inclusive education. Mechanisms should be established for the sharing of expertise both within schools, and beyond. An inclusive education system requires a network of support provided by teachers with additional levels of expertise.

A national teacher education programme should be developed with close collaboration between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry responsible for tertiary or higher education. It is essential that teacher training courses are designed to meet the needs of the changing education system. This will often require a long preparation phase with close consultation to ensure the courses contain the approaches and content necessary to prepare regular teachers for their role in inclusive schools.

*Teacher training expertise in Pacific countries*

There is extensive experience and expertise in teacher training in a number of Pacific countries, particularly in Fiji and Samoa, as well as the Federated States of



Micronesia and Palau. This expertise could be shared in a regional teacher training initiative. Tonga has taken early steps to develop courses which will provide students with the skills and practical experience needed to teach in an inclusive system, and this will be extended to all pre-service training in the future.

## **6. Designing data collection processes, monitoring and evaluating progress**

The importance of data has been recognised in Pacific countries in recent years and significant work has been carried out with surveys conducted on persons with disabilities, both children and adults, which has been used in planning services such as education in Samoa and the Cook Islands. Inclusion International has made a strong contribution in this area. However, there is a need for a more comprehensive approach to data collection, both in census and disability surveys, as well as within Ministries of Education.

Once a policy decision has been made to include children with disabilities in the education system, a commitment to monitoring and evaluating their progress must be made. All the steps are linked, as it is not possible to monitor progress unless data on children with disabilities (both in and out of the education system) are collected and made available. The capacity to evaluate progress is critically important. It must cover numbers of children included as well as qualitative aspects such as school commitment, training of teachers, classroom organisation, curriculum and teaching practice modifications, student learning outcomes, and family and community involvement. The data is needed to give a clear picture of the current situation, and, on the basis of that situation, changes to policy directions and to current procedures can be made to improve the outcomes.

This is an area of difficulty for many national education systems and technical support from international agencies such as UNESCO, UNICEF and UNESCAP has a very significant role to play in strengthening systems of education in Pacific countries.

## **7. Participating in the education process: the role of disabled peoples' organisations, families and community members**

The *Biwako Millennium Framework* places organisations of persons with disabilities at the forefront of action to be taken to achieve an inclusive, rights-based and barrier-free society by 2012.

Disabled peoples' organisations have a critical role to play in advising governments on education policy and implementation strategy. Their network of organisations and contacts at grassroots level with the disability community puts them in a powerful position to persuade families and the community to send their children to school. They can act as links between stakeholders. They can also broaden their membership beyond adults and encourage other, younger membership in their own organisation, or act as an umbrella group with other organisations.

In relation to education, the voice of parents of children with disabilities is very important. Some parents of children with disabilities face frustration at the unwillingness of disabled peoples' organisations to include them as members. In other cases, parents may be unaware of the rights of their children or lack the confidence to send them to school or fear how they will be treated. Organisations of persons with disabilities have a responsibility to address these issues.

Support to families in the years before school entry is very important and contributes greatly to the success of children in school. Careful planning or transition from one stage to the next is also important, with full consultation with families every step of the way. Encouraging children with disabilities to attend pre-school is another important step in breaking down the barriers to inclusion in mainstream educational settings.

The special education centres, schools and community organisations need to take steps to find families with children with disabilities, to provide them with support and encourage them to send their children to school. They need to ensure that parents are welcome and fully involved in decisions about their children's schooling.

A close relationship is needed so that the family and school work in partnership to best assist and promote the development of children with disabilities.

Investing time in helping the educational system to improve is one way parents can feel that they are contributing to a solution that can help their own children and others in the future. Developing parent support groups will allow informal information-sharing and provide emotional support.

## **8. Listening to Children**

Clearly, children with disabilities have an invaluable contribution to make to any discussion of their rights and possible solutions to the challenges that they face, and yet it is not common for them to be consulted in Pacific countries.

In the UNESCO study, not only did they articulate actions that need to be taken by governments, schools and communities in relation to ensuring that they have equal access to good quality education, but they also identified the need for providing services to children with disabilities at the youngest age, to make sure that they can benefit from educational opportunities at the next stage in their lives.

They also identified the need to provide support and training to their families; they observed that families may need to be educated and informed on the rights of their disabled children to education and equal opportunities in all aspects of community life.

The *Biwako Millennium Framework* has stated that persons with disabilities are the most qualified and best equipped to support, inform and advocate for themselves and other persons with disabilities. This statement applies to children with disabilities as well, and consultations with children with disabilities would benefit all levels of decision-making, in education and in relation to all matters concerning children (UNESCAP, 2002: 5).

## **Conclusion**

Organisations of persons with disabilities have played a critical role in the Pacific in terms of advocacy to governments and in terms of helping to form a strong disability voice in each country. The responsiveness of governments, the close partnership between PDF and PIFS, with strong support from NZAID, places the Pacific in a unique position of strength, not found anywhere else in the larger Asian and Pacific region.

It is this collective resolve and active commitment which will almost certainly result in the gradual development of inclusive school systems in all the countries of the region and which will provide opportunities for young persons with disabilities to benefit from education. This will transform the experiences of the next generation and lead to inclusive societies, as foreshadowed in the *Salamanca Statement*.

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## 7

### **Inclusive education: children with vision impairments in the Pacific**

*Frances Gentle*

#### **Introduction**

Pacific Island countries (PICs) are characterised by great diversity of size, geography, politics, economies and socio-cultural life and, as a result, education systems have evolved to meet local conditions and influences (Keeffe, Konayama & Taylor, 2002). Historically, school systems around the world were established according to a dual system, with separate general and special education classes. Dual systems of regular and special schools were generally introduced to PICs between the 1950s and 1980s. These special schools were mostly funded and managed by civil society organisations, church groups and concerned individuals within the private sector. In many PICs, students judged to be disabled are excluded from regular schools (Macanawai, 2007).

The past three decades have witnessed international events that have significantly influenced educational policy and classroom practice. In the Pacific region at

this time, many administrators and educators working in government and non-government educational services are asking: How can we in our schools improve special education support for our students with disabilities and how can we develop good policies to enhance opportunities for their greater participation in regular education classes?

For children with vision impairments, the practice of inclusion must involve more than a shift in physical environment, such as from a specialist school for the blind to a regular school setting. It must include efforts to address curriculum and social needs of individual children with vision impairments (Steer & Gentle, 2007).

This chapter presents an introduction to the topic of inclusion of children with vision impairments, including those with additional disabilities, into mainstream education in the Pacific region. The chapter includes an overview of the causes and prevalence of vision impairments in the region; international principles and standards for education; and examples of teaching strategies to improve access and participation of children with vision impairments in learning and school environments.

### **Prevalence and causes of vision impairments in the Pacific**

There are limited data on the prevalence of blindness and low vision in adults and children globally. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that, world-wide, there are 1.4 million blind children (Gilbert & Foster, 2001). Three-quarters of these children live in the poorest regions of Africa and Asia. In addition, the WHO estimates that there are three people with low vision for every blind person (Keeffe, Konyama & Taylor, 2002). This means that, globally, there are approximately 4.2 million children with low vision.

Data on the prevalence and causes of blindness in developing countries world-wide are mostly obtained by examining enrolment rates of students in special schools for blind children. Gilbert and Foster (2001) noted that such special schools rarely provide learning opportunities for children of pre-school age or those with multiple disabilities. In addition, schools for the blind are usually

located in towns and urban centres and, as a result, enrolment rates of children with vision impairments and their families from poor, remote and rural areas are severely restricted. It can therefore be assumed that children from disadvantaged and remote communities are likely to be under-represented in the existing WHO data and in national population surveys.

Table 1 provides summary data on the number of children and adults with vision impairments in eight Pacific Island countries: Solomon Islands, Vanuatu (Tafea Province), Kiribati, Tonga, Cook Islands, Tokelau, Samoa and Papua New Guinea. These data are drawn from two population surveys undertaken in 2006. The first survey was completed by Inclusion International Asia Pacific Region, in association with Intellectually Handicapped Children New Zealand, Sumac Consultants and the NZAID<sup>1</sup> (personal communication, R. McCullough, October 2007); and the second survey was completed by the Papua New Guinea Department of Education (2006).

Table 1 highlights variation in the number of people with disabilities identified in the 2006 Pacific Island surveys. For example, the Kiribati survey found that 1.48% of the total population had disabilities, and that 27% of all people identified with disabilities had vision impairments. This compares with the Cook Islands, where 0.27% of the total population had disabilities, and 6% of all people identified with disabilities had vision impairment. Keeffe, Konyama and Taylor (2002) noted that such surveys may not reflect an accurate picture of the number of children and adults with vision impairments.

As shown in Table 1, data on age distributions of people with vision impairments were only available for Vanuatu (Tafea Province), Kiribati, Tonga, Cook Islands and Tokelau. In these five countries, a total of 2% of those identified as blind or vision impaired were aged between birth and four years; 6.5% were aged between five and 14 years; and 92% were aged over 15 years. This result highlights the importance of government services for adults with vision impairments.

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1. New Zealand Agency for International Development

**Table 1** People with vision impairments in eight Pacific Island countries

Age (yrs)	Solomon Is	Vanuatu (Tafea Province)	Kiribati	Tonga		Cook Is	Tokelau	Samoa	Papua New Guinea		Total
	Blind Vision impaired Low vision	Blind Vision impaired Low vision	Blind Vision impaired Low vision	Blind	Vision impaired Low vision	Blind Vision impaired Low vision	Vision impaired Low vision	Blind Vision impaired Low vision	Blind	Vision impaired Low vision	
0-4	No data	1 (0-5yrs)	29	1	3	-		12			46 2%
5-14	No data	16 (6-14yrs)	69	4	18	6 (6-14 yrs)		61			174 6.5%
15-24	No data	7 (15-20 yrs)	44 (15-20 yrs)	3	24	9 (15-20 yrs)	2 (15-25 yrs)				89 3.5 %
24+	No data	77	1038 (21+ yrs)	52	1103	38	1	No data			2309 88%
Unknown age				2	12						14 0.5%
<b>TOTAL</b> People with vision imp	<b>No data</b>	<b>101</b> (Tafea Province only)	<b>1180</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>1160</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>73</b> (0-14 yrs only)	<b>83</b>	<b>261</b>	
% of total Popn		No data	<b>1.48%</b>		<b>1.36%</b>	<b>0.27%</b>				<b>2458</b>	
% of all Disab	27.37%	18.1%	27%	25%		6.4%	17.6%	6%	3.4 %	10.6%	



The Papua New Guinea (PNG) Department of Education survey identified a total of 2458 people with disabilities receiving education and community-based rehabilitation services during 2006. This represents 0.04% of the total PNG population. Of the 2458 people with disabilities identified, 344 (or 14%) had vision impairments (83 blind and 261 low vision). Information about the age distribution of those identified with vision impairments is unavailable.

Table 2 provides an overview of the major causes of eye health problems in the Pacific region (Vision2020 Australia, 2007), and population rates of vision impairment (Keeffe *et al.*, 2002). The two most common identified causes of eye health problems in Pacific Island nations are cataract and diabetic eye disease, followed by refractive error, trachoma and trauma (see definitions section for explanations of these eye conditions).

