

PACIFIC REGIONAL INCLUSIVE EDUCATION REVIEW

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Inclusive education in the Pacific is the combination of hundreds and thousands of individual actions that teachers, students, principals, community leaders, government officers, policy leaders, advocates, parents, civil society representatives and others take every day to create opportunities and find solutions to overcome barriers. Everyone has a role to play in making quality inclusive education a reality in the Pacific. Many of these people contributed to this study – but all of them contribute to inclusive education every day. We are so very grateful for all of these contributions.

This joint report reflects the activities of individual agencies around an issue of common concern. The principles and policies of each agency are governed by the relevant decisions of its governing body. Each agency implements the interventions described in this document in accordance with these principles and policies and within the scope of its mandate.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ANAR	Adjusted Net Attendance Rate
APTC	Australia Pacific Training Coalition
ASET	Australia Support to Education in Tuvalu
CAROLS	Children at Risk of Leaving Schools
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CIAG	Cook Islands Administrative Guidelines
CITTI	Cook Islands Trades and Training Institute
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DFAT	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DRC	Disability Resource Centre
EAPRO	East Asia and Pacific Regional Office
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EQAP	Educational Quality and Assessment Programme
ESSP	Education Sector Support Program
EU	European Union
FBO	Faith-Based Organization
FEdMM	Forum Education Ministers Meeting
FEMIS	Fiji Education Management Information System
FODE	Flexible Open Distance Education
FSM	Federated States of Micronesia
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
ICF	International Classification of Functioning
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individual Education Plan
IERC	Inclusive Education Resource Centre
ITP	Individual Transition Plan
KEIP	Kiribati Education Improvement Program
KIT	Kiribati Institute of Technology
KSCCSN	Kiribati School and Centre for Children with Special Needs
KTC	Kiribati Teachers College

LPP	Local Performance Plans
MFAT	New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MoET	Ministry of Education and Training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NOLA	Nuanua O Le Alofa
OPD	Organization of Persons with Disabilities
Pacific INDIE	Pacific Indicators for Disability-Inclusive Education
PacREF	Pacific Regional Education Framework
PDF	Pacific Disability Forum
PHES	Pacific Heads of Education Systems
PIANGO	Pacific Islands Association of Non-Government Organisations
PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
PILNA	Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment
PNG	Papua New Guinea
PRCECCE	Pacific Regional Council on Early Childhood Care and Education
PRIEF	Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Framework
Project LIFT	Project Literacy Intervention for FSM leaders of Tomorrow
RMI	Republic of the Marshall Islands
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIEMIS	Solomon Islands Education Management Information System
SPC	Pacific Community
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TVSD	Technical and Vocational Skills Development
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USA	United States of America
USP	The University of the South Pacific
VESP	Vanuatu Education Support Program
VSPD	Vanuatu Society for People with Disability

Definitions

Early childhood development

ECD enables all children to survive and thrive. It refers to all policies and programmes required to support the healthy development of children from birth to six years of age, including health, nutrition, protection, early childhood education opportunities and responsive caregiving.¹

Early childhood education

ECE refers to organized programmes that are intentionally designed to include educational content for young children before the start of Grade 1-level education, often around age six in Pacific Island Countries. Participation in quality ECE is proven to establish strong foundations for learning and success in school and beyond, especially for the most vulnerable. ECE is an integral component of multi-sectoral ECD.

Early intervention

Early intervention describes services and support for babies and children with disabilities and their families. These may include occupational, physio and speech therapy, or other services as required by the child and their family. Early intervention can have a significant impact on a child's ability to learn new skills and overcome challenges and can increase success in school and life.

Inclusive education

Inclusive education is a process to ensure all children receive an equitable and participatory learning experience and environment that best corresponds to their requirements.² This should include children with disabilities, gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or migrant populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalized areas or groups. Inclusive education requires educational systems and schools to identify and implement ways of successfully educating all children, including those who are disadvantaged and have disabilities.

Reasonable accommodations

Also known as “reasonable adjustments,” these are measures or actions to enable learners with disabilities to participate in education on the same basis as learners without disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are mandated in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Examples include classroom seating that supports a student's learning requirements, provision of learning and assessment materials in accessible formats such as Braille and sign and other languages, assistance with note-taking and extended time for tests.

Technical and vocational education and training

TVET is understood as comprising education, training and skills development relating to a wide range of occupational fields, production, services and livelihoods. As part of lifelong learning, TVET can take place at secondary, post-secondary and tertiary levels and includes work-based learning and continuing training and professional development that may lead to qualifications. TVET also includes a wide range of skills development opportunities attuned to national and local contexts. Learning to learn and the development of literacy and numeracy skills, transversal skills and citizenship skills are integral components of TVET.³

1. UNICEF, World Bank and WHO (2018) *Nurturing Care for Early Childhood Development: A Framework for Helping Children Survive and Thrive to Transform Health and Human Potential*.

2. UN (2016) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [General Comment No. 4, Article 24: Right to Inclusive Education](#).

3. UNESCO (2015) *Revision of the 2001 Revised Recommendation Concerning Technical and Vocational Education*.

Executive summary

The purpose of the *Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Review* is to document key trends, achievements, lessons, gaps and challenges, resources, good practices and country case studies in relation to inclusive education in the Pacific. The review saw the participation of 15 countries through multi-stakeholder survey workshops, and 12 regional agencies provided survey data.

Review findings highlight many useful Pacific inclusion practices, as well as a concern across the region that there is a need for significantly increased efforts to ensure access to quality and inclusive education for disadvantaged children. Recommendations from this review support the implementation of the Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Framework (PRIEF), which offers a clear pathway towards this aim.

