



Faculty of Education

Pacific Indicators for Disability-Inclusive Education (Pacific-INDIE)

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Executive Summary

Working collaboratively with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), the Pacific Disability Forum (PDF), Monash University and the CBM-Nossal Institute Partnership for Disability-Inclusive Development, The University of Melbourne, this research involved 14 Pacific Island countries providing information about the progress already made towards measuring inclusive education in the region. Subsequently, four countries (Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu) were involved in developing and trialing a set of indicators for measuring progress towards disability-inclusive education across the region.

The research project spanned three years involving a three-phase approach and culminated with the development and launch of the Pacific Indicators for Disability-Inclusive Education (Pacific-INDIE). In each phase a number of small research studies were conducted to inform the development of the indicators. Outcomes from these studies are reported in international and local journals and publications and have been presented at several conferences and workshops (details of these are available separately on the website). Brief findings are included in this report.

The development of the Pacific-INDIE now offers decision-makers a valuable tool for undertaking appropriate data collection that will inform policy development work and enable them to monitor progress towards disability-inclusive education. In addition, data collected by the Pacific-INDIE can feed back into reporting required by international Conventions such as the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

These culturally relevant indicators will assist countries to evaluate their progress towards disability-inclusive education and to develop further plans and targets for providing quality education for children with disabilities. This research is aligned with other Pacific regional processes for improving the measurement of the Pacific Education Development Framework (PEDF, 2009; PDF & PIFS, 2012).

Contents

Acknowledgements	2
Executive Summary	4
Introduction	6
Key Principles Grounding the Research	7
Principle One: Collaboration	7
Principle Two: A need for systematic change	7
Principle Three: Nothing about us, without us.....	7
Phase 1	8
Methodical literature reviews	8
Focus group and key informant interviews in four Pacific countries.....	8
Document analysis of reporting frameworks	9
Outcomes from Phase 1	9
Phase 2	10
Refinement of the potential list of indicators	10
Expert feedback.....	10
Developing categories and themes.....	10
Review of the 126 draft indicators.....	10
Review of the refined 70 draft indicators.....	11
Aligning the final 48 indicators to the PEDF framework	12
Outcomes from Phase 2	12
Phase 3	13
Validating a tool for identification of children with disabilities	13
Reviewing and trialling the Pacific-INDIE and the Guidelines	13
Development of training manuals	14
In-country training of key people	14
Outcomes from Phase 3	14
Conclusion	16
References	17
Policy Briefs	19

Introduction

International principles that endorse the rights of all children including those with disabilities to access regular schools have been endorsed by Ministers in the Pacific Islands responsible for disability and those responsible for education. Pacific Island countries are now tasked with implementing disability-inclusive education and collecting appropriate statistical data to enable them to monitor and report on their progress.

In order to guide countries to assess whether they are achieving international aims and goals it is important for them to be able to plan and map progress against contextually relevant indicators for measuring outcomes. Establishing meaningful quality indicators for measuring progress towards enabling disability-inclusive education has, therefore, been critical for Pacific Island countries.

The Pacific Indicators for Disability-Inclusive Education (Pacific-INDIE) have been designed to support the implementation of disability-inclusive education in the Pacific Islands. The final set of 48 indicators across 10 dimensions were collaboratively developed in partnership with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), the Pacific Disability Forum (PDF), Monash University and the CBM-Nossal Institute Partnership for Disability-Inclusive Development, The University of Melbourne.

The development of the Pacific-INDIE now offers decision-makers a valuable tool for undertaking appropriate data collection that will inform policy development work and enable them to monitor progress towards disability-inclusive education. In addition, data collected by the Pacific-INDIE can feed back into reporting required by international Conventions such as the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Pacific-INDIE further provides a structure for the development by PIFS of the proposed Pacific Inclusive Education Framework. In this way the Pacific-INDIE can act as a monitoring and evaluation framework for all Pacific countries.