**Table 2** Major causes of eye health problems in the Pacific region

Pacific Countries (in order of population size)	Rate of vision impairment (per thousand)	Causes of eye health problems
Australia – Population approx 20 million	2.7 (blindness) 11 (low vision)	Age-related macular degeneration, cataract, glaucoma, refractive error
New Zealand – Population approx 4 million	8.6 (low vision)	Not Available (N/A)
Papua New Guinea – Population 5,795,887	5	Cataract, refractive error
<b>Island nations with population greater than 60,000:</b> Federated States of Micronesia Fiji Kiribati Marshall Islands Solomon Islands Tonga Vanuatu Western Samoa	N/A 7 N/A 8 5.6 (blindness) 18 (low vision) N/A N/A	Cataract, diabetic eye disease, refractive error, trachoma, and trauma
<b>Island nations with population less than 60,000:</b> Cook Islands Nauru Niue Palau Tokelau Tuvalu	16.22 N/A N/A N/A N/A N/A	Cataract, diabetic eye disease, refractive error, trachoma, and trauma

Source: Keeffe, Konyama & Taylor (2002: 606); Vision2020 Australia (2007: 3)

The impact of eye health problems that cannot be corrected by spectacles are wide ranging and vary according to the nature and severity of the eye condition. In young children, vision impairment impacts upon normal development in four interrelated areas: (a) social and emotional development, (b) language development, (c) cognitive development, and (d) motor development, mobility and orientation. The reasons for developmental delays were identified as early as 1948 by Lowenfeld, who observed that vision loss affected the range and variety of the child's experiences and his/her ability to move about and interact with the environment (Lowenfeld, 1948, cited in Mason & McCall, 1997). Limitations in these four developmental areas also affect the child's ability to independently interact with family members; to participate in daily activities, routines and experiences of families and communities; and to acquire concepts that are generally acquired by sighted children through incidental learning, observation and imitation of others.

The specific learning and social needs of students with vision impairments are best addressed through the cooperative efforts of school staff, parents/carers and other related service providers. The choice of school placement for any student should include consideration of the nature of the child's disabilities and capabilities, the situational demands of the classroom, and the nature of the intervention(s) required to establish and maintain satisfactory student progress (Steer & Gentle, 2007). For example, students may require modifications and/or adaptations to programmes, school activities and assessments, as well as additional resources to assist them in accessing the curriculum and achieving educational outcomes that match their abilities.

The following section focuses on ways educators and school administrators might enhance the access opportunities of children with vision impairments to education services and school environments.

### **Enhancing educational inclusion of children with vision impairments**

Mason and McCall (1997:14) stated that, although the needs of the child should be the starting point in decisions about school placement and provision, the 'choice of educational settings available to children with vision impairments and their

families depends largely on local financial considerations and judgments about the efficient use of resources'. In response to these oftentimes adverse influences on the fundamental rights of children to education, leaders in the field of education of children with vision impairment in the United States, Australia and New Zealand have striven to establish guiding principles and standards for the education of these children. Two contemporary documents addressing best practice in education of children with vision impairments are the US National Agenda (1994, updated 2004), and the South Pacific Educators in Vision Impairment (SPEVI) Principles and Standards (2004). The foreword of the US National Agenda stated that 'a document such as this shines forth like a beacon, establishing clear-cut, timely, and attainable goals toward which we should strive' (Huebner, Merk-Adam, Stryker & Wolffe, 2004: v).

Of particular importance to the Pacific region are the principles and standards developed by SPEVI, addressing the education of children and youth with vision impairments, including those with multiple disabilities (2004). An overview of the SPEVI principles and standards document is presented below.

### **SPEVI principles and standards**

In 2004, the Heads of Educational Services (HOES) of the (SPEVI) published a comprehensive set of principles and standards for the education of children and youth with vision impairments, including those with multiple disabilities. The SPEVI HOES stated that the principles and standards are 'essential components of an educational and related services system for Australian, New Zealand and South Pacific Island students who are blind or vision impaired' (SPEVI, 2004, Foreword).

The SPEVI principles and standards are based on four philosophical perspectives.

1. All students who are blind or vision impaired, as well as those with multiple disabilities, have the capacity for inclusion into society, at a time and to a degree that is appropriate for each individual, and is chosen by that individual.

2. Assessment, educational planning, and placement decisions must be driven by the individual needs of each student.
3. Every student who is blind or vision impaired must have the services of a qualified teacher of the vision impaired and an orientation and mobility instructor for periods of time sufficient to meet their identified needs.
4. Parents and educators form a special, vital, and necessary partnership (SPEVI, 2004).

As noted in item two above, assessment of a child's vision by an eye care professional, such as an ophthalmologist or optometrist, will assist teachers, parents and caregivers to determine the most appropriate adjustments and modifications to curriculum and learning activities for a particular child in his/her school, home and community settings. The assessment by an eye care professional will provide the following information about the visual abilities of the individual child or youth:

- the ability to see distant and near information and objects
- the visual field (central and peripheral vision)
- the ability to see print or objects which have poor contrast
- colour vision
- the effects of lighting on the ability to see clearly (Keeffe & Squire, 2008).

In addition to an assessment of the child's vision, the completion of a functional vision assessment by an eye care professional or vision resource teacher will provide teachers, parents and caregivers with useful information about how the child uses his/her vision in different environmental settings (e.g. indoor, outdoor), times of the day, and when completing different activities (e.g. reading and writing tasks, sport and physical education activities, and practical experiments). In addition, a functional vision assessment will provide information about how well an individual child or youth can see and recognise objects under the following environmental conditions:

- whether objects are familiar or strange
- distance of objects
- size of objects

- detail or simplicity of the object
- amount of light on the object
- contrast against the background
- colour of the object
- whether objects are still or moving
- how easy the object is to find
- position of the object
- time available for looking (Keeffe & Squire, 2008).

The SPEVI standards were developed to serve as a set of guidelines to assist educators, school administrators, community-based rehabilitation workers and other professionals working with families of children and youth with vision impairments. The standards outline the disability-specific adjustments and accommodations required to maximise learning outcomes for children and youth with vision impairments. They are based on the following five propositions.

1. Students with vision impairments have unique educational needs that are a result of their inability to observe the environment and respond accordingly.
2. Students with vision impairments are increasingly presenting with additional disabilities. The curriculum access needs of these students are highly complex and interrelated and must be considered on an individual basis.
3. A range of programmes and educational options must be made available to students with vision impairment and their families, and reviewed through a consultative process on a regular basis.
4. Educational goals for students with vision impairments are the same as those for all other students.
5. Students should, as much as possible, be taught and supported in core curriculum areas by general classroom teachers and in *expanded core curricular areas* by teachers with qualifications and expertise in vision impairment. The *core curriculum* refers to the key learning (curriculum) areas provided in schools to all students, e.g. English, mathematics, science. The *expanded core curriculum* refers to the unique specialised needs of learners who are vision impaired, e.g. orientation and mobility, Braille instruction (SPEVI, 2004).

There is a range of simple strategies and modifications that teachers can implement to assist school access and learning of students with vision impairments. These include strategies for making reasonable adjustments to a classroom environment, such as the following examples.

- Creation of barrier-free school environments. This includes ease of access to classrooms, libraries, resource areas, learning laboratories, amenities, sports grounds and playgrounds.
- Modification of seating arrangements to enable students with physical or sensory disabilities to view information on the blackboard, to access learning activities and equipment, and to participate in discussion groups with classmates.
- Timetabling of classes and selection of classrooms with consideration of their location in relation to school building entrances and exits (in particular in secondary schools).
- Rearrangement or enlargement of visual information or resources.
- Use of computers, audiotape equipment or alternative communication devices for students with communication difficulties (Steer & Gentle, 2007).

Teachers may use a variety of teaching strategies to maximise the learning opportunities of a student with a vision impairment who has been placed in a mainstream class. Simple adjustments to teaching practices as well as high expectations of student achievement, can result in the student with a vision impairment achieving grade levels equal to his/her sighted peers. The following variations are presented as examples.

- Task analysis to break down instructional objectives into smaller units.
- Use of multiple instructional strategies aimed at matching the student's individual learning style to specific skill acquisition.
- Increasing student opportunity to participate in active learning. This includes hands-on instruction using concrete (3-dimensional) objects.
- The team teaching model offers an alternative and is preferable to placing several students with disabilities into a traditional academic setting without support. Two or more teachers collaborate in the joint planning and delivery of curriculum (Steer & Gentle, 2007).

Table 3 presents an overview of the range of disability-specific modifications and adaptations that should be considered by educators when developing programmes and individual education plans for students with vision impairments. These modifications and adaptations relate to the expanded core curriculum areas of the SPEVI (2004) principles and standards. When reviewing the list, it is important to consider the individual strengths and needs of the particular student, as identified through assessments of academic achievements, visual acuity and functional vision.

**Table 3** Areas of the expanded core curriculum for students with visual impairments

Area	Modification and adaptation considerations
Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adapting or modifying existing curriculum without changing its content or objectives, using a variety of teaching strategies</li><li>• The timely delivery of appropriate high quality texts and other educational materials in the preferred medium, for example: braille, large print, audio and electronic text</li></ul>
Communication modes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reading and writing in alternative formats, e.g. braille, large print, electronic text, and audio</li><li>• Tactile skills</li><li>• Typing/ keyboarding skills</li><li>• Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) systems for students with expressive or receptive language difficulties</li><li>• Listening skills</li></ul>
Visual skills training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enhancement of functional vision</li><li>• Visual perceptual skills</li><li>• Training in the use of low vision aids, e.g. magnifiers, monoculars/binoculars</li><li>• Development of compensatory skills to maximise the student's opportunity to access the environment, educational activities, information, and basic human needs (These involve the use of tools, adaptations, modifications and behaviours.)</li></ul>
Physical abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Postural control, balance and coordination</li><li>• Fine and gross motor abilities</li><li>• Loco-motor (movement) abilities</li><li>• Physical strength and endurance</li></ul>
Orientation and mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Body awareness and environmental awareness</li><li>• Spatial understanding</li><li>• Safe, independent, confident, and socially acceptable movement</li><li>• Independent travel</li><li>• Body image concepts</li><li>• Environmental awareness</li></ul>
Social skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Socially acceptable behaviour</li><li>• Self-esteem, self-confidence, self-advocacy</li></ul>

Life skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Self-care, including dressing, eating, personal hygiene, clothing care, food preparation</li><li>• Organisational skills</li><li>• Time management</li><li>• Money management</li><li>• Decision making</li><li>• Pre-vocational and career skills</li><li>• Self-advocacy</li><li>• Awareness of and access to community resources</li><li>• Appropriate home-based leisure activities</li></ul>
Use of resources and technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use of appropriate assistive technologies</li><li>• Research, referencing and study skills</li></ul>

Source: SPEVI, 2004; Telec, Boyd & King, 1997.

## Conclusion

This chapter has addressed the topic of inclusion of children and youth with vision impairments in mainstream education settings in the Pacific region. Implicit in the notion of inclusion is *belonging*, and the ultimate rationale for engaging in inclusive education practices is not based on law or regulation, or on changes in pedagogy or teaching technologies. It is based on the philosophical perspectives that leaders and practitioners in the field of education hold to such questions as the following:

- What kind of people are we as national citizens?
- What kind of society do we want to develop?
- What are the values that we as Pacific Islanders honour?

Professional administrators and educators in our school systems should be guided by a belief that Pacific Islanders can develop policies and practices that prevent the harmful aspects of discrimination and that promote equal opportunity and equal access to education. The principles of inclusive education apply to all children, including children who are marginalised from education or who are at risk of failure. A fundamental principle guiding the planning and organisational strategies in school systems is that *good schools are good schools for all students*. The success of inclusive education rests on the proposition that, given reasonable support, general educators can teach most exceptional and at-risk students in regular classrooms.



Building a community of learners is essential to successful inclusive education. Initiating and maintaining a community of learners actively learning is at the very core of the inclusive educational experience.

### **Definitions**

Listed below are definitions of some of the terms and conditions referred to in this chapter.