Background and purpose

At their 2019 meeting in Niue, the Pacific Heads of Education Systems (PHES) endorsed the draft PRIEF and its support for the delivery of the Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF) commitment to inclusive education. At the Forum Education Ministers Meeting (FEEdMM) in April 2021, Ministers formally endorsed PRIEF.

This Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Review was an activity within the PacREF rolling implementation plan, under the Learning Pathways policy area. It was undertaken in line with the PRIEF conceptualization of inclusive education. This adopts a broad definition to ensure inclusion of all learners, but with a particular commitment to identifying and addressing the specific barriers facing students with disabilities, as well as other vulnerable students, to fully benefit from quality, relevant and inclusive education. PHES endorsed this definition at their 2019 meeting in Niue.

The design and implementation of the review was guided by the Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Taskforce and the review was undertaken by independent consultants contracted by UNICEF as the lead agency on this activity. The objectives of the review were to:

- ▶ Take stock of the status of, and approaches to, inclusive education in the Pacific; and
- ▶ Launch a regional discussion on good practices, priorities and lessons learnt to date on inclusive education with the aim of informing next steps, including policies and planning, for inclusive education in the Pacific.

Methodology

The review process utilized methodological approaches that were agreed during an inception workshop with Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Taskforce members in November 2019. These included a document/literature review and a data collection process that incorporated surveys completed by countries and regional agencies. Each country completed two surveys (A and B below); regional organizations completed a single survey (C below):

- ▶ **Survey A** focused on overarching policy and system information and was completed by the special or inclusive education focal point from the education agency (ministry or department), the government disability focal point and a representative from the peak Organization of Persons with Disability (OPD).
- ▶ **Survey B** guided a multi-stakeholder workshop to reflect on and form consensus responses to questions on inclusive education efforts, successes, challenges and priorities.
- ▶ **Survey C** was completed by regional organizations to document efforts towards inclusive education across the Pacific and provide their perspectives regarding strengths, challenges and critical issues in inclusive education.

Surveys were reviewed by Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Taskforce members prior to dissemination.

Survey findings were presented to FedMM in April 2021 and PHES in July 2021. The draft report was circulated to inclusive education focal points in each participating country and Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Taskforce members, who were invited to provide feedback. Feedback was incorporated into the final version of the report.

Definition of inclusive education

As agreed with the Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Taskforce, participants were provided with the following definition of inclusive education:

Schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. This should include children with disabilities, gifted children, street and working children, children from remote or migrant populations, children from linguistic, ethnic or cultural minorities and children from other disadvantaged or marginalized areas or groups. Inclusive education requires educational systems and schools to identify and implement ways of successfully educating all children, including those who are disadvantaged and have disabilities.

Many countries and agencies have historically used the term “**inclusive education**” with a narrower definition – **learners with disabilities**. PHES have indicated that the broader definition outlined above should be used.⁴ Where survey questions focused on the situation for **learners with disabilities**, they used the term “**disability-inclusive education**.”

4. UNESCO Office for Pacific States (2019) Outcome Document. 23rd Consultation of PHES, Niue, 22–26 April.

Participating countries and agencies

Participating countries included **Cook Islands, Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.**⁵

Twelve regional agencies and civil society partners participated: the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Australia Pacific Training Coalition (APTC), Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), the Pacific Disability Forum (PDF), the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), Save the Children, the Pacific Community Educational Quality and Assessment Programme (SPC EQAP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), The University of the South Pacific (USP) and the World Bank.

Rich resources and promising practices across the Pacific

The review underscored the extensive number and the variety of inclusive education resources from across the region, including manuals, guidelines, standards, toolkits and policies. Countries involved in the review gave permission for many of these to be shared. These have been uploaded to the [Pacific Data Hub](#) and tagged so they are readily searchable.

Collectively, the region has a comprehensive range of approaches and experiences that can be harnessed to strengthen the coverage and quality of inclusive education. Examples include:

- ▶ Model inclusion schools in Kiribati;
- ▶ Screening students for early identification of reading problems in FSM;
- ▶ Tokelau's Standards for Education, which outline requirements for quality inclusive education;
- ▶ Vanuatu's technical and vocational education and training (TVET) providers implementing disability inclusion action plans;
- ▶ Fiji's Education Management Information System (FEMIS) and its capacity to produce disability-disaggregated data across complex variables;
- ▶ Cook Islands' successful use of teaching assistants within the education workforce;
- ▶ Samoa's multi-sectoral Inclusive Education Reference Group;
- ▶ Sign language TV lessons for Deaf students in PNG;
- ▶ Solomon Islands' disability-inclusive education stakeholder consultation process in policy discussions;
- ▶ Niue's school partnership with the Ministry of Health for annual vision and hearing screening of students;

5. Efforts to involve French-speaking countries are ongoing.

- ▶ Tonga's financial support to enable youth from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds and outer islands to enrol in TVET schools;
- ▶ Tuvalu's adoption of a Disability Policy and progress towards a supportive policy framework for inclusive education;
- ▶ Improved attitudes towards children with disabilities in Nauru's schools through engagement with families;
- ▶ Palau's substantial budget provision enabling comprehensive support for inclusive education from preschool to high school;
- ▶ RMI's Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Programme, which identifies newborns and babies who are Deaf or hard of hearing and enables enrolment in the Early Intervention Programme.

Key findings and recommendations

This section provides summaries of key findings and related recommendations.

Access to education

Challenges in accessing quality education in the Pacific are related to factors such as gender, disability, remoteness, poverty, ethnicity, language, migration, sexual orientation and gender identity. These factors intertwine to form multi-faceted dimensions of exclusion experienced by some students.

