



PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM SECRETARIAT

PIFS(07)FEDMA.04(e)

EDUCATION MINISTERS MEETING

*Auckland, New Zealand
26-28 November 2007*

SESSION TWO

**INCLUSIVE EDUCATION:
OUTCOMES OF REGIONAL WORKSHOP, OCTOBER 2007**

This paper was prepared by the partner agencies involved in this workshop: Fiji Government, SPBEA, UNESCO, UNICEF, PRIDE, PREL and the Forum Secretariat

FORUM EYES ONLY

REPORT ON THE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION WORKSHOP, NADI, FIJI, 1-5 OCTOBER 2007

Purpose

1. This paper seeks the Ministers' support and endorsement of four recommendations emerging from the Inclusive Education regional workshop that was held in Nadi, Fiji from 1 – 5 October 2007.

Background

2. Disability issues were addressed by the Pacific Islands Forum Education Ministers during their meeting in 2002. The outcomes from this discussion were incorporated into the Forum Basic Education Action Plan (FBEAP) in which the Ministers noted that access to education for children and youth with disability is an issue that needs to be addressed. Ministers also recognised that the education of children and youth with disabilities remains one of the most serious challenges facing Governments in the Pacific region.

3. A key outcome of the 2002 Ministerial meeting focused on the issue of inclusive education and recommended that the Forum Secretariat, in collaboration with other regional organisations and development partners to explore the possibility of a regional programme to develop capacity that will provide inclusive education for children with disabilities in Pacific countries, the sharing of regional expertise, and provide examples of good practice.

4. The 14 actions that are required to achieve the targets in priority 3 of the Biwako Millennium Framework (BMF) reflects the need for Pacific Governments to ensure the provision of appropriate education which responds to the needs of children with all types of disabilities in the next decade. The need to strengthen regional cooperation to facilitate the sharing of experiences and good practices and to support the development of inclusive education initiatives is also reflected.

5. Inclusive Education (IE) has been the focus of a number of conferences in the Pacific in the recent past. Many of the conceptual issues have been addressed during these discussions. It has also become clear that there are many different groups working within IE, addressing excluded groups.

6. As such, the main aim of the October workshop was to advance awareness of the issues impacting on the education of children with special needs, both nationally and regionally, with a view to identifying key strategies for wider implementation of inclusive practices, especially for children with disabilities.

FORUM EYES ONLY

Inclusive Education Regional Workshop, Fiji, 1-5 October 2007

7. 'Advancing Inclusive Education in the Pacific' was the theme of the Inclusive Education workshop held in Fiji from 1-5 October 2007. It was co-hosted by seven agencies and included: the Fiji Government, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL), Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of basic Education (PRIDE), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment (SPBEA). 42 participants representing governments and NGOs engaging in Inclusive Education from 14 Forum countries and Tokelau attended the workshop.

8. Several key areas that will need to be addressed at the national level were highlighted at the workshop. These areas included:

- i. Policy
- ii. Collaboration
- iii. Research
- iv. Budget / Finances
- v. Implementation of policy and training
- vi. School level initiatives

9. Participants acknowledged the importance of advancing awareness of the issues impacting on the education of children with special needs, both nationally and regionally, as well as identifying key strategies for wider implementation of inclusive practices, especially for children with disabilities.

10. Many Pacific island governments are developing inclusive policies and plans clearly identifying the need to address education for all children including those who have disabilities. Follow-up to the workshop outcomes will need to be sustained by the development partners in a collaborative manner to ensure that there is impact and delivery at both regional and national levels on workshop recommendations in the longer-term.

Recommendations

11. Ministers are invited to:

- (a) note the progress for Inclusive Education at the regional and national level and supporting the current paradigm shift from the charity and medical models to social and rights-based models of disability;
- (b) note the actions required in the Biwako Millennium Framework and the BMF plus 5 as a basis of advancing Inclusive Education at the policy level of Forum Island Countries;
- (c) endorse an integrated approach to Inclusive Education that recognises all children's right to education; and

FORUM EYES ONLY

- (d) endorse the use of the UNESCO toolkit on Inclusive Education as the basis for promoting the philosophies of Inclusive Education in Forum Island Countries.