**Blindness** refers to the inability to see; the absence or severe reduction in vision (Koenig & Holbrook, 2000). The WHO defines blindness as ‘a corrected visual acuity in the better eye of less than 3/60’ (Gilbert & Foster, 2001: 227).

**Vision impairment** refers to a person with a significant degree of difficulty with vision which cannot be fully corrected by wearing spectacles. Impairment refers to a disability, whereas handicap refers to the difficulties the person faces as a result of the impairment (Dawkins, 1991: 10).

**Severe vision impairment** is defined by WHO as ‘a corrected acuity in the better eye of 6/60’ (Gilbert & Foster, 2001: 228). Visual acuity of 6/60 means that the person can read at six metres what a normally sighted person can read at a distance of 60 metres.

**Visual acuity** refers to the sharpness or clarity of vision; the power of the eye to discriminate form at various distances; the measure of the ability to discriminate fine detail at a distance (Kelley & Gale, 1998). For example, a visual acuity of 3/60 means that the person can read at three metres what a normally sighted person can read at a distance of 60 metres.

**Cataract** refers to the progressive opacity or clouding of the lens (Telec, Boyd & King, 1997).

**Age-related macular degeneration** refers to an eye disease with its onset usually after age 60 that progressively destroys the macula, the central portion of the retina, impairing central vision (MedicineNet.com, 2007).

**Glaucoma** refers to eye disease characterised by increased or unstable pressure inside the eyeball (Telec, Boyd & King, 1997).

**Diabetic eye disease** refers to disease of the eye caused by diabetes.

**Refractive error** refers to a defect in the eyes that prevents light rays from being brought to a single focus on the retina; may be corrected with spectacles (Kelley & Gale, 1998).

**Trachoma** refers to a chronic inflammatory eye disease due to infection with a bacterium called *Chlamydia trachomatis*. Trachoma affects approximately 500 million people worldwide, primarily in rural communities of the developing world and in the arid areas of tropical and subtropical zones. Australia is the only developed country where trachoma is still a significant health problem; there it affects an estimated 100,000 people (MedicineNet.com, 2007).

**Trauma** refers to physical injury following a stressful event (Oxford Dictionary, 2002).

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## 8

### **The voice of a parent**

*Fesi Filipe*

My husband and I realised that something was not right with our daughter when she was taking a long time to go through the stages of mental and physical development of a child – crawling, learning to walk, learning to speak, etc. This was something new for us and we did not know then what to do or how to cope.

In 1996 she was diagnosed by the family pediatrician to be suffering from autism. Autism is defined by medical experts as a brain development disorder. Physical tests were done to determine her level of mental development and to decide on the type of assistance and educational support and teaching she required. She displayed the following behaviour conditions: an inability to interact regularly with family members, an inability to communicate her feelings and needs through speech or signs, repetitive behaviour, and bouts of tantrums and aggression.

During the early years of our daughter growing up, we faced a lot of difficulties trying to care for her and cope with her tantrums and aggression. She was enrolled at the Early Intervention School for three years and then transferred to Suva Special School for five years until 2003. It was equally difficult at school for the teacher

and children in her class when she threw a tantrum. When I asked her teacher what she did, she said she just left our daughter alone to get over it. The teachers at the school were not trained to teach in any area of disability or other special needs. They went through teacher training for the regular school system.

My husband and I decided to remove her from school at the end of 2003 because she needed special individual attention which was not possible at that school. Since then, she has been cared for at home by her father on weekdays and by the rest of family at weekends.

### **Challenges we faced as parents**

My daughter is now 16 years old. She is dependent on my family for all her needs. Over the years we have divided up our care of her in this way: my husband, older daughter and I look after bathing and changing her, while her older brother assists us in taking care of her other needs.

Whenever she throws a tantrum we try to calm her by speaking softly to her. It takes about 20 to 30 minutes for her to calm down when she has a tantrum or is aggressive. Aggressive behaviour mostly includes biting her arms, punching her cheek or scratching and pinching herself. She is very attached to her father because he is the one who is with her every day. He is the only one who can calm her when the rest of the family cannot deal with a tantrum or aggressive behaviour.

Whenever she is about to have her menstruation she becomes irritable and anxious and displays anti-social behaviour like dropping things on the floor or refusing to bath or eat. There are also spells of aloneness when she goes to her room and stands looking outside for a long time or sits and looks at a book or picture and babbles to herself, unaware of things happening around her.

According to science and research there is no cure for autism. There is no single treatment that is the best for autism. Treatment is normally tailored to the individual child's needs. There are some drugs approved in the US for medication to reduce the severity of the condition. Many other therapies and interventions are

available overseas. Few are supported by scientific studies. Treatment in the US is very expensive (2003 – US \$3.2m – 10% medical care, 30% non medical care as child care and education, 60% lost productivity of individuals and parents).

### **How we have coped**

We have learnt to understand and cope. We provide lots of tender, loving care. Hugs and kisses work wonders for her. Whenever she is happy or contented she hums like a dove or kisses us on the cheek or sinks her front teeth into someone's head or arm.

We always keep her nails short. At one stage we tried putting gloves on her but she always managed to remove them. We even tried tying her hands together with a cloth but she is able to remove that too. We've now resorted to holding her hands tight when she tries to punch or bite herself.

My daughter loves music, watching children's movies, watching children play, looking at colourful pictures and watching the dogs at home play. We always try to maximise on the things she likes doing, listening to or watching. We try as much as possible to provide an environment of love, care, nurture and support. She dislikes any change of routine in her daily rituals, having her bath in cold water or noise like loud laughter, screaming or noisy music. Any of these can trigger tantrums.

It took the family some time to learn how to cope with our daughter's condition. It was mainly through trial and error. We took the time over the years to closely observe and monitor her condition in order to be able to cope. I also read around, watched videos and spoke with people who knew something about autism and shared it with the family. We got involved in her school programme when she was attending school.

We took our daughter to St Giles for diagnosis when she was eight years old and were given medication for her to take. We stopped giving it to her after two days when we saw it was making her drowsy so that she slept for long hours. I thought the dosage may have been too strong so I rang the hospital and asked for a review, which never happened.

We have been blessed with support from my parents, church members, friends and colleagues. We also have our faith in Jesus that has kept us going and we strongly believe our daughter is special in our family. We have come to accept her condition and have learnt to cope and view each day with her as special and a challenge.

## 9

### **The voice of a non-governmental organisation: the Fiji Disabled People's Association**

*Angeline Chand*

#### **Background**

The Fiji Disabled People's Association (FDPA) started as a sports and social group of persons with physical disabilities in Suva in the early 1970s. A few able-bodied persons were also involved from the beginning as advocates, friends and supporters. The group participated in local and international sporting events for persons with disabilities, such as the Far East South Pacific International Championships, and celebrated the International Year of Disabled Persons in 1981.

The group became known as the Fiji Paraplegic Association in 1984 and was actively involved in Disabled Peoples International (DPI) during its formative years. The Association changed its name and logo to the FDPA in the late 1980s to reflect cross-disability representation in its membership. The FDPA established its headquarters in 1988.



The FDPA has three branches around Fiji, as well as a Women and Youth Committee. It also has four affiliated organisations which advocate for specific disability groups:

- Fiji Association of the Deaf
- Psychiatric Survivors Association
- Spinal Injuries Association
- United Blind Persons of Fiji

The Association members participated in activities of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Japan International Cooperation Agency, DPI, the World Blind Union and Rehabilitation International. In 2005, the FDPA was awarded a grant by the Australian Government Small Grants Scheme, based on a proposal to undertake a human rights project for persons with disabilities.

### **Mission**

The FDPA mission is:

As a needs based, efficient and effective strong grassroots organisation, FDPA will facilitate, support and promote the equalization of opportunities for people with disabilities. This will be achieved through the full participation of people with disabilities collaborating with key stakeholders, delivering services and advocating for the promotion of an inclusive, barrier-free and rights-based society.

The Association undertakes the following activities on an ongoing basis.

#### **Advocacy and awareness**

The Association, through its Advocacy and Awareness Committee, advocates for the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all programmes and activities. Some of its achievements are given on the next page.

- Published and launched the Fiji Sign Language Dictionary.
- Had Fiji currency notes printed in different sizes.
- Succeeded in getting the Fiji Ministry of Education to be responsible for paying interpreters at two schools in Fiji which admit deaf students. Gospel High School has six full-time interpreters and Marist Brothers High School has two.
- Succeeded in having written information on television narrated so that visually impaired people can hear.
- Information papers written by the Advocacy team were used as lobbying tools. One such paper was entitled “Why written information on television should be narrated”. The United Blind Persons of Fiji used this paper to highlight the issue with Fiji TV.
- Used the media to highlight issues relating to disability.
- Organised workshops on advocacy, awareness and human rights issues.

#### **Workshops/ seminars**

The FDPA continues to attend workshops and seminars on general and disability-specific activities. Some of these are listed below.

- A review of the Biwako Millennium Framework (BMF) and BMF Plus Five, organised by UNESCAP
- The Inclusive Education Workshop organised by the Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of basic Education Project
- The Disability Rights Advocacy Workshop organised by the Regional Rights Resource Team

#### **Support, cooperation and networking**

The FDPA works with branches and affiliates to support them in their initiatives. A lot of support has been given to the newest affiliate, the Psychiatric Survivors' Association, to ensure that their issues are heard.

#### *Standing Committee*

The FDPA supports the Women and Youth Committees with their programmes and activities. It encourages them to create awareness on issues relating to women and youth with disabilities.

### *National cooperation*

The FDPA continues to network with national organisations to promote its issues. It is a member of the Fiji National Council for the Disabled and district/advisory committees and it works closely with the Fiji Human Rights Commission.

### *International networks and cooperation*

The FDPA is involved in the activities of the Pacific Disability Forum. The Board's intention is to build a strong leadership base, and strengthen the branches and affiliates to develop the Association's capacity.

## **Education for people with disabilities**

People with disabilities face many challenges in accessing education. The reasons for this are many, and include the lack of:

- awareness in the community
- accessible buildings/schools
- trained teachers
- materials in alternative formats
- resources: human and financial
- support services.

Other reasons are the fact that special schools are located only in the main centres, and the negative attitudes of families and communities, who do not appreciate or promote the educational needs and rights of children with disabilities.

## **Challenges for disabled persons' organisations**

Some of the challenges facing people with disabilities are: the shortage of interpreters for deaf students; the lack of awareness about the Fiji Sign Language Dictionary; working together with students and families to identify appropriate schools where students and teachers are comfortable; creating awareness in the community and education centres; changing attitudes of society, especially those who are already working in special education; finding employment; and meeting the demands of the employers.

### **Suggestions for moving IE forward**

At country level there should be a move towards IE to ensure that people with disabilities are truly part of the *Education for All* programmes. Currently, special education comes under the Primary Section the Fiji Ministry of Education; it should also have a place in the Secondary Section, as well as a more adequate allocation in the national budget. Support centres are needed (at least in the three main towns) for students, teachers, parents and relevant stakeholders.

At the regional level, there should be a regional plan targeting IE, and information and resources must be shared, as well as good practices in education. There must also be adherence to and awareness of national, regional and international policies, conventions and frameworks, such as Section 39 of the *Bill of Rights*, Chapter 4 of the *Constitution of the Fiji Islands*, the *Human Rights Commission Act 1999*, the *Biwako Millennium Framework*, the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* and the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.

As IE is about educating everyone, let us work collectively to make the Pacific an inclusive, barrier-free and rights-based society for all.

## **Delivering inclusive education in Pacific Island villages: the Tongan Inclusive Model for Education**

*Malakai H. Kaufusi*



## **Introduction**

Education continues to be an important aspect of Tongan culture. Parents do their best to ensure that their children are given all the tools to succeed. Children who do well in school and receive class awards are given parties that rival many weddings.