While data was not collected on this during this mapping, emerging literature indicates that COVID-19 is likely to have exacerbated disadvantages, having caused school closures and interrupted learning for many students and had an economic impact on many families across the region.

National efforts to promote the rights of marginalized people are emerging but incomplete: of 15 responding countries, 11 reported that they had initiated processes to establish legislation relating to gender. Ten reported the same for disability and eight for ethnicity.

Marginalization experienced by learners with disabilities appears to be the most complex and compounding, with disproportionately lower numbers of students with disabilities enrolling and completing school in many countries across the Pacific region. National censuses and regional analysis indicate that individuals with disabilities are less likely to ever attend school, are more likely to be out of school and tend to have fewer years of education than people without disabilities. Additionally, people with disabilities are less likely to complete primary or secondary education and less likely to have basic literacy skills.

Given the well-established link between disability and poverty, it is vital that learners with disabilities are not further excluded from the lifelong and generational benefits that education brings.

▶ RECOMMENDATION 1:

Inclusive education policies and programmes, including COVID-19 recovery plans, must address the inclusion of students disadvantaged by various factors; however, increased and sustained efforts to meet the requirements of learners with disabilities must be assured.

▶ RECOMMENDATION 2:

Access to education must be promoted for all marginalized learners, in particular students with disabilities, through policies and strategies that enable this.

Inclusive education policy implementation

All countries have legislation that supports inclusive education and have or are developing policy frameworks that support disability-inclusive education. All have committed to inclusive education as it is broadly defined through international framework commitments and adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals.

► RECOMMENDATION 3:

Inclusive education policies require costed implementation plans, and these need significantly greater resourcing, activation and monitoring.

► RECOMMENDATION 4:

Inclusive education implementation plan priorities and strategies should be incorporated, resourced and monitored within education sector plans.

However, realities for students with disabilities in schools, which frequently lack an inclusive culture, suggest that wide gaps exist between policy aspirations and implementation. The majority of countries (10) reported that the culture of inclusion within schools fell short or far short of expectations. Only five countries reported that the culture of inclusion equalled expectations.

Policy implementation plans can be a central enabler of inclusive education by providing a clear outline of priorities for incorporation in wider education sector plans. Out of 15 country respondents, 14 reported that operational, strategic or business plans incorporated inclusive education in some way. These, however, require resourcing and monitoring. While funding for inclusive education is made available in the education budgets of 13 countries, this is insufficient, and 12 countries rely on development partners for financial support.

Inclusive education leadership

Across the region, responsibility for inclusive education is often held by a single officer within the education agency (ministry or department), with limited capacity and authority to work effectively with other divisions, ministries and stakeholders. In 12 countries, a single officer within the ministry of education manages inclusive education. In at least four of these countries, that officer has multiple other responsibilities.

A whole-of-sector approach, including planning and monitoring, is essential to enable inclusive education, including through the work of divisions such as human resources, curriculum and assessment, finance, infrastructure, information management systems and student support services. Coordination is most effective when underpinned by strong leadership.

► RECOMMENDATION 5:

Championing inclusive education and facilitating effective collaboration across the education sector should be undertaken by the highest levels of leadership within governments.

Workforce capacity to support inclusive education

Teacher aides or assistants can provide critical support to teachers in implementing inclusive education within classrooms. However, across the region, there are limitations on both their availability and their skills to fulfil their roles.

Teacher aides are part of the education workforce in 11 countries. None of these countries reported that teacher aides had sufficient skills in all required areas. Distribution of teacher aides across urban, rural and remote areas is mixed. Availability of teacher aides varies widely within and between countries. To ensure appropriate and priority allocation of teacher aides, there is a need for effective use of student data systems, particularly in relation to disability data, and school staffing formulae.

► RECOMMENDATION 6:

Governments must make trained teacher aides/assistants available to support teachers in classrooms where children with disabilities require them.

► RECOMMENDATION 7:

Pre-service and in-service training must enable teachers, teacher aides and school leaders to implement inclusive education competently and confidently, in a way that maximizes their positive wellbeing and safety from violence.

Teacher capacity with regard to differentiating national curricula and assessments to meet the needs of diverse students varies within and between countries. Inclusive education professional development for teachers, school leaders and teacher aides represents a challenge across the region. In-service training in inclusive education is available in all Pacific countries; however, delivery is limited, and it is compulsory in only half of the countries. Coverage varies widely, with as little as 0.05% (Vanuatu) to as much as 90% (Tokelau) of the teaching workforce having ever participated in in-service training in inclusive education.

Within pre-service and in-service teacher training in universities and colleges, provision of mandatory inclusive education courses also varies. It is mandatory in 10 countries for teachers to complete a pre-service module in special or inclusive education.

Information regarding professional development related to wellbeing and psychosocial support for children was not reported. And yet this is essential to promote positive school experiences for all children, including those with disabilities. In addition, training in identifying and reporting violence, abuse and neglect of children is critical, noting the particular vulnerability of those with disabilities.

Strengthening access, learning outcomes, retention and transition

Early childhood development (ECD) is an important enabler of the healthy development of children from birth to six years of age. Effective ECD requires the involvement of stakeholders across multiple sectors, including health, nutrition, protection and education. Parents and caregivers are important providers of support to children, particularly in the early years. ECD systems across the Pacific region are still emerging, with five countries reporting that they are in the process of establishing or developing these.

ECD incorporates early detection and intervention. Early detection mechanisms can support early identification of disability among young children, and early intervention services can support their development. ECD can help children develop the skills they need to take part in everyday activities, including early childhood education (ECE) and school. Early intervention services are available in 10 of the respondent Pacific countries, although the often-limited services are in many cases available only in large towns, perhaps reflecting their high cost. Services are more developed in countries that have historical links to, and receive funding from, New Zealand or the USA.