Key Principles Grounding the Research

Three key principles grounded the research:

Principle One: Collaboration

A collaborative and rigorous approach to developing indicators which measure what Pacific Islanders value as authentic and relevant disability-inclusive education was adopted. The project was undertaken in partnership with two regional bodies: Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and Pacific Disability Forum. Both regional bodies were involved from the inception of the research in identifying the key objectives, recruiting research assistants, data gathering and data analysis.

Principle Two: A need for systematic change

Disability-inclusive education was premised on systems changing to meet the diverse needs of learners and their families, rather than expecting the child or youth to 'fit in'. This project is about measurement and disability. We were aware of the danger of identifying disability residing within an individual. We, therefore, made every attempt possible to move away from the medical model of disability towards using social and human rights models of disability. This approach allowed us to identify indicators that look at addressing environmental barriers to provide quality education to people with disability.

Principle Three: Nothing about us, without us

One of the significant drawbacks of past research on disability-inclusive education in developing countries is that most of the research is conducted by outsiders (in terms of people who don't have a disability or by overseas researchers). Involvement of people with disability and their families in research that has direct impact on their life is critical. People with disability and their organisations were involved in this research as partner researchers. For example, the CEO of the Pacific Disability Forum was a research partner in this project. In addition, half of the associate researchers in each of the four countries (Fiji, Samoa, Vanuatu, and Solomon Islands) were people with disabilities who were nominated by their national level Disabled People Organisations (DPO). These members were provided necessary training to undertake the research during the initial phase

Phase 1

This phase consisted of methodical literature reviews, survey of key stakeholders from 14 Pacific Island countries, focus group and key informant interviews, and documentation analysis of reporting frameworks. Dissemination of results occurred through workshops, the website and publications.

Methodical literature reviews

Three systematic literature reviews were undertaken to identify previous research with regard to implementing disability-inclusive education. The focus of the first literature review was to understand the international work in developing indicators for disability-inclusive education (Loreman, Forlin, & Sharma, 2014). The second literature review focused on capturing the work already done across the Pacific countries regarding inclusive education (Forlin, Sharma, Loreman, & Sprunt, 2015). The last review focused on out of school children with disabilities (Sharma & Ng, 2014). This considered previous research in Pacific Island countries and identified effective strategies for including out-of-school children with disabilities in education in developing countries.

Survey of key stakeholders from 14 Pacific Island countries

A survey was developed to gain an understanding of indicators and systems already being used to monitor and evaluate education in the participating 14 Pacific Island countries. A key focus of the survey was to determine what data, if any, these countries were collecting in relation to disability-inclusive education. The key stakeholders who provided the data consisted of government officials who had a portfolio of working in disability and/or education sector (Sharma, Forlin, Sprunt, & Merumeru, submitted, in review).

Focus group and key informant interviews in four Pacific countries

A series of key informant and focus group interviews were also conducted by local associate investigators. The interviews were conducted in four countries of the Pacific (Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu). Participants consisted of members representing DPO, parents of children with disabilities, primary and early childhood teachers, secondary teachers, disability service providers, and representatives from ministries of education, health, community development, social welfare, and other key education or disability stakeholders. The qualitative

data provided great depth and breadth in understanding what Pacific islanders valued in terms of approaches to education of children/youth with disability (Sharma, Loreman, & Macanawai, 2015).

Document analysis of reporting frameworks

The fourth key activity at Phase 1 was a document analysis. The analysis was undertaken to understand the implications of various existing monitoring and evaluation frameworks, performance assessment frameworks, UN conventions, regional and national strategies, and frameworks and agreements that relate to the reporting requirements of the Pacific Island countries in terms of inclusive education. This analysis allowed the identification of international level frameworks and agreements that were relevant to the Pacific countries with regard to disability-inclusive education.

Outcomes from Phase 1

Following the completion of Phase 1, information from the four activities was analysed by the research team to provide the initial potential list of indicators. The total number of indicators that were developed at this stage consisted of 140.



Phase 2

In phase two, three key activities were undertaken to refine and develop the draft indicators. These involved in-country workshops, reviews by a group of international experts using the Delphi technique, and the development of a final set of draft indicators. Dissemination of results occurred through workshops, the website, research briefs and papers.