Many of us have pre-conceived dreams about our new-born children. We wonder about what schools they will attend and how well they will do, what sports they will play, what university they will attend, and whom they will marry. In the case of Tongans, they may hope their son or daughter will marry the oldest child from a respected family.

For parents whose child is born with a disability, this process is different. These parents often go through stages of depression, denial, anger and finally acceptance. Shame and embarrassment are common emotions that plague couples in village settings. This explains why some parents hide their child at home. Gossip and rumour, coupled with superstition, are often used to explain why the child was born with a disability.

Inclusive education (IE) is a new concept in Tonga. For parents of children with a disability, IE is a blessing. For the first time, many of these parents can begin to feel a sense of belonging and normalcy when enrolling their child in school. “I began to cry when I saw my son in a school uniform” said a parent from Ngele’ia Government Primary school. “This was the first time I had ever bought a uniform and I was so happy.”

## **How Tonga defines inclusive education**

Inclusive education is the end result of a process which involves the school system transforming itself from a system that meets the needs of some students and excludes others into a system that welcomes all students and adapts its practices and methods so that the learning needs of all children are met.

In the Tongan context, inclusion in education involves the practice of increasing the participation of students with disabilities in, and reducing their exclusion from, the educational culture, curricula and mainstream (government) schools in Tonga. Inclusion in Tonga also involves gender equity and gifted children and focuses on creating an environment in which *all* children—disabled and non-disabled—are able to learn side by side.

Inclusive education is a collaborative process which enables children with disabilities to interact with their peers and strengthen these relationships. Both groups of children benefit, as able-bodied children learn about differences in abilities and children with disabilities learn that it is acceptable to be differently abled. An inclusive education system does not allow children with a disability to be hidden in the back of the classroom but fully accepts them, supports them, teaches them, and identifies them as children first and the disability as secondary.

Inclusive education is not a method to separate children with disabilities from the rest of the school but involves them fully within the mainstream school. Inclusive education does not create a separate facility or special school for children with disabilities.

Inclusive education supports and trains *all* teachers to teach *all* children. Children with disabilities become students in the mainstream educational system that endorses inclusive education.

### **The Tonga Inclusive Model for Education: TIME**

Tonga's TIME model combines several models to create a system of supports with measurable benchmarks and outcomes for each IE student. One is the consultant model, which works best in schools with a low incidence of special-needs children and a small overall enrollment. The IE teacher is available to teach IE children difficult skills and provides the children with at least two teachers to help with curriculum problems. Then there is the teaming model, which promotes cooperative planning and teaching. Mainstream and IE teachers work together to present the same material to all students in the classroom. The IE teacher provides

student information, possible instructional strategies, and modification ideas for assignments, tests and behaviour strategies. Thirdly, there is the collaborative teaching model. Shared responsibility between the mainstream and IE teachers is an advantage of this model. Teachers may organise a class into groups (mixture of IE students and mainstream students) and teach them simultaneously, one teacher leading an enrichment activity while the other works with a small group on difficult content areas.

In Tonga's TIME model, the IE teacher acts as a consultant and is available to teach learning strategies and skills to special needs students. To start with, three class periods are set aside for these students to learn strategies and receive tutoring in difficult subjects. Mainstream teachers send students to this classroom after a formal enrollment process and each student has an individual education plan (IEP). During these three class periods, parents can act as teacher aides, and mainstream students act as student aides. Personnel from non-government organisations may observe, train, collaborate, and support the IE teacher.

In each mainstream class period, a peer advocate (student aide) is assigned to the special needs student by the IE teacher to help with questions, mobility, emotional support, etc. While special needs students are attending regular classes, the IE teacher monitors classrooms of his/her students, supports, and consults with mainstream teachers. As IE students improve and begin to show progress and self-confidence, the IEP team can choose to taper off the number of IE class periods from three classes to two, one or no classes.

Students who have a severe intellectual impairment begin to attend school for half of each day. This may be increased to a full day if there is improvement. The IEP goals focus on the areas of socialisation and basic education. The IEP process helps to identify the severity of the students' disability case by case and determines if the student attends for a half day or a full day. Parents act as teacher's aides and mainstream students act as peer advocates and as classroom aides. Here, too, personnel from non-government organisations may observe, train, collaborate, and support the IE teacher.



### **Inclusive education pilot classroom**

Prior to the opening of the pilot classroom, a local Tongan teacher, Lesieli Latu, was identified in November 2006 from the Teachers' Institute of Education. The training of this new teacher included basic sign language, classroom management, lesson planning, individual educational planning and behavioural management. The IE Office conducted a series of awareness programmes and community activities to inform local village communities about the upcoming changes in education and to answer questions regarding inclusive education.

The first IE classroom began early January 2007 in Ngele'ia with four students from surrounding villages and Lesieli Latu as Tonga's first IE teacher, supported by Carly Anderson, a Peace Corps Volunteer. Attending the opening were the school's principal, representatives of the parent-teacher association, village officials, local church leaders, teachers and parents. As communities got wind of the new programme, five more students enrolled. The classroom enjoyed positive feedback from the local villages and parents of IE students.

In January 2008 the classroom opened with 17 students. Due to the success of the classroom in 2007, parents from different parts of Tongatapu began to bring their children to the village of Ngele'ia to participate in the pilot classroom. This became stressful as the pilot classroom was not meant to accommodate so many students. Its main purpose was to garner information for the drafting of the IE Policy and its implementation.

Tentative plans are on the table to open up pilot classrooms in Vava'u and Ha'apai island groups in 2009. These classrooms will duplicate the Ngele'ia Model and act as a local resource for other schools in the area.

### **The inclusive education evolution In Tonga**

The 5-year plan in IE will involve in-service training, professional development, and on-going workshops in IE. It also involves an IE Policy already endorsed and approved by the Director of Education and by Cabinet. New compulsory courses in IE best practices are now being developed for the Tonga Institute of Education,

and ongoing professional development courses for current teachers will begin in April 2008.

Our hope is that, in time, all teachers in Tonga will be able to teach all children, regardless of their ability or special circumstance. In the near future, parents will be able to take their children to their own village schools and not worry about traveling long distances to educate their children with special needs. The TIME Model currently used to deliver IE practices will evolve and will be used on a smaller scale in schools as an additional support for children with special needs and a resource room for teachers.

## **Inclusive education: a Samoan case study**

*Donna Lene*

Inclusive education (IE) in Samoa is a developing concept at the national level. In a process of educational change we are moving away from the framework of special education towards a process of establishing inclusive education.

### **Special education**

Special education operates under a framework that the child has special needs and thus requires specialised support through qualified special educators. This is provided through education settings that are stand alone or through special needs units that may be attached to regular school settings. The special needs teacher takes most of the responsibility for the learning needs of the individual and judges whether the child has undergone enough training, therapy or has enough skills to be integrated or mainstreamed into regular classes. In other words the child must change to suit the system.

### **Inclusive education**

Inclusive education is a process whereby the school systems, strategic plans and

policies adapt and change to include teaching strategies for a wider, more diverse range of children and their families. It operates under the framework that it is every child's right to access education. Inclusive education involves identifying a child's learning style and adapting the classroom and teaching strategies to ensure high quality learning outcomes for all members of the class. Everyone is important, unique and valued for their contribution to the school.

Inclusive education involves the development of teacher training strategies (such as cooperative learning, group work, specific disability support knowledge); adaptation of curricula, teaching and learning materials; provision of transport systems; accessible facilities; and equity of access to communication and information. It also involves the development of a system of on-site and community-based support for schools, parents of children with disabilities and individual children with disabilities. It is not a system that develops overnight and, like all educational change, needs open forum discussion to air concerns and develop consensus. Simply put, inclusive education means that the system must change to suit the child.

### **The great debate**

I think most people would agree that an education system should ensure that it is relevant to the needs of its students, that it offers equity of access and respects basic individual human rights. The debate with addressing the learning needs of the very diverse group of children with disabilities centres on the quality of education experience. It is with this notion of quality that I would like to share my experience in Samoa for the purpose of reflective thought, discussion and future action.

### **Why is it necessary to make education inclusive in Samoa?**

Prior to 2000 about 100 children with disabilities were offered an educational experience at three non-governmental institutions in Samoa. All these organisations are based in the capital, Apia. The organisation that I was involved in initially as a teacher of the deaf and then as a board member and eventually as President of the board was a school for the deaf and physically disabled. In 1990 I was the only

qualified teacher in a staff of four, supporting about 30 students (on a good day). The principal was a highly titled person of some notoriety in the Hollywood movie arena. By 2000, the school had grown and had 13 teachers for about 80 students (on a good day). At that time, the principal was a New Zealand volunteer. Three of the staff were qualified, but no one had specific training in how to support children who are deaf or physically disabled. In both time frames the school was managed by a board that consisted largely of affluent business people with a sense of charity.

Here we see a pattern: a lack of trained teachers, leadership and management systems with no real sense of disability issues but good charitable intentions. There is a need to reflect how this has impacted on the people with disabilities (themselves now young adults). The population of deaf people that attended during that time developed a very fundamental system of communication but never achieved a functional level of literacy.

In Samoa, 85% of the children with disabilities live in rural areas. Historically, the majority of these children did not attend school at all or, if they did, they attended for only a very short period of time. Most students with physical disabilities remained at home after leaving school and did not have any form of income generation.

Amongst this population there are high mortality rates as families struggle to access the health care needed by some children. Whilst there is a community-based early intervention service, it struggles to provide the intensity of service that is needed at this critical stage in a child's development. It is implemented by a non-government organisation (NGO) and is donor dependant.

Increasingly, it is felt that the government must take responsibility to better address the needs of all Samoans. The change to inclusive education by the Ministry of Education Sport and Culture (MESC) is a positive significant step toward this goal. Samoa has started to make it happen, as the story of Malaki shows.

Malaki, at the time of writing<sup>1</sup>, is a five-year-old boy who lives in a village in rural Samoa. He has significant hearing loss in both ears.

Malaki attends his local government school full time. The MESC collaborated with Senese Junior Secondary School, an inclusive education provider, to provide a system of sustainable support that allowed the school system to build capacity to include Malaki. The teachers underwent in-service training, learning how to use the UNESCO<sup>2</sup> toolkits with children with hearing impairments and the sign language dictionary and accompanying DVD. The principal and teachers also attended training on how to develop an individual education plan for Malaki. They then shared this training with the rest of the staff as they knew Malaki would be going through their entire system and other teachers needed to know about these strategies for inclusion.

Malaki's hearing was tested and he now has a hearing aid. With all this support and expertise, Malaki has begun to speak and sign in simple sentences. When Malaki's mother visited recently, she summed up all their efforts to date with a wide smile on her face, "Malaki is really learning. He can read, write and have a joke with me."

A parent support group meets once a week at Senese School and Malaki's class teacher sometimes attends. Regular visits by MESC personnel are also made to the school to give them support and ideas for future development. His teachers attend district net meetings where they discuss and promote IE. Malaki's mother and a youth member have attended an intensive training course on how to support children with hearing impairment. Both are now employed as support people in Malaki's school and another neighbouring school under a pilot project of the Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of basic Education (PRIDE) Inclusive Education Project. The long term plan is to develop a *teacher aide for children with disabilities* position in the Ministry of Education's organisational structure.

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1. October 2007

2. United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organisation

Malaki's story, which is similar to the stories of children in the other four pilot schools involved in the project, has convinced the MESC that this is indeed an important strategy for the development of quality inclusive education.