ECE is a critical ECD strategy and is an important enabler of transition into primary school for all children; it is particularly important for children with disabilities. Inclusive ECE systems are still being established across the Pacific region. Of the respondent countries, 12 (80%) reported that they were developing or establishing inclusive ECE services and 11 (73%) that they supported children with disabilities to transition from ECE to primary school.

► RECOMMENDATION 8: Strengthen national integrated ECD systems for children from birth to school age, which involve parents and caregivers, to maximize the health and development of all children, in particular those with disabilities, enable their access to ECE and optimize opportunities for their transition into inclusive primary schooling.

► RECOMMENDATION 9:

Develop, validate and implement early detection mechanisms and interventions to ensure learning and development for children with disabilities are supported from the foundation years.

► RECOMMENDATION 10:

Improve access to ECE for all students by establishing policies, training teachers, strengthening ECE coordination and improving classroom practices to optimize learning for all children, including those with disabilities.

► RECOMMENDATION 11:

Curricula must be accompanied by guidance to support teachers, teacher aides and school leaders to adapt lessons and differentiate teaching approaches so that everyone in a classroom can learn.

► RECOMMENDATION 12:

Policies and processes must be in place to guide adaptation of exams and assessments and provision of reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities who need them, and ministries and schools must be trained in their implementation.

► RECOMMENDATION 13:

The use of IEPs with students with disabilities who need them should be guided by policies and supported by training for teachers and teacher aides.

► RECOMMENDATION 14:

National governments and civil society organizations, as well as regional and bilateral development partners, must increase the emphasis and resourcing to support retention, re-engage out-of-school students and build pathways between education and TVET for marginalized students.

Countries that support inclusive ECE use strategies that could inform practices across the region, including establishment of an inclusive ECE policy (Kiribati), training of ECE teachers in inclusive approaches (PNG), strengthening of the ECE coordination unit (Tonga) and the use of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) to guide and monitor progress of ECE students with disabilities (Palau).

Inclusive delivery of curricula and assessments is essential to enable retention and learning outcomes for all children. All learners have the right to the same curriculum, and the curriculum and assessment must be responsive and accessible to a diverse range of learners.

Thirteen countries reported that they were in the process of developing and establishing inclusive curricula. Twelve reported the same for assessment processes. Several countries reported that, generally, teachers lacked the knowledge, understanding and ability to adapt lessons to suit the learning needs of children with different type of disabilities. National assessments cater for children with disabilities if exams authorities are notified but this process is not always well utilized.

IEPs record student strengths as well as their learning goals, strategies and assessment plans. In 14 countries, IEPs are used to support the learning of students with disabilities, although in some countries this practice is largely in special schools and use in mainstream schools is nascent. IEPs are critical in supporting learning outcomes for some students with disabilities.

Children with disabilities experience a disproportionate risk of dropping out of school at the end of primary school, and are less likely than others to complete secondary school and move on to post-school education and training. Thirteen countries (87%) reported that further measures were required to improve school retention and address the problem of out-of-school children.

For disadvantaged learners, success in transitioning through education pathways and on to higher education, skills and employment varies widely within and between countries. The most common post-school training options accessible to students with disabilities across the Pacific are TVET and literacy and numeracy and/or life skills training. However, where access to these was rated positively, it was more likely to be ranked “somewhat good” rather than “extremely good,” suggesting there is still work to be done to improve access. Bridging courses are the least available post-school training options.

► **RECOMMENDATION 15:** Reasonable accommodations and assistive technologies should be mandated in policy and funding made available for their application in schools to enable equitable curriculum delivery and assessment.

► **RECOMMENDATION 16:** Policies, programmes and budgets should prioritize learners with disabilities who are particularly marginalized, including Deaf children. In countries where an agreed sign language is not present, government should work with Deaf people and their representative groups (OPDs) to develop sign language and train teachers and teacher aides in this.

► **RECOMMENDATION 17:** Education and health authorities should establish agreements and costed plans that enable children with disabilities to access on- and off-campus specialist support services.

► **RECOMMENDATION 18:** Incorporate strategies for reaching people in rural and remote areas in education policies and plans, and resource and monitor these by disaggregating data by geographical location.

Educating a diverse range of learners

In some Pacific countries, learners with certain disability types may experience greater barriers to education. Reasonable accommodations are mandated by policy to enable school participation in all countries, although their availability varies. Lower-cost accommodations, such as adaptations to classroom seating, lesson plans or activities, are more widely available than more costly assistive technologies and personal assistance.

Assistive technologies are a pre-condition for inclusive education for many children with disabilities. However, availability of these is limited, with approximately half of the countries reporting that assistive devices and adapted learning materials are not generally available in schools, and a further quarter that these are available in special schools but not in mainstream schools.

Services to support learners with diverse disability types range in their availability. For example, Deaf children are less likely to have access to school compared with others. Where an agreed sign language is not available, for example in Tonga and Vanuatu, many Deaf and hard-of-hearing children are unable to participate in or benefit from school at all.

Learning outcomes for students with diverse disabilities are maximized by availability of and access to specialists.⁶ Many Pacific nations are small and do not have access to a range of specialists in-country. Where these are available, they are generally available through the ministries of education and health, although in some countries (e.g. Cook Islands and Niue) some highly specialized personnel are made available through visits by international specialists supported by New Zealand.

Of the 15 countries, 14 (93%) reported that the referral system was challenging. Enabling access to and participation in education for students with diverse disabilities requires ministries of education and health to work together to plan, allocate funding, build a workforce of personnel with qualifications in priority specializations and/or identify external – sometimes international – sources of specialist support.