Refinement of the potential list of indicators

It was deemed critical to reduce the number of indicators to enhance the utility by the key stakeholders across the Pacific countries. The potential list of indicators was initially refined in a series of collaborative meetings held in Melbourne and Fiji with key stakeholders over an eight month period. Members of the Fiji meetings included representatives from Ministries in the four case study countries, parents of children with disabilities, DPO, non-government education providers, senior staff from the PIFS and PDF and the research team. Following expert feedback and the development of categories and themes, further in-country meetings were held in Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu for confirmation of the refined indicators.

Expert feedback

An international expert review team provided feedback using the Delphi technique on the list of indicators throughout the Phase 2. The team of 12 members consisted of experts on inclusive education or disability-inclusive education and key stakeholders from the Pacific countries.

Developing categories and themes

The final part of this phase was to collate the information received to date to refine the indicators and develop categories and themes. All team members met over three days in Melbourne to improve wording, identify duplicate indicators and to categorize the indicators based on themes and the meso, micro or macro level of measurement. All indicators were categorised in one of 10 themes (e.g., teacher education, policy and legislation, role of special schools) and one of three levels of measurement (system, community, or school and child levels). After the three day meeting the remaining list consisted of 126 draft indicators.

Review of the 126 draft indicators

Two groups reviewed this draft of the indicators simultaneously. The first group consisted of the international expert panel utilising the Delphi technique. The panel was asked to report any significant indicator that was missing in the list or to identify indicators that may be redundant for the context. They were also asked to report on the wordings of the indicators and suggest revisions. In addition they were asked to report any other comments that might be relevant to creating a refined list of indicators.

The second group consisted of 40 representatives from Ministries in the four case study countries (Samoa, Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands), parents of children with disabilities, DPO representatives, non-government education providers, university teacher educators, senior staff from PIFS and PDF and the research team. The participants also included the eight local country associate research investigators and representatives. This group met for a regional 3-day workshop in Fiji. The indicators were discussed and debated in country and regional groups, with consideration given to relevance, feasibility and priority. All groups acknowledged that the Pacific countries were moving towards a culture of inclusive education and that the indicators were central for measuring this change and that the indicators should be able to provide aspirations and ambitions to countries for doing this.

Subsequent to the 3-day workshop a smaller group of 14 representatives from all groups and the research team met for two days to consider the proposed changes. All suggestions to the indicators were collated resulting in merging and renaming themes, revised wording and a small reduction in the number of indicators. A next draft of 70 indicators was developed classified under 12 themes. Each identified theme had an overarching outcome statement. It was anticipated that information about the overarching outcome would be collected by gathering information from the specific indicators that were clustered under the 12 themes.

Review of the refined 70 draft indicators

Continuing with the expert team, 12 international experts were asked to rate each indicator against five criteria representing SMART dimensions: *Relevant* (is the indicator relevant for disability inclusive education); *Measurability* (is the indicator measurable using quantitative or qualitative data); *Specificity* (is the indicator specific enough); *Attainability* (is the indicator attainable/realistic); and *Timeliness* (can the information on indicator be obtained within a reasonable timeframe). Along with assessing the indicators against these five criteria, the reviewers were requested to make any other suggestions or comments on the set of indicators.

Analysis of IPS score indicated that most of the 70 indicators were rated highly. Only one indicator obtained a rating of 100%; 22 indicators obtained a rating between 95 and 99; 22 indicators obtained a rating of 90-94; and 25 indicators were rated below 90. All identified indicators were clustered in one of the 10 themes. A decision was made to retain all indicators that had a value of 90 and above. Thus a total of 46 indicators were retained at this stage. After a thorough examination of the indicators and a careful review of the comments of the panel of reviewers and extensive consultations with the members of Pacific Disability Forum and Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat a further two indicators were retained, thus resulting in a final set of 48 indicators.