### **Development of inclusive education in Samoa**

Like many other Pacific Island nations, Samoa has a history of NGOs providing a service for children with disabilities in urban areas. The education of special needs children, or children with disabilities, was the sole task of these organisations, which were all based in Apia, from the 1960s until 2000.

An important year for Samoa was 1991, when the Compulsory Education Act was passed, and all children were required to attend school from the age of five to 14 years. This prompted the MESC to make every effort to include children with disabilities in educational settings.

Since 1992, the blind and visually impaired students in Samoa have been enrolled in regular schools under the Prevention, Rehabilitation and Education for the Blind (PREB) Society's management. Some government and private school teachers have attended Braille in-service training and Braille workshops under the direction of PREB. There has never been a special school for the blind in Samoa. Instead, staff provide a specialised service, teaching blind and visually impaired students the skills to read and write in Braille. Every traditional village in Samoa has a primary school. A blind or visually impaired student attends his or her own village primary school or a mission school. Those who reach Year 8 sit the Year 8 National Exam. After that, they attend their own district secondary school, or one of the colleges in Apia which are run by the various churches or the government. The very first person with a disability in Samoa to have obtained a full-time overseas scholarship was a totally blind young woman. She obtained a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Communication from the Auckland University of Technology.

The year 2000 was a turning point for Samoa; this was when a survey was conducted under a UNDP project to identify children with disabilities throughout the country. The survey focused discussions on issues relating to children, disabilities and

education, and the statistics from the survey were used to support policy change. This UNDP project established a National Special Needs Advisory Committee with representation from NGOs and government, and pilot schools with special needs units attached to each regular school were established. In addition, the National University of Samoa developed compulsory papers for all teacher undergraduates, as well as students taking a Diploma in Primary Education, majoring in Special Needs Education.

Unfortunately, the special units did not work—for several reasons: there was not enough discussion at school level, the units began to segregate children, there was a shortage of teachers and there was not enough onsite support for teachers. The special needs teachers were allocated to regular class duties.

The Loto Taumafai Early Intervention Program (LTEIP) was established in January 2004. It is a community-based rehabilitation, therapy and family support service for children with disabilities (from birth to seven years old) and their families. It currently serves approximately one quarter of Samoa and plans to expand until it serves the entire country. A physiotherapist is currently the Programme Coordinator, and an additional six community-based rehabilitation assistants provide regular support and therapy to children with disabilities and their families. The LTEIP is part of the Loto Taumafai National Society (established in 1981), which also runs the Loto Taumafai Education Centre for the Disabled, a special school and vocational programme. The school has approximately 94 students, roughly half of whom are deaf and half of whom have a physical disability.<sup>3</sup> The programme works closely with MESC, which appointed a Special Needs Education Coordinator in 2002, and other NGO providers.

In 2005, a revision of the status of the pilot special needs units was conducted and the MESC developed its Strategic Policies and Plan July 2006 – June 2015. It includes a section on special needs education and focuses on a process of change to incorporate inclusive education. The document outlines the problems and goes on to policy statements. The relevant extract is reproduced here.

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3. <http://www.ayad.com.au/asp/displayAssignment.aspx?assignmentID=6476>



### **Specific problems**

- There is a need to develop understanding about Inclusive Education approaches.
- There is a need to encourage children, youths and adults with disabilities to access quality education. This includes village educational systems and National institutions.
- Studies have shown that girls and women with disabilities have lower attendance rates at educational settings.
- Rates of mortality for children with disabilities in Samoa are high due to a lack of early detection and intervention.
- Referral links for children with disabilities and their families between the Health, Education and community-based non-government organisations are weak.
- Special needs teachers being placed in special needs units have faced many challenges in establishing inclusive best practice without consistent onsite support.
- Many schools are attempting to provide physical access but there are no national guidelines on specifications for ramp gradients, door widths, railings and ablution facilities.
- There is a need for the MESC to work closely with the Ministry of Health in the training of district nurses in the identification of special needs students in the rural and urban areas.
- Whilst the Government provides a grant for 'Special Needs Education' mainly to non-government organisations there is a need to review the allocation of this assistance.
- The MESC needs to build efficient systems to maintain comprehensive data on children with disabilities, which can be used for planning appropriate early intervention and educational provision, resources and support services.
- There is a need for action research on inclusive education to develop a broader range of strategies for implementing inclusive education.
- There is a need to develop a comprehensive system of support for inclusive education.
- Low participation of people with disabilities in sports.

### **Policy statements**

- Facilitate the enrolment and participation of children with disabilities. Special attention will be given to girls and women with disabilities.
  - Develop sound knowledge of best practice for inclusive education.
  - Work in collaboration with Lotu Taumafai Early Intervention Program and the Ministry of Health (MOH) to ensure the future sustainability of early intervention for children with disabilities.
  - Capacity building for the Special Needs Education Advisory Committee (SNEAC) will be encouraged.
  - There will be ongoing support for Special Needs teachers.
  - The MESC will support public awareness programmes on inclusive education and people with disabilities, with particular emphasis on girls and women.
  - In collaboration with the Ministry of Works, Transport and Infrastructure (MWTI), national guidelines for appropriate accessible educational and public facilities will be enforced.
  - Document, record and adopt appropriate models of good practice for educational and sporting provision.
- (MESC, 2006:30)

Also in 2005, the PRIDE Inclusive Education subproject was designed through consultation with MESC and NGOs. It began in 2006 to help support the development of systems to facilitate inclusive education. This included meetings to discuss concepts and strategies, teacher training on how to support children with specific disabilities, a media campaign to help get accurate information about disability to the general public, accessible guidelines for the design of schools, and recording stories of significant change.

The Curriculum and Materials division of MESC began translating UNESCO's Inclusive Education Toolkits into Samoan and held workshops to introduce two of the booklets from UNESCO's toolkit. In the same year, 2006, the Samoan sign language dictionary and DVD were released.

In 2007, Samoan children were tested for hearing impairment and fitted with hearing aids. This was done by the Carabez Alliance, an Australian charitable organisation dedicated to placing children with hearing impairment in mainstream schools, in collaboration with the MESC, the Ministry of Health, and non-government providers of inclusive education. Malaki was one of many children to benefit from this.

Currently, a lecturer from the National University of Samoa is completing her doctorate on the barriers to inclusive education through the comparison of different school settings. Her research will be of great value in reducing these barriers.

### **Statistics/education management information system (EMIS)**

The MESC has an established database of all children with disabilities in Samoa. There have been some difficulties in the use of the database and maintaining current information. The Special Needs Coordinator under MESC coordinates the database.

### **Teacher training**

In Samoa, the National University of Samoa provides training in inclusive education. Recruiting enough trained lecturers with theoretical and practical experience remains an issue. Currently there are approximately 40 Samoan teachers who have completed the University course in inclusive education. Primary level student teachers can take the Diploma in Education, majoring in Special Needs Education.

The need for ongoing training is essential and in 2008 the MESC will begin a unique shadowing programme with Senese Junior Preparatory School. This will allow a graduate teacher to be placed at Senese for one year to gain advanced skills in supporting IE programmes for specific disability groups, such as the deaf, the blind, those with physical disability and those with intellectual disability. After the year, the graduate will return to the government system.

### **Recommended strategies**

The following ideas summarise the future steps that my colleagues and I feel are now necessary for Samoa to implement in order to ensure that the process of inclusive education continues to develop:

- government-supported and funded community-based systems of support for schools implementing IE and delivering early intervention services for families with children with disabilities
- dedicated budgets for the development of human resource staff and services
- strategically aligning the NGOs providing support for children with disabilities to take advantage of the synergy this would create
- accessibility guidelines for the building of schools
- more accurate information for communities on the causes, effects and prevention of disabilities
- more media campaigns, collection of significant stories of change and visual images of what inclusive education looks like
- development of district support systems
- closer coordination with the Ministry of Health to ensure improved access to health care services for children with disabilities in rural areas
- introduction of the MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccine throughout the country to prevent disabilities
- coordination of overseas disability organisations that can help support the development of key services (e.g. hearing and vision screening, occupational and physiotherapy support and the provision of prosthesis and orthotics equipment) and to assist in the development of ICT<sup>4</sup> solutions for different disability groups
- additional training for key members of MESC
- establishment of the EENET<sup>5</sup> for the Pacific to develop a sharing culture
- development of inclusive education programmes to support children who are deaf or blind or have a physical, intellectual or learning disability.

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4. information and communication technology

5. The Enabling Education Network is an organisation working to promote the inclusion of marginalised groups in education worldwide.

### **What is needed to make this happen?**

We need leaders who are fired-up and can spread the word about inclusive education. The UNESCO Inclusive Education and Learner Friendly Toolkits can be the fuel to start the fire. The toolkits contain six booklets, each of which contains tools and activities for self-study to start creating an inclusive, learning-friendly environment. Translating these into Samoan has increased their accessibility on a national level.

Collaboration is also key to progress: the Ministry of Health, the NGOs, the disabled persons organisations, the parents and the children need to meet and work together. In addition, the international NGOs must be brought into the picture for specific disability support.

Attitudes need to change: the words *but* and *cannot* must be banned, and replaced by *perhaps* and *can*.

## 12

### **Mainstreaming students with disabilities in Palau**

*Emery Wenty*

In Palau, inclusive education for children with disabilities is referred to as special education, and its programme is run by the Ministry of Education (MOE). The programme currently operates with US\$2,022,566 funding annually from the US Department of Education, which represents approximately 20% of the Palau total education budget.

#### **The legal aspect**

Known as *The Programs and Services for Handicapped Children Act of 1989*, Republic of Palau Public Law 3-9 provides for comprehensive educational programmes and services for handicapped infants, toddlers and children. The Act was introduced in the Palau National Congress in April 1989 and a few months later was passed by the Palau Congress and signed into law by the Palau President. The Act includes policies and procedures concerning the legal aspects of child identification, assessment, re-evaluation, parental roles, individualised educational programmes, placement notices of proposed action, consent and mediation.

### **The special education programme**

The aim of the special education programme is to provide appropriate individualised education programmes for students with disabilities, with proper accommodation in the most conducive and appropriate learning environment possible. This kind of environment is provided in the form of special education resource rooms located at schools throughout the country, which come under the school principals' control, and centralised classrooms, which are run by the programme coordinator. The post of programme coordinator is a full-time position in the MOE and there is a staff of 60, of whom 47 are classroom teachers. At the time of writing<sup>1</sup>, 193 clients are enrolled in the programme (from 0 to 21 years old), representing about 5% of the total student population.

### **Mainstreaming students with disabilities**

Students with disabilities attend schools in their communities, either in regular classrooms or in special education resource classrooms. The special education programme works with schools to provide an individualised education plan for each student with a disability, and helps him or her to be mainstreamed into the regular classroom setting and activities. Accommodation for students with disabilities is also provided at the schools.

Over the years, the number of students mainstreamed into regular schooling has increased. All schools now provide special education services to students with disabilities and, today, the special education programme and its services have reached almost all children with disabilities aged 0 – 21; more than 90% of students with disabilities attend regular school programmes.

### **Challenges**

The current provision would be much improved if the accommodation for students with disabilities at the schools were more adequate and appropriate. Maintaining the number of appropriately skilled teachers and specialists for the special education programme and its services is another challenge. Development

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1. October, 2007.

activities currently under way include providing training to special education and regular education teachers and specialists, and developing alternative assessment for children with disabilities.



## 13

### Emerging issues in inclusive education

*Rebekah McCullough*

The stories we tell and how we tell them shape how we think about things.

What stories can we tell about how we educate our children?

How can these stories shape our future?

#### **Malaki's story—living the dream**

Malaki is a five-year-old boy living in a rural village in Samoa. He is bright and confident and has severe hearing loss in both ears. He goes to the local village primary school.