In many countries, educating students in remote areas and outer islands is an enormous challenge. Resources for the effective decentralization of education and its administration are frequently scant, meaning people in rural and remote locations must relocate or miss out on school. Policies, plans, human and financial resource allocations and monitoring systems frequently miss geographically marginalized people.

While all respondent countries reported the presence of strategies to support the engagement of rural and remote learners, two (Solomon Islands and Vanuatu) highlighted the extent of this challenge. This may be because of the particularly wide spread of the populations of these two countries across large archipelagos, combined with limited access to resources to address the challenges.

6. Examples include sign language interpreters, Braille teachers, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, educational psychology, speech therapy, teacher aides, etc.

► RECOMMENDATION 19:

Cross-sectoral inclusive education coordination mechanisms are critical for inclusive education, including ECD, and must have multi-sectoral representation and a commitment from respective jurisdictions and agencies to collaboratively develop and implement required actions.

► RECOMMENDATION 20:

Inclusive education working groups should enable meaningful cooperation between governments, communities, parents, civil society, faith-based organizations and OPDs to raise awareness, implement activities and strengthen referral systems to support inclusive education by building coalitions that harness the strengths of all stakeholders.

Multi-sector coordination to promote inclusive education

Governments, communities, civil society and faith-based organizations play an important role in education. Inclusive education and ECD require multi-sectoral efforts involving health, social welfare, internal affairs, transport, infrastructure, women's and children's affairs, law and education. Both inclusive education and ECD are more effective in countries where services in these sectors are resourced and have clear strategies, and where they are integrated through collaborative multi-sector networks.

Eleven countries (73%) reported that they had established cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms to support inclusive education, or were in the process of doing so. These include working groups, taskforces or steering committees that enable a system for coordination among government departments, set out clear responsibilities and, as a result, enable children to access multi-disciplinary services. In some countries, these groups exist but need reactivating. Almost all countries (93%) reported that coordination measures were in place between national and sub-national authorities.

Partnerships between education ministries and civil society organizations such as OPDs can raise community awareness of the rights of everyone to education, generate demand for inclusive education and link students to support networks and services.

Safe and accessible inclusive education

Violence against children in school settings can include exposure to verbal, emotional, sexual and physical abuse from a teacher, school personnel or peer; corporal punishment; adult–child relationships; sexual harassment; and online or in-person bullying. Both girls and boys can be affected.

Two countries reported that they had child protection or safeguarding policies, and seven are in the process of developing these. Seven countries reported that they were in the process of developing procedures to prevent and address violence against children in schools, and seven countries reported that they had moved a step beyond this, towards the establishment of child protection procedures.

Bullying is governed by national legislation, policies or handbooks in six countries, while schools in three countries are required to develop their own bullying policies. In four countries, there are no policy provisions and few school-based processes to eliminate or address bullying.

Gender-based violence was found to be moderately well covered by policies, with nine countries reporting that policies were in place to prevent gender-based violence. This study did not collect information on processes and procedures for ensuring safety and reporting gender-based violence.

Twelve countries (80%) reported that they were at the beginning stages of initiating accessible schools and developing the standards to guide these. Three have national guidelines already in place. Schools in countries across the region are somewhat likely to have accessible handwashing and sanitation

► RECOMMENDATION 21: Develop child protection policies and procedures to eliminate and respond to violence against children, bullying and gender-based violence, and support schools to implement these.

► RECOMMENDATION 22:

Develop and implement standards to ensure schools are accessible, safe and gender-sensitive, with a focus on water, sanitation and hygiene facilities.

► RECOMMENDATION 23:

Develop sector- and school-based inclusive disaster preparedness plans.

► RECOMMENDATION 24:

Governments should strengthen efforts to collect and utilize disaggregated data for inclusion more effectively within data systems to inform education sector planning, resource allocation, service delivery and monitoring.

► RECOMMENDATION 25:

Disaggregation variables should include factors such as disability, gender, rural/remote, ethnicity, socio-economic status, health and other variables specific to contextual factors of exclusion. This disaggregation should be utilized to monitor standard education indicators, such as enrolment, attendance and learning outcomes.

► RECOMMENDATION 26:

Data systems should collect information on available support in school, accessibility of the school environment and transportation, and provision of reasonable accommodations for exams and assessment.

► RECOMMENDATION 27:

Countries must be supported in considering and implementing recommendations arising from regional efforts, as well as sharing and learning from each others' wealth of experiences and practices.

facilities but less likely to have accessible menstrual hygiene management facilities. Accessible water, sanitation and hygiene facilities are a pre-condition for inclusive education, and very important in reducing the transmission of diseases such as COVID-19.

Cook Islands, Palau, RMI and Tokelau all reported that all or most of their schools were accessible and safe facilities. Interestingly, these four countries have specific funding arrangements with the governments of New Zealand and the USA, which may account for this.

Reflecting the high risk of disasters across the region, the data indicates that inclusive school disaster response plans are in place in most or all schools in eight countries. These are critical, given the highly disaster-prone nature of the region.

Evidence-based planning and monitoring to support inclusive education

Data collection and monitoring for inclusion are critical to enable equitable resource allocation, including grant disbursement to schools for education support and adjustments. In 12 countries (80%), disability is captured in the EMIS, and many countries in the region are developing increasingly sophisticated EMIS that are capable of multi-variable analysis. However, disaggregated data is rarely connected to finance and resource allocation systems and frequently does not inform the monitoring of inclusive education policy implementation.