Aligning the final 48 indicators to the PEDF framework

The final resulting 10 themes (reduced from the original 12 themes) became the 10 dimensions containing the 48 indicators and these formed the *Pacific Indicators for Disability-Inclusive Education* (Pacific-INDIE). These were designed to supplement and therefore needed to align and assist with the implementation of the PEDF Framework strategic objectives of Access, Quality and Effectiveness and Efficiency. The 48 indicators were, thus, categorized according to the PEDF under one of the three categories. The 48 indicators contain 17 that measure Access, 14 that measure Quality and 17 that measure Effectiveness and Efficiency within the PEDF framework. From these we identified 12 indicators that were to be recommended as critical for measuring disability-inclusive education in the Pacific Islands.

Outcomes from Phase 2

Once the Pacific-INDIE were developed the research team prepared a set of draft guidelines for implementing them across all Pacific Island countries (Sharma, Forlin, Marella, Sprunt, & Deppeler, 2015). The Guidelines are a resource designed to support Pacific Island countries in a process of developing disability-inclusive education. They have been prepared for administrators (e.g. system or regional level), senior leaders (e.g. principals) and operational staff (such as teachers) to be used in collaboration with other relevant professionals, parents and community stakeholders such as DPO, to measure advancement towards disability-inclusive education. The Guidelines contain three sections providing background information to the project and the rationale for developing the indicators; guidance for stakeholders for using the indicators for measuring disability-inclusive education in the Pacific Islands; and the 48 indicators with specific information, directions and practical steps for implementing and measuring them.

To promote the project and to keep local participants abreast of the development of the Pacific-INDIE several briefs were written and distributed during Phase 2 (See Policy Briefs One and Two).

Phase 3

In phase three, five key activities were undertaken to finalise the Pacific-INDIE. These involved validating a tool for schools to identify children with disabilities in Fiji, trialing the Pacific-INDIE, development of training manuals, in-country training of key people, and final launching and dissemination of the indicators. Publications included country brochures, papers, policy briefs, and updating of the website.

Validating a tool for identification of children with disabilities

A study was conducted in Fiji with an aim to investigate the validity and reliability of the vision, hearing and mobility questions of the draft Washington Group/UNICEF Module on Children's Functioning and Disability to identify children with disabilities at school level in Fiji. Data from a sample of 473 children from 15 schools in Fiji were collected. The purpose of the study was (a) to determine if there was consensus between parents and teachers in identifying children with disabilities using the Module and (b) to determine the sensitivity and specificity of the Module compared to clinical measures. Both groups were asked to use four response categories to report on a child's ability within three domains of vision, hearing and walking. The response categories were: *no difficulty*, *some difficulty*, *a lot of difficulty* and *cannot do at all*.

In general, there was a reasonably good agreement between parents and teachers in identifying children with vision, hearing and mobility impairments and there was good sensitivity and specificity using "*at least some difficulty*" cut off for all three impairments. The study concluded that the cut off '*some difficulty*' should be used to avoid missing large numbers of children with disabilities who are reported by both parents and teachers within this level. However, to avoid over-estimations and potentially misleading categorisation, and to ensure that children with service needs have those met, it is strongly recommended that children in all categories with '*some difficulty*' and above receive relevant screening, assessment and services.

Reviewing and trialling the Pacific-INDIE and the Guidelines

To ensure that the indicators and guidelines were relevant to the needs of the Pacific Islands the case study countries were involved in reviewing and trialling them. Each country has tested different sets of indicators that were selected based on their relevance to the current country context and their feasibility of collecting data within the limited timeline. Unfortunately, due to circumstances beyond our control the implementation planned for Vanuatu was unable to go ahead due to the devastating effects of Tropical Cyclone Pam.