How can this happen? How does the teacher talk to him if he cannot hear? How can he play with the other children if he does not know what they are saying?



All of these things are possible because of inclusive education (IE). Many good things have happened to make it possible for Malaki to attend his local school. His parents believed that it was his right to go to his local school and be supported to learn alongside his peers. The government provided in-service training for the teachers, as well as resources such as sign language books. They also organised meetings for the teachers to discuss IE. His parents and teachers have learned sign language and have regular training with other parents and supporters. Members of a local early intervention non-government organisation (NGO) visit the school to share their expertise and provide advice. Every time a barrier is identified, Malaki's family and teachers meet and work out a way to overcome it. Malaki is learning to say a few words now and can sign simple sentences. He is happy at school and school is happy with Malaki.<sup>1</sup>

*Lesson learned: Where there is a will there is a way, especially when everyone works together.*

### **Ruci's Story—IE works!**

"My name is Ruci Senikula. At the age of six, I was enrolled at the Fiji School for the Blind and began my primary education. In 1994, I was fortunate to be integrated into a mainstream primary school. I continued through primary education and pursued secondary education in the mainstream too.

Learning in a regular school was a real challenge. Firstly, students did not know how to react to having a child with a disability in the classroom. At first, both teachers and students were either not sure of what to do or they were just ignorant. Sometimes, teachers and the school management lacked the knowledge or the ability to fit me into their normal teaching environment. However, after spending weeks with me in the classroom, students began to realise that there was a need to help me and so they began to dictate notes that the teacher wrote on the blackboard. At other times, teachers would read out notes aloud in class and every student would write them down, including myself.

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1. Advancing IE in the Pacific Workshop, 1 – 5 October 2007, Nadi, Fiji. Samoa country presentation, see Chapter 11.

In 2006, I enrolled at the University of the South Pacific to pursue studies in Applied Psychology and Education, where I am now in my second year.”<sup>2</sup>

*Lesson learned: Children who learn together, learn to live together.*

### **Junior’s story—getting to school**

Junior uses a wheelchair. Although he lives close to his local school, the road is too bumpy for his mother to get him to school. When the principal heard about Junior, she organised a roster of the boys in the rugby team to go to his house each day. One boy carried Junior and another boy carried his wheelchair. If Junior did not come to school, there was no rugby practice that day! (McCullough, 2005:6)

*Lesson learned: Think outside the box.*

### **Introduction**

The stories at the beginning of this chapter are only a few of the many helpful and hopeful stories about inclusive education that were shared at the Advancing Inclusive Education in the Pacific Workshop that was held in Nadi, Fiji, from 1 – 5 October, 2007. The workshop brought together a wide range of people representing disabled people’s organisations (DPOs), government ministries and departments, NGOs and interested individuals from 14 Pacific states. The aim of the workshop was to give participants the opportunity to share experiences and understanding of IE in their own countries and in the Pacific region, and to work towards developing strategies for the future. The keynote speeches, presentations, panel discussions and case studies provided a broad context for working towards a Pacific-specific understanding of inclusive education.

From this workshop, three key issues emerged which will require consideration and action in order to ensure, promote and activate the rights to education for all children.

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2. Advancing Inclusive Education in the Pacific Workshop, 1 – 5 October 2007, Nadi, Fiji. excerpt from panel presentation.

### **Emerging Issue 1 – Education is a right for *all* children**

Throughout the workshop, many references were made regarding education as a right for all children. Many international declarations and mandates were identified and discussed. A summary of those relevant to both IE and the Pacific is given below.

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- The World Declaration on Education for All
- The Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities
- The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education
- Salamanca Five Years on Review
- World Education Forum Framework for Action, Dakar
- Millennium Development Goals – Poverty Reduction and Development
- EFA Flagship on Education and Disability.

Pacific nations have participated in many of these fora and have agreed to and signed many of these rights-based global, international and regional initiatives that call for commitment and action in order to achieve education for all. So, why, after more than 60 years of agreeing, pledging and signing a vast array of declarations, frameworks and international, regional and national plans, are children with disability, children who are poor, children who are marginalised by a variety of circumstances still not being educated?

Dr Visessio Pongi, Director of the UNESCO Apia Office, reminded us in his keynote speech at this workshop that, globally, more than 90% of children with disabilities in developing nations are either excluded from education or marginalised within educational systems. He went on to say that approximately 500,000 children per year lose some part of their vision due to vitamin A deficiency and that some 41 million babies are born each year at risk of mental impairment due to the poor diet of their mother. Furthermore, most of the individuals with hearing or visual impairment in developing nations do not have basic reading skills and those with

intellectual impairment are often treated with cruelty and neglect. Sadly, there is a strong link between disability and poverty.

Inclusive education is based on the **right** to education for all children. It is welcoming all students and all learning situations because of the fundamental belief that all children can learn and all children have the right to learn and be educated. This right is not just for those who can fit into current formal education systems, which often promote hierarchal competitiveness. Nor is IE simply a separate part of an education system, a part that is just tacked on to accommodate those who are perceived to be unable to participate in the current educational process. Education and learning opportunities are major factors in overcoming economic and social inequalities for those seen to be outside typical educational parameters.

As Penelope Price mentioned in her paper (See Chapter 6), numerous international documents and global events continue to raise awareness and give structure and guidance for the development of IE. Of significance to the Pacific region is the Forum Education Ministers' meeting in 2002, at which the Ministers agreed to adopt the following three key recommendations from the third priority area of the Biwako Millenium Framework (BMW):

- to achieve the BMW targets for access to primary school for children with disabilities
- to review and strengthen regional teacher training opportunities
- to develop a regional programme to develop capacity that will provide inclusive education for children with disabilities.

This was further developed during a Pacific expert group meeting held by UNESCAP in Nadi in March 2007 to set Pacific principles in education through:

- early identification and intervention
- increased access to schools for children with disabilities
- transformation to inclusive systems with emphasis on teacher training for a diverse range of abilities.

**Transformation** is a very important word. It implies a fluidity of movement that enables those current education practices which are positive and useful to move forward and merge with other positive activities to embrace the concepts inherent in IE. The fact that transformation to inclusive education is being documented and agreed to at these high governmental levels is important, because governments can be held accountable for their actions—or their lack of action.

There are also regional networks that can raise the visibility of IE and provide a forum for sharing successes and articulating concerns. Networks are vital to the learning process. They provide opportunities to listen and learn, to debate and to voice collectively both the celebrations and the challenges. The opportunities to network within the Pacific region mean that, while each country is unique, some of the challenges faced are part of the location, culture and values of the Pacific. This ensures that issues raised will be specific to the Pacific situation. In addition, networking within the region assists in identifying, developing and supporting Pacific people's expertise and experience. The development of regional skills and opportunities for skill-sharing are another aspect of recognising and nurturing the expert at home. This practice assists in ensuring the acknowledgement and incorporation of Pacific values and cultures in the process of IE.

At the national level, as we have heard at this workshop, many countries are developing or strengthening education policies and legislation to enable IE to become an integral part of the educational framework. For some countries this is at a policy level. For example, the Cook Islanders presented a country report to the workshop participants, which described their IE policy and practice: all Cook Island children with disability are now part of their local school community and receive government-funded teacher aide support. In other countries, projects are being developed to promote IE and then develop it further. In Samoa, UNESCO and the Samoan Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture collaborated to conduct a nationwide immersion into IE, using UNESCO's Toolkit for Creating Inclusive Learner-friendly Environments (ILFE). The Toolkit contains six booklets, each of which has tools and activities for self-study to start creating such environments. Some of these activities ask readers to reflect on what their school is doing now in

terms of creating an ILFE, while others actively guide readers in improving their skills as teachers in a diverse classroom.

In some situations, there is cooperation between government and NGOs. In other situations, change is being driven by families and disabled persons' organisations (DPOs). We heard of the exciting and important work of the Fiji Disabled Peoples' Association which steadfastly advocates and promotes the rights of people with disability (see Chapter 9). The exciting part of IE is that it must happen at all levels but it can start anywhere!

The challenges associated with this issue are:

- to understand the international declarations and mandates and make them work for the benefit of all Pacific children
- to strengthen and develop regional coordination and support networks
- to build the capacity of national frameworks, DPOs, schools, villages and individuals so that all are included in the IE process.

### **Emerging Issue 2 - Pacific cultures and inclusive education**

Another emerging issue is the development of a Pacific understanding of inclusive education. It is clear that the role of culture and values cannot be separated from educational beliefs and systems. The legacies of colonialism have had both positive and negative effects. Educational concepts and practices such as individualism and independence were introduced, but this has had the counter affect in some areas of undermining and weakening traditional beliefs that were interwoven into many aspects of an inclusive society.

In her opening keynote speech for this workshop (see Chapter 1), Emi Rabukawaqa, the Fiji Permanent Secretary for Education, states:

[o]ne of the defining characteristics of modern Pacific societies is their inclusiveness. We are very inclusive societies in the sense that everyone has a place—a traditional role to play in the community—and everyone is expected to participate in communal life and to have a share in the resources of the

land, sea and rivers. Togetherness is our philosophy of life and exclusiveness is an alien concept. ... Indigenous Fijians, for instance, regard themselves as being an integral part of their land or *vanua*. All Fijians belong to an extended family unit which owns their portion of clan land collectively; and whether they live and work in a town or even in another country, they are included in the structure of their *vanua*. *Vanua* is an embodiment of the Fijian world view of inclusiveness.

In Pacific societies, learning and understanding take place not just in a classroom setting, but also through participation in the roles and responsibilities ascribed to each person. Pacific cultures also recognise that gaining knowledge is entwined with sustaining cultural continuity. Inclusive education promotes participatory approaches to learning, just as traditional learning is understood to be participatory, practical and useful to individuals and their community. IE looks at the relationships among students, teachers, families and the wider community. Relationships provide a framework for working together in Pacific cultures.

As I wrote on another occasion:

The process of inclusive education is a natural fit with Pacific cultures. It reinforces the importance of working together to share information, to solve problems, to make decisions and to take action. The many roles and responsibilities played by the wide range of people involved in the education process will help ensure the continuing development of a healthy and vibrant school community (McCullough, 2007).

The challenge associated with this issue is to reclaim important lessons and values from Pacific cultures and use them as a foundation for advancing IE by taking on board ideas from the global perspective.

### **Emerging Issue 3 - The special education versus inclusive education debate**

One of the most contentious issues and one that continues to be debated is that of special education versus inclusive education. That it is being openly discussed



is positive and healthy, as difficult issues must be dealt with in order to promote understanding. This discussion is a necessary part of removing the obstacles to improving our understanding and our practices for educating all of our children.

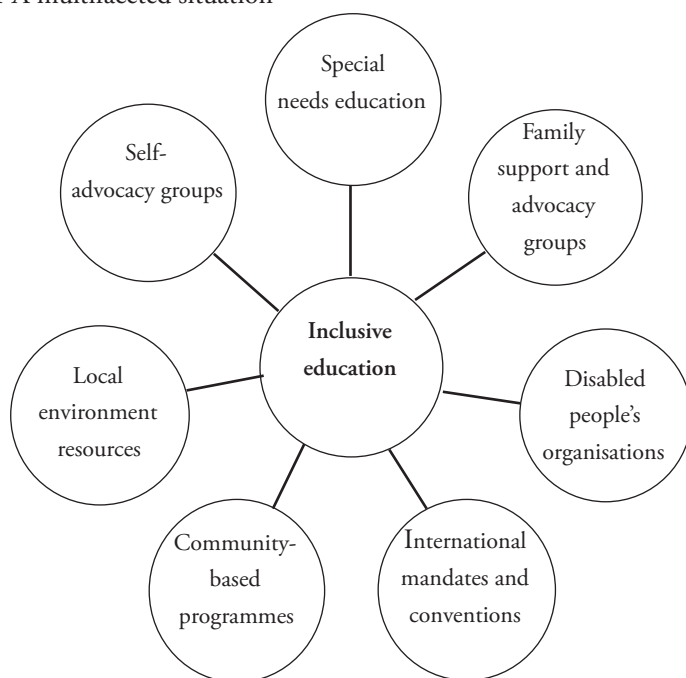
To date, those Pacific countries that have provided education for marginalised children have tended to focus on children with disability by creating various types of special education systems. Typically, these have followed the models of having special schools for children with specific types of disabilities (e.g. schools for the blind, schools for the deaf) or the development of special units attached to regular primary and secondary schools. This development has certainly been well-intended but it results in maintaining a segregated system that continues to regard *the student* as the problem rather than *the education system*. This demonstrates a misunderstanding of how to provide education and learning to all students, regardless of their disability, gender, ethnicity, economic situation or other circumstances that cause exclusion.