Regional mechanisms to support inclusive education

This report recognizes many promising practices occurring across the region, and forums that enable countries to share and learn from each other are highly valuable. Regional mechanisms can facilitate access to useful technical information and resources. However, change happens at the national level. For example, the work of the Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Taskforce has resulted in this mapping report but support will be needed to assist countries to consider and implement recommendations at the national level.

Pacific leaders have called for the transitioning of the Pacific Regional Council on Early Childhood Care and Education (PRCECCE) to a more multi-sectoral Pacific Regional Council for ECD, with ECD focal points in each country. PIFS has been working with ECD stakeholders across the Pacific to encourage the establishment of these roles. A regional focus on ECD has promoted its importance and perhaps contributed to support for ECD in at least five countries (Cook Islands, FSM, Palau, PNG, Solomon Islands); however, generally, ECD systems across the Pacific region are still emerging.

Introduction

In accordance with the Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF) rolling implementation plan, UNICEF Pacific supported a review of inclusive education policies, efforts, good practices and lessons learnt across the region. This work was undertaken under guidance of the Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Taskforce.⁷

The objectives of this review were to:

- ▶ Take stock of the status of and approaches to inclusive education in the Pacific;
- ▶ Launch a regional discussion on good practices, priorities and lessons learnt to date on inclusive education with the aim of informing next steps for inclusive education in the Pacific.

In addition, the review sought to generate and share knowledge and experiences to date so as to inform policy development, programming, advocacy and partnerships to advance quality inclusive education for all learners in Pacific Island Countries. This includes through national, cross-country and regional action.

Participating countries were **Cook Islands, Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.**⁸

This report presents the methodological approach, findings and recommendations arising from the review and discusses multiple issues that could constrain or compromise quality inclusive education.

As directed by the Pacific Heads of Education Systems (PHES) in their 2019 meeting, the review reflects the understanding that inclusive education covers all learners.⁹ As such, it considers various factors that challenge inclusivity in education, including gender, remote and rural locations, economic hardship, ethnicity and language, and health and wellbeing. This is in line with General Comment No. 4 on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) Article 24 (Education), which was released in 2016 and understands inclusive education as a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all children, youth and adults.¹⁰

It is important to note that much of the data collected from national and regional stakeholders highlights an implicit perception and operationalization of inclusive education focused on learners with disabilities. The tendency for respondents to focus on disability-inclusive education most likely mirrors a stronger focus on students with disabilities in the implementation of inclusive education across the Pacific region.

7. Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Taskforce members include representatives of UNICEF Pacific; the Department of Education, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM); the Department of Education, Niue; the Pacific Community (SPC); the Pacific Disability Forum (PDF); the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS); the Australia Pacific Training Coalition (APTC); UNESCO; The University of the South Pacific (USP); and the Secretariat of the SPC.

8. Efforts to involve French-speaking countries are ongoing.

9. UNESCO Office for Pacific States (2019) Outcome Document. 23rd Consultation of PHES, Niue, 22–26 April.

10. UNESCO (2020) *Inclusion and Education: All Means All*. Global Education Monitoring Report 2020. Paris: UNESCO.

Methodology

Principles

Participants at an inception workshop for the review agreed on three principles to guide the research:

1. A strengths-based approach, focusing on identification and collection of good practices;
2. Consideration of inclusive education as inclusive of people who are marginalized owing to a range of factors, including gender, disability, age, ethnicity, rural/remote location, etc.;
3. The need for analysis of the availability of pre-conditions to inclusive education, including assistive technology, social protection, accessibility, sign language and support services.

Approaches

The review methodology used a variety of approaches and activities, as summarized below.

Literature review

The literature review included a wide range of international, regional and country-specific literature, listed in the bibliography. Key documents were uploaded on the Pacific Data Hub to facilitate dissemination and learning. To find country-based datasets, go to <https://pacificdata.org/data/group> and select the group named Pacific Inclusive Education.

Literature included regional and national policies, legislation and frameworks; peer-reviewed literature; annual strategies, plans and reports; regional and country statistical reports including education statistics; programme monitoring and evaluation reports; Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) and CRPD monitoring reports; UNICEF country situation analyses; disability monographs; censuses and household surveys, including Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) reports; specific reports on assistive technologies and perspectives from Deaf people in the Pacific; and community and other relevant stories.

Engagement with national inclusive education focal points

Within each of the 15 countries, national inclusive education focal points, most of whom sit within ministries or departments of education, were contacted and invited to support data collection. Their roles included:

- ▶ Complete Survey A (together with national government disability focal points and Organization of Persons with Disabilities (OPD) representatives), including identifying and uploading documents;
- ▶ Identify and coordinate with key informants for Survey B;
- ▶ Facilitate a workshop or meeting, using the facilitation guidelines, to enable multi-sectoral discussion and collective completion of Survey B;
- ▶ Provide feedback on the draft report and country profile.

Surveys

Three online surveys were developed in alignment with CRPD General Comment No. 4, and in response to priorities outlined by the Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Taskforce at the review inception workshop.

Survey A focused on overarching information regarding inclusive education policies, legislation, resources and approaches in each country. Each of the 15 inclusive education focal points was invited to complete this together with the national government disability focal point and an OPD representative.

Survey B: A group of multi-sectoral stakeholders in each country was convened to report on progress in inclusive education in line with CRPD General Comment No. 4. Survey B drew heavily on the theoretical framework developed for the UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO) Review and Roadmap of Disability-Inclusive Education Programming in East Asia and Pacific Region.¹¹ The framework was adapted to fit contextual terminology and issues prioritized by the Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Taskforce, notably an expanded definition of inclusive education to include all marginalized learners.

Each of the 15 inclusive education focal points was invited and supported to lead workshops, within which open discussions regarding survey questions were held and consensus responses identified through reflections, sharing and discussion regarding efforts, challenges, policies, research, resources and priorities for expanding quality inclusive education.