The local associate research investigators in these countries worked collaboratively with a nominated country representative of the research team to organise in-country focus group

meetings with Ministry staff, parents of children with disability, DPO representatives, and non-government education providers to review the indicators and guidelines. Questions related to the user friendliness of the indicators and the guidelines, the information provided, the amount of content and the kind of additional information they would like to see incorporated into it. Data were analysed and used to finalise the Guidelines and to inform the subsequent development of training manuals to support the implementation of the Pacific-INDIE (Sharma, Marella, Merumeru, & Forlin, submitted, under review). Associate investigators in all four countries produced brief reports based on the data collected from the participants about the usefulness of the Pacific –INDIE (Vanuatu-Ilaisa & Willie, 2016; Samoa- Loelu, Utumapu, Pesamino, 2016; Solomon Islands- Saemane, Fa’asala, & Simi, 2016; and, Fiji- Tinnaavunivalu & Ravulo, 2016)

Development of training manuals

A training manual was developed for use by the Pacific key stakeholders. A key purpose of the training manual was to ensure that the participants would understand how to use the Pacific-INDIE and understand the intent of each indicator. The training manual was developed with an intention that the training participants not only would be able to use the Pacific-INDIE themselves but will also be able to train others in using the Pacific-INDIE. The training material consisted of PowerPoint slides accompanied with detailed notes for each slide.

In-country training of key people

Training in the use of Pacific-INDIE of key stakeholders was undertaken in all four countries. The participants for training were recruited in consultation with the in country Associate Investigators and DPOs. The participants included officials from various Ministries who have direct responsibility of providing services to children and youth with disabilities; officials responsible for data collection on education and disability; school principals from primary and secondary schools involved in using the Pacific-INDIE, members from local DPOs, parents advocates; and academics from universities involved in teacher education. The training lasted two days in each of the four countries.

Outcomes from Phase 3

The project findings were launched in all four countries of the Pacific (Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu) between February and March 2016. A key purpose of the launch was to ensure that key policy makers, politicians and decision makers in all countries were aware of the project outcomes and how the Pacific INDIE could be used to move the system forward with regard to effective implementation of inclusive education. In each country the project findings were launched by either Minister of Education, Disability Services or Secretary from relevant Ministries. Invitees included members from various Ministries, members of local DPOs, parent

advocates, university academics, members from international donor agencies (e.g. DFAT, NZAID) based in the country, school educators, service providers and local researchers.

To enhance local publicity of the project each of the four trial countries developed a brochure outlining their progress towards disability-inclusive education (Pacific Indicators for Disability-Inclusive Education (Pacific-INDIE): Developing inclusive education in Samoa; Pacific Indicators for Disability-Inclusive Education (Pacific-INDIE): Voices from Solomon Islands; Pacific Indicators for Disability-Inclusive Education (Pacific-INDIE): Fiji for Disability-inclusive Education; and Pacific Indicators for Disability-Inclusive Education (Pacific-INDIE): Strengthening and Promoting Inclusive Education in Vanuatu). These brochures were disseminated during the in-country launches of the Pacific-INDIE.

In addition, brief versions of the Guidelines were also made available in local languages to enable people at all levels to be able to have access to information: Fiji (Fijian and Hindi); Solomon Islands (Pidgin); Samoa (Samoan); and Vanuatu (French and Bislama).

Conclusion

The process of developing the indicators to support disability-inclusive education in the Pacific Island countries draws on the views and the engagement of a large number of stakeholders. These have included Ministry staff, DPOs, school leaders, parents, teachers, professionals, students, and other members of local communities working closely with international partners in the course of development. Throughout the collaborative process there were, however, many challenges for the local research investigators. These included difficulties with physical access, inconsistent email access, travel, communication to set up interviews, participants not arriving even when pre-arranged, time management (late arrivals), transcribing of interviews (limited personnel), requirement to provide snacks (no funding available), participants not being aware of the questions, difficulty in getting participants, timing in October being difficult (due to examination time), getting questionnaires completed, obtaining required data, competing with other researchers, unsure line of communication and working as teams.

Nevertheless, we feel confident that given the necessary support by local governments and the continued emphasis placed by PIFS and PDF on enabling disability-inclusive education, the Pacific-INDIE will provide the first locally developed and culturally responsive means for measuring progress towards disability-inclusive education in the Pacific Islands.



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Policy Briefs

Developing and testing indicators for inclusive education in the Pacific (Policy Brief One)

Pacific Indicators for Disability-Inclusive Education (Pacific-INDIE): Key Messages for Policy Makers (Policy Brief Two).