For some in the special education sector, the development of IE is seen as very threatening. There is a perception that all of the good work done to date will be lost and that those who have invested time and energy into this area are no longer appreciated. There is a concern that the specialist skills developed will be lost and that the reallocation of expertise from a segregated system to an inclusive one is too difficult. However, many of the teaching methods and aids used in special education are simply good teaching practices that are useful for all students. Special education does not and should not be seen as the only place where students' learning is individualised, the environment is conducive to learning and materials are accessible. All of this should and does happen in inclusive education settings.

Understanding the history and developments affecting IE can help to reassure and assuage some of these concerns. Certainly, the special needs education movement was a critical factor in persuading many countries that children with disabilities could and should be educated. It brought more visibility to the issue of the right to education and focused on individualised, child-focused models using a wide range of good teaching practices to support students' learning styles. It worked

towards developing close relationships with families and developed teaching methods and aids to make education more accessible. Self-advocacy groups and DPOs have also influenced the development of IE. They have rightly called for education to be accessible to all children in both physical and social terms. Community-based programmes work in the area of early identification, family support and advocacy for the rights of all children to have the same opportunities for schooling. Individually these movements have looked at specific issues such as teaching technologies or family support or advocacy. IE tackles all of these and more in order to develop a holistic and effective change in educational systems and societal expectations that will enable all children to be in school and to learn in school (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1** A multifaceted situation



Source: Adapted from Stubbs, 2002

The transition from special education to inclusive education can also be viewed from the standpoint of who has the problem. There is a perception that in special education, the student with a disability is the problem and needs to go to a special place to 'get fixed' or at least 'mended'. The focus is on rehabilitation, therapy and trying to 'make the student normal'. The student bears the burden of change, not the teachers, school or educational system. In inclusive education, it is the system which must change. Disabled and marginalised students are valued for their individuality and uniqueness. They are encouraged to learn and interact with one another in a wide range of methods and activities. Differences are explored and enjoyed (see Table 1).

**Table 1** Differences between the special and/or traditional education and inclusive education

<b>Special and/or Traditional Education</b>	<b>Inclusive Education</b>
Curriculum and materials are set and pre-determined and used as prescribed.	Curriculum and materials are able to be adapted to meet a range of learning styles.
Teacher is in charge. Teacher lectures/demonstrates. Students sit and learn.	Learning and teaching are shared by all. Teachers and students learn from one another.
Everyone is the same age or has a similar disability.	Students are all recognised as unique. The classroom may have a range of students, ages, helpers, etc.
Classroom materials are arranged to suit the teacher.	Classrooms are arranged to be learning friendly environments with access to a wide range of learning approaches.
Students are assessed by standardised exams	Authentic assessment is utilised.

These concerns identify a number of misunderstandings about what IE is and what it is not. Defining IE is very important because there must be clear underlying principles that shape practice and process. When special education is used interchangeably with inclusive education it is obvious that there is no clear philosophy that can be used to shape policy and practice. Using terms such as

*mainstreaming, integration* and *special units* further confuses the issues. IE must be clearly understood so that all of the stakeholders are working towards a common goal.

To clear up some misconceptions: a special school cannot call itself inclusive on the grounds that it follows the national curriculum. Neither can a mainstream school that takes special needs students and has them taught by one teacher who has learned to sign and accommodate specific communications systems. IE is about systemic change at all levels: students, families, teachers, principals, school communities, policy-makers, decision makers and society at large. IE is not just an extra set of skills used to assist students with disability. It is about changing our world to be welcoming and humane to all.

In the Pacific, IE is not only a sensible approach due to its values-based philosophy, but also it suits the economic and geographic challenges that are a reality for many countries. In some rural or remote areas, there is only one school and learning community. Inclusive education is the sensible, practical and only way to educate all of the children in those communities. Special education schools are typically located in urban areas and are not accessible to those living far from these centres.

The most critical issue facing Pacific countries is coming to terms with the role of current systems (often a special education system) and learning and taking from those experiences to contribute to the process of IE. It will mean that ministries of education, schools, families and civil society must all take part in the transformation process of moving towards IE.

In the UK, the Centre of Studies on Inclusive Education, an NGO, published the *Index for Inclusion* by Booth and Ainscow. As soon as the Index was launched in 2000, the British Government placed the document in every school and local education authority in England. Later the Welsh Assembly did the same for Wales. Translations and adaptations of the Index began in 2000, and the number has grown regularly ever since.

According to Booth and Ainscow (2000), inclusion in education involves:

- Valuing all students and staff equally.
- Increasing the participation of students in, and reducing their exclusion from, the cultures, curricula and communities of local schools.
- Restructuring the cultures, policies and practices in schools so that they respond to the diversity of students in the locality.
- Reducing barriers to learning and participation for all students, not only those with impairments or those who are categorised as 'having special educational needs'.
- Learning from attempts to overcome barriers to the access and participation of particular students to make changes for the benefit of students more widely.
- Viewing the difference between students as resources to support learning, rather than as problems to be overcome.
- Acknowledging the right of students to an education in their locality.
- Improving schools for staff as well as for students.
- Emphasising the role of schools in building community and developing values, as well as in increasing achievement.
- Fostering mutually sustaining relationships between schools and communities.
- Recognising that inclusion in education is one aspect of inclusion in society.

At its worst, the defense of special education can develop into a siege mentality of protecting something just because there is fear of change. For some involved in special education, the segregation process has meant that they feel out of touch with mainstream schooling and are concerned that they, as teachers, educators and principals, may not fit into a new way of learning and teaching. They will require in-service training and regular opportunities to discuss their progress with other teachers. They will have much to offer if given information, mentoring and support. Teacher training at all levels is crucial to the successful implementation of an IE system. Teacher training institutions will need to provide students with information and skills for teaching in participatory, cooperative and learning-friendly environments. Resources both, human and technical, will need to be developed as well. All of these are possible and important.

I reiterate, school communities in the Pacific need only to look at their traditional values and they will find that inclusive education is not really a new concept and therefore it should not be an unwelcome one either.

The challenge associated with this issue is to develop a process that ensures a clear and articulated definition of inclusive education, that embraces Pacific cultures and values, is understood and shared, and is implemented for the benefit of all.

### **Next steps**

Where does all of this leave educators, families, out-of-school children and policy makers? What are the next steps towards ensuring that all children are learning in school in their communities? Do we need a working definition of IE and what would be its components? At the workshop, groups discussed this issue. The presentation from a group comprising representation from Fiji, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, Hawaii, Palau and Cook Islands seemed to sum up the general understanding regarding this question. They presented the following.

Yes, we need a working definition of IE:

- so that we have a common understanding of what IE is
- so that we can talk on the same terms or wavelength
- to facilitate discussion and sharing of ideas
- so we can all educate our leaders about the same thing so that they know what they are to talk about at forums and regional meetings.

Key components of IE in the Pacific would be:

- education for ALL
- includes not only low incidence needs but also high incidence needs (e.g. learning difficulties)
- is not limited to those with disability
- includes everyone at risk of being excluded
- caters for diverse learners and learning needs
- is learner-focused
- is focused on assisting students to achieve their full potential.

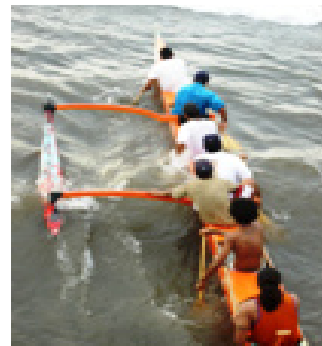
Key actions and considerations:

- includes partnerships with parents, community groups, government and non-government organisations
- includes trans-disciplinary partnerships
- focuses on mindsets and attitudes
- includes assessment which accommodates diversity and flexibility
- includes multiple means of expression, representation and motivation built into the curriculum
- provides appropriate accommodation for students with different needs
- provides appropriate physical, curriculum, access, social and emotional support for students
- provides equitable choices for families and students
- provides quality education with appropriate funding
- provides rewards and incentives for teachers
- provides support for teachers, including expert and specialist advice, in-class aides and technological support.

As stated at this workshop by Setareki Macanawai, Chief Executive Officer of the Pacific Disability Forum: ‘We need to keep our focus on the child and think outside the box.’

### **A way forward—the Pacific inclusive education *vaka***

A strong and valued aspect of Pacific cultures is the relationship with the elements, including the sea. Pacific nations depend on the sea for nourishment and travel to gain information and knowledge from other places. Sometimes an analogy is a helpful way of describing what might be a possible way forward in these often choppy waters. Hence, I have chosen the *vaka/waka*, as the analogy for the Pacific IE process.



#### **The *vaka***

The *vaka* is the foundation. It is solid and seaworthy. It carries our core values and

beliefs about our culture. It carries our vision about the rights of education for all children. In our *vaka* we find respect, community, understanding, learning from and with each other, appreciating our uniqueness and using that to collaborate effectively and harmoniously.

### **The paddlers**

The paddlers are our strength. Strength comes from many places: direction and inspiration from our children and their families, strong and effective leadership within our governments, advocacy and challenge from people with disabilities and their organisations. Cooperation and collaboration are the methods used to ensure a smooth transition towards IE.

### **The journey**

Our journey in our *vaka* takes us through many seas of change and development. We know that we must continue to develop and improve teacher training. We must continue to develop and implement our legislation and education policies. We need to collect useful information and data so that we can inform ourselves about the directions to take.

### **The destination**

We know that inclusive education is an ongoing journey, so we strive to paddle towards an educational system that embraces and values diversity, that is creative and fun, that is sustainable, and that is a framework for an inclusive, Pacific society.

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## Outcomes document<sup>1</sup>

### Preamble

Outcomes from the Advancing Inclusive Education in the Pacific Workshop include urging the people of the Pacific to note that inclusive education as defined by UNESCO<sup>2</sup> is ‘a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of learners by increasing participation in learning and reducing exclusion within and from education’. The objective is to support education for all, with special emphasis on removing barriers to participation for children with disabilities and out-of-school children. The statement notes that the overall goal is a school which adapts to the needs of all learners and where all children are participating and treated equally—it is thus imperative that the word *all* effectively includes children with disabilities.

All stakeholders were encouraged to note that in this definition, inclusive education (IE) will always seek to address the learning needs of all children, with a specific focus on those who are vulnerable to marginalisation and exclusion. Moreover, it was emphasised that at the core of inclusive education is the fundamental right to education for all, and from the adoption of the principle of inclusive education

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1. This document was compiled by Frederick Miller, Richard Wah, Donna Lene, Brother Graeme Leach, Malakai Kaufusi and Cathy Sohler on behalf of the workshop participants.