Each workshop was guided by facilitation guidelines that provided detailed information or “descriptors” for the response categories for many of the survey questions (see Figure 1 for an illustration of the detailed tables provided throughout this report). Discussions were documented to capture the range of views, providing background information to the final consensus rating for many of the survey questions.

FIGURE 1: Descriptors for Survey B are indicated throughout this report in coloured tables

	PROGRESS INDICATORS			
	Initiating	Developing	Establishing	Championing
Legislation on equity (disability)	There is no equity legislation that clearly establishes the rights of persons with disabilities.	The government is reviewing all legislation related to persons with disabilities and/or developing new legislation to ensure equity for people with disabilities in all aspects of society and compliance with the CRPD.	The government has established overarching equity legislation that is compliant with the CRPD.	The government has enacted and is implementing equity legislation that is compliant with the CRPD.
Legislation on equity (gender)	There is no legislation that clearly establishes gender equity.	The government is reviewing all legislation related to gender and/or developing new legislation to ensure gender equity in all aspects of society and compliance with CEDAW.	The government has established overarching equity legislation that is compliant with CEDAW.	The government has enacted and is implementing equity legislation that is compliant with CEDAW.

11. UNICEF EAPRO (2021) Education for Every Ability: Review and Roadmap of Disability-Inclusive Education Programming in East Asia and Pacific Region.

In addition to meeting the objectives of the mapping, the workshops sought to provide a platform for countries to progress or review progress on inclusive education policy implementation plans and to guide the way forward. Key informants for Survey B varied across countries, and included representatives of the following:

- ▶ Ministries of education, health, women, children, social welfare/affairs, internal affairs and/or justice, sport and wellbeing;
- ▶ Government disability focal points;
- ▶ Government gender focal points;
- ▶ OPDs;
- ▶ Non-government organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs) and faith-based organizations (FBOs) working in education;
- ▶ Mainstream schools;
- ▶ Special schools;
- ▶ Teacher training Institutions
- ▶ Technical and vocational training and education (TVET) providers;
- ▶ Parents/guardians/carers of learners with disabilities;
- ▶ Service providers – early intervention, disability services, social welfare services;
- ▶ Development partners (donors);
- ▶ Coordination of focal points for disability and/or inclusive education and/or early childhood development (ECD).

Survey C: Recognizing the important contribution regional organizations make to shaping inclusive education across the Pacific, regional stakeholders were invited to complete a survey on strengths, challenges and critical issues in inclusive education. Twelve regional agencies and civil society partners participated: the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Australia Pacific Training Coalition (APTC), Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), the Pacific Disability Forum (PDF), the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS), Save the Children, the Pacific Community Educational Quality and Assessment Programme (SPC EQAP), UNESCO, UNICEF, The University of the South Pacific (USP) and the World Bank.

Review of draft report

The report was drafted and feedback from regional and national inclusive education stakeholder leads incorporated before finalization.



Findings

Findings combine results from the surveys and literature review and are presented in alignment with the five priority areas of the Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Framework (PRIEF). Each of the five sections below includes:

- ▶ A box outlining the intent and purpose of the respective PRIEF priority area: this content is not from this study, and is provided here to facilitate awareness of the content of the PRIEF and enable links between PRIEF and the findings from this study.
- ▶ Headline findings from this study, which note trends, progress and achievements across the region.

PRIEF Priority 1:

Enabling Policies and Legislation

Results in this section incorporate data on issues related to PRIEF Priority 1, outlined in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2: PRIEF Priority 1

0.1 Intent

All learners' right to quality inclusive education is supported by legislation and/or policy. Children with disabilities or at risk of being excluded are identified through referral or screening processes and receive timely access to appropriate services, including early intervention, through a system that does not stigmatize or alienate.

0.2 Purpose

In order to enact education-related commitments to human rights treaties, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, governments must have laws that support fulfilment of these rights. An implementation plan for inclusive education needs to be aligned with existing legislation and/or policy and approved by relevant government ministry.

Children with disabilities and children at risk of exclusion need to be identified and provided with streamlined, holistic services within a reasonable timeframe. These services can include early intervention programmes, use of referral systems to seek support, rehabilitation, medical interventions and provision of assistive devices and technologies to assist with active and quality participation in education. Such services will be provided in a manner that does not label, stigmatize or in any way alienate a learner or their family from their classroom, school or community.

Headline findings

- ▶ Educational access for students with disabilities varies from purely inclusive settings to purely segregated settings. Five countries offer a combination of inclusive, integrated and segregated options.
- ▶ All countries have legislation that supports inclusive education, and 11 countries have or are developing policy frameworks that support disability-inclusive education. However, there is a gap between policy and practice. Inclusive education implementation plans need greater human and financial resourcing, activation and monitoring.
- ▶ Resources are available for inclusive education in the education budgets of 13 countries to some extent; however, there is strong reliance on development partners for financial support.
- ▶ Data systems for inclusive education are improving; however, in many countries data is not being used to effectively inform planning, resource allocation and monitoring.
- ▶ Disability identification has relied on diagnostic specialists but, increasingly, some countries are developing systems based on teacher observations of student functional status; this does not replace the need for specialists but mitigates a long-standing resourcing problem.
- ▶ Early intervention services are available in less than half of Pacific countries; perhaps reflecting their high cost, services are more developed in countries that have historical links to, and receive funding from, New Zealand or the USA.
- ▶ Approximately half of the countries reported that assistive devices and adapted learning materials were not generally available in schools, and a further quarter of countries that these were available in special schools but not in mainstream schools.
- ▶ Thirteen countries (87%) reported that further measures to improve school retention and address the problem of out-of-school children were required.