2. United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organisation

at the Salamanca World Conference on Special Needs Education held in Spain in 1994, and its affirmation at the World Education Forum, the challenge of getting all children into school has been put on the political agenda in many countries and is reflected in the Pacific Islands Forum Basic Education Action Plan as well as Pacific commitments to achieving Education for All. This has helped to focus attention on a broad range of children who are not in school or may be marginalised within the education system.

The workshop noted that the overall goal of inclusive education is to promote opportunities for all children to participate and be treated equally. It is a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners and of reducing exclusion to and within education systems.<sup>3</sup> It is from this perspective that Pacific Islanders are encouraged to note that inclusive education is concerned with providing appropriate responses to the broad spectrum of learning needs in both formal and non-formal educational settings and that it advocates changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures, policies and strategies.

At the heart of inclusive education is the vision to transform the education system so that it can provide improved, worthwhile education for all learners. Schools in Pacific Island countries can only be inclusive when they are working towards full participation, a sense of community, and equality through respect for differences, respect for different learning styles, variations in methods, open and flexible curricula and assessment techniques, and welcoming each and every child. In other words, inclusive schools are learner-centred and child-friendly.

Many people see inclusive education as concerning only children with disabilities, and providing education in regular school settings for them. The educational partners are promoting a much broader view of inclusive education, which encompasses all children who are excluded on grounds of gender, ability, ethnicity, linguistic, geographic location or poverty related reasons.

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3. Overcoming Exclusion through Inclusive Approaches in Education: A Challenge and a Vision. Conceptual paper, UNESCO, 2003.

Inclusion may also be seen as a continuing process of increasing participation and reducing segregation as a recurring tendency to exclude difference. In this sense inclusion and segregation are not fixed states or educational placements. Schools are continually working towards inclusion and resisting segregation. They will find themselves at different stages, perhaps even taking wrong turns on the road to inclusion.

Many of the workshop participants were of the opinion that, for inclusive education to become a reality in the Pacific, we need to eliminate altogether any continuum of service, including special education and special educators, as a system of provision. This would require the redeployment of special education staff and resources to mainstream schools, where they would be employed not only for the benefit of students with disabilities but in a supportive role across the whole curriculum.

The inclusive schools movement should seek to enhance the social skills and community participation of people with severe disabilities, and in so doing will change the attitudes of both teachers and students towards disability.

All participants were also encouraged to keep in mind that inclusive education brings together different forms of education. It is rights-focused and can be considered the ultimate educational outcome of the principle of normalisation. It begins with the premise that every individual has the right to participate in the mainstream of society and enjoy the same privileges, benefits and opportunities as his or her peers. It is child-focused and founded on the principle that all children, regardless of disability, are capable of learning and should be given the same opportunities to achieve through learning to the best of their abilities.

The participants agreed that inclusive education is a process that involves students, teachers, parents, the school community and the local community. It involves learning and development for everyone who is part of the school community. It involves discussion, examination of relevant issues and decision-making, based on the benefits for all concerned.

These practices are deeply rooted in Pacific cultures. Pacific cultures have a long and proud history of understanding that learning is about gaining knowledge and understanding to sustain cultural continuity. Learning is practical and related to shared values and beliefs. In addition, relationships among people are core values in Pacific cultures. Relationships are important because they identify individuals and groups and provide a framework for working together. The roles of individuals within their family and community assist in developing positive skills and social responsibility.

It was also noted that the process of inclusive education is a natural fit with Pacific culture. It reinforces the importance of working together to share information, to solve problems, to make decisions and to take action. The many roles and responsibilities played by the wide range of people involved in the education process will help ensure the continuing development of a healthy and vibrant school community.

Education in the Pacific is in the midst of tremendous change brought about by the current review of systems and practices. It is now faced with greater challenges, as scepticism about the quality of education appears to be increasing, with demands from Pacific citizens for higher academic standards, greater accountability and improved educational performance. At the same time it is hampered by insufficient funding, overburdened teachers, low salary scales and the persistence of outdated instructional approaches. Though there are signs of development and change, its direction is still uncertain in the sense of policies for all of those who have the fundamental right to receive good quality education.

### **Workshop Objectives**

1. To understand the visions, experiences, practices and challenges of inclusive education globally and in Pacific countries.
  - All persons have the right to access quality educational opportunities and choices which enhance, include and welcome everyone as active contributing citizens in our schools, villages and societies.

- Inclusive education is not about how some learners can be integrated into the mainstream educational system. Rather, it is transforming the educational system so it will respond to the diversity of all learners.
  - People who learn together, learn to live together.
2. To identify key strategies needed for wider implementation of inclusive practices and their implications for children with disabilities in Pacific Island countries.
    - In the Pacific context, consultation, collaboration and cultural competencies among and within countries are vital to advancing inclusive education and must involve people with disabilities and family members at all levels of decision-making.
  3. To discuss, explore and investigate future national and regional strategies and actions aimed at strengthening inclusive education within the framework of the Education for All initiative.

### **Strategies**

The workshop agreed that three levels of strategies need to be developed: regional, national and school.

#### **Strategies at the regional level – the policy level**

1. Sign, ratify and implement significant documents.
2. Advocate for support for inclusion in the Pacific Plan.
3. Establish a Pacific Island Enabling Education Network for IE.
4. Undertake qualitative and quantitative research to inform policy and practice of inclusive education. This includes disaggregated data to reflect key issues (including data that identify all marginalised/vulnerable groups).
5. Develop sustainable systems for the acquisition and provision of training on assistive technology devices and supports. This includes low and high tech devices.

6. Support mobilising funding, including technical assistance in funding acquisition.
7. Create a media initiative to implement systems and programmes of awareness (including media such as television, public service announcements, radio programmes). Vision: a television series celebrating the story of inclusion within the heart of the Pacific.
8. Provide regional teacher training and professional development, teacher exchanges and regional mentoring/study trips to upgrade teacher competence. Vision: A teacher training package, including learning strategies, assessment strategies (updated best practices on inclusive education).
9. The Pacific Island Forum Secretariat is to monitor curriculum to ensure best practices on all levels of education in IE, with particular emphasis on tertiary teacher programmes and international disability development programmes.

### **Strategies at the national level**

#### **Policy**

1. Formulate national IE policy and advocacy for policy-makers on IE.
2. Include persons with disability and parents and/or caregivers into all related policy development activities.
3. Provide support for parents and caregivers of all children, including children with disabilities, and involvement in their child's educational process.
4. Advocate for improved opportunities for the transition of students with disabilities from education to employment.
5. Ensure consultation as an integral process involving parents of children with disabilities.
6. Implement early detection and early intervention.
7. Recommend that Ministries of Health establish case-management databases with a referral management system for children with disabilities from birth to six years.
8. Strengthen preventative measures (e.g. immunisation, pre- and post-natal care).
9. Promote awareness on disability issues in villages and communities.

10. Develop an in-country culture of IE discourse / sharing.
11. Provide ongoing professional development of teachers.
12. Develop sustainable systems for the acquisition and provision of training on assistive technology devices and supports. This includes low and high tech devices.

### **Collaboration**

1. Promote collaboration amongst government ministries, stakeholders and NGOs.
2. Actively support groups of people with disabilities.
3. Establish networks amongst professionals.
4. Collaborate across teacher training institutions in the country.
5. Establish preventative measures, immunisation, diet.
6. Develop systems that support collaboration between the formal and informal educational system.
7. Establish effective coordination and communication mechanisms between government ministries in the provision of services to infants and children with disabilities in terms of early identification, assessment, referral to enrolment in early intervention services, pre-school and schools.
8. Actively seek innovative and creative approaches to IE.

### **Research**

1. Undertake qualitative and quantitative research to inform policy and practice of inclusive education. This includes disaggregated data to reflect key issues (including data that identifies all marginalised/vulnerable groups).
2. Implement or advocate for changes in an Educational Management Information Systems system that will include significant questions and data for all children, especially children with disabilities.
3. Ensure that the research process is culturally sensitive and significant.
4. Share best practice research methodology related to IE.

## **Budget**

1. Value for money budget
  - establishment of structure within the system
  - targeted budget allocations
  - assistive technologies.
2. Create policies and programmes that are fiscally sustainable and that fit within current budgets or are a minimal strain.
3. Strategically plan and acquire funding to support IE systems and resources.

## **Implementation**

1. Develop IE policies and practices that are easily replicated in isolated islands.
2. Make IE training compulsory for all pre-service teachers.
3. Provide for continuing IE in-service training.
4. ACCESS - Need for “interpreters”; sign languages for each national language; on-going training; a deaf education policy leading to inclusion into society; sign language as a language; hearing aids. Also, the need to develop effective measures to address barriers that limit access to education, e.g., alternate or additional forms of communication (Braille, sign language, augmented communication, etc.), physical access (such as ramps).
5. Clearly define and designate responsibility at a senior level for inclusive education within Ministries and Departments of Education in the region.
6. Provide or strengthen screening processes for all disabilities supported by subsequent referral systems where necessary.
7. Provide training and support for teachers to conduct low technology methods of screening (e.g. vision and hearing).



### **Strategies at the school level**

1. Prepare teachers and students for effective inclusion of individuals with disabilities.
2. Foster commitment of all—leaders, teachers, children, community.
3. Provide safe environments through a culture of acceptance, understanding and support.
4. Focus on the holistic development of the child and his/her learning styles and needs.
5. Develop teams which support internal capacity-building within schools to support effective inclusion.
6. Use inclusive teaching practices.
7. Collect in-school data, participate in action research and support wider research activities.
8. Develop strategic plans and budgetary support for inclusion.
9. Provide support for students using assistive devices.
10. Conduct low technology screening (e.g. vision and hearing).
11. Teach basic ear and eye health care routines.

### **Defining inclusive education**

One of the workshop outcomes focuses on a topic that was frequently discussed. This was the matter of arriving at a definition of what inclusive education means in each country, as well as at the regional and international level.

The workshop resolved that each country needs to make known its position on the following terms:

inclusive education  
mainstreaming  
special education  
mainstreaming  
segregation

integration  
specialised classrooms.  
special school  
special units

## **Appendix A: List of Participants**

### **Cook Islands**

Ms Cathy Sohler  
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Cook Islands Disability Council

### **Fiji**

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Mr Paserio Furivai  
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Mr V.K Sharma  
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### **Kiribati**

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Ministry of Education, Youth & Sports

Mr Uriam Robuti  
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Ministry of Internal & Social Affairs

### **Marshall Islands**

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Education Department

### **Palau**

Mr Emery Wenty  
Director of Education  
Ministry of Education

### **Papua New Guinea**

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Br Graeme Leach  
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Callan Services for Disabled Persons

### **Samoa**

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## Appendix B: Workshop participants



Left to Right

Back: V.K. Sharma, Kienene Bauakin, Maseiga Osema, Virginia Cabarez, Donna Lene, Dr James Skouge, Marlie Rota, Veronica Mar, Uriam Robuti, Kanchi Hosia, Dr Richard Wah.

Middle: Lili Tuioi, Frances Gentle, Graeme Leach, Jennifer Tamarua, Benedict Ronald Esibaea, Kesaia Rokosuka, Malakai Kaufusi, Paserio Furivai, Angeline Chand, Mareselina Tabalailai, Timote Finau Vaïomoounga, Paul Dumas, Frances Pene, Jarden Kephias.

Front: Faeaa Multalo, Rebecca McCullough, Susana Daurewa, Edwin Peter Babanisi, Setareki Macanawai, Tekura Nancy Bairallard, Priscilla Puamau, Emi Rabukawaqa, Rev Jovilisi Duvuloco, Dr Nikhat Shameem, Joyce Heeraman, Emery Wenty, Frederick Miller.