Country representatives were invited to rate their current status in relation to legislation, policies, standards and systems that enable inclusive education. Table 1 outlines the indicators that countries were invited to consider.

TABLE 1: Progress indicators for inclusive education legislation, policies, plans and standards

	PROGRESS INDICATORS			
	Initiating	Developing	Establishing	Championing
Legislation on equity (disability)	There is no equity legislation that clearly establishes the rights of persons with disabilities.	The government is reviewing all legislation related to persons with disabilities and/or developing new legislation to ensure equity for people with disabilities in all aspects of society and compliance with the CRPD.	The government has established overarching equity legislation that is compliant with the CRPD.	The government has enacted and is implementing equity legislation that is compliant with the CRPD.
Legislation on equity (gender)	There is no legislation that clearly establishes gender equity.	The government is reviewing all legislation related to gender and/or developing new legislation to ensure gender equity in all aspects of society and compliance with CEDAW.	The government has established overarching equity legislation that is compliant with CEDAW.	The government has enacted and is implementing equity legislation that is compliant with CEDAW.
Legislation on equity (ethnicity)	There is no legislation that clearly establishes equity for all ethnicities.	The government is reviewing all legislation related to ethnicity and/or developing new legislation to ensure equity for all ethnicities in all aspects of society and compliance with United Nations Conventions.	The government has established overarching equity legislation regarding ethnicity that is compliant with United Nations conventions.	The government has enacted and is implementing equity legislation regarding ethnicity which is compliant with United Nations conventions.
Legislation on inclusive education	There is no law that specifically establishes the right of marginalized learners to education.	The government is developing legislation to establish the rights of marginalized learners to education.	There is legislation establishing the right of all to receive an education, with an explicit mention of marginalized learners.	The government has enacted and is implementing legislation that establishes the rights of all learners to access education regardless of disability status, gender, ethnicity or other marginalizing factors, alongside other learners.
Policy on inclusive education	There is no national policy that specifically establishes the right of marginalized learners to education.	The government is developing a national policy (or policies) to operationalize the rights of marginalized learners to education.	National policies exist that establish the right of all learners to receive an education, with an explicit mention of marginalized learners.	The government has enacted and is implementing national policies that establish the rights of all learners to access education regardless of disability status, gender, ethnicity or other marginalizing factors, alongside other learners.
Implementation plan on inclusive education	Discussions are ongoing regarding the development of a national action plan or implementation plan for inclusive education.	There is an education sector plan that refers to inclusion but does not include specific strategies to support the inclusion of marginalized learners in schools.	The national government has in place an education sector plan that includes specific strategies to support the inclusion of marginalized learners in schools.	The national government has in place an inclusive education policy implementation plan that outlines strategies to support action at ministry, sub-national and school levels to promote inclusive education.

TABLE 1: Progress indicators for inclusive education legislation, policies, plans and standards

	PROGRESS INDICATORS			
	Initiating	Developing	Establishing	Championing
Equitable financing and resource allocation	Government allocates human or financial resources to support inclusive education but not both.	The government allocates human and financial resources to support inclusive education but the allocation is inadequate to support action at both the ministry and school levels.	The government allocates adequate human and financial resources to support inclusive education at ministry and school levels.	The government allocates adequate human and financial resources to support inclusive education at ministry and school levels, and the amount increases each year.
Capacity of government and institutions	No capacity-building related to inclusive education takes place.	Some capacity-building related to inclusive education takes place but it is ad hoc and not aligned with national action or implementation plans or the CRPD.	Some capacity-building related to inclusive education takes place, and it is aligned with national action or implementation plans or the CRPD.	The government allocates annual funding for capacity-building related to inclusive education, in alignment with national action or implementation plans and the CRPD.
Competency standards for teachers	Discussions are taking place on reviewing/developing professional competency standards for teachers to ensure alignment with inclusion and equity principles.	Professional competency standards for teachers are under review or development to ensure they incorporate inclusion and equity principles.	The ministry of education has reformed its national professional competency standards for teachers to embed the principles of equity and inclusion.	The country has established and is implementing professional competency standards for teachers that incorporate the principles of inclusion and equity.
Competency standards for school leaders	Discussions are taking place on reviewing/developing professional competency standards for school leaders to ensure alignment with inclusion and equity principles.	Professional competency standards for school leaders are under review or development to ensure they incorporate inclusion and equity principles.	The ministry of education has reformed its national professional competency standards for school leaders to embed the principles of equity and inclusion.	The country has established and is implementing professional competency standards for school leaders that incorporate the principles of inclusion and equity.

Access to education

Challenges in accessing quality education in the Pacific are related to factors such as gender, disability, remoteness, poverty, ethnicity, language, migration, sexual orientation and gender identity. These factors are intertwined to form multi-faceted dimensions of exclusion experienced by some students.

A range of barriers can restrict access to education. These can include stigmatizing social norms and negative attitudes; limited teacher capacity resulting from limited training; barriers in the built environment; institutional barriers such as restrictive legislation, policies and resource allocation; and lack of government commitment.¹² While data was not collected on this during this mapping, emerging literature indicates that COVID-19 is likely to have exacerbated disadvantages, having caused school closures and interrupted learning for many students and had an economic impact on many families across the region.¹³ Countries reported the options available for education of students with disabilities within the following non-exclusive categories:

- ▶ Inclusive education (education within mainstream school classrooms);
- ▶ Integrated (special classrooms in mainstream schools);
- ▶ Special school (including segregated schools, or segregated institutes for vocational training);
- ▶ No enrolment available for learners with disabilities.

Three countries reported that education of students with disabilities was entirely within inclusive education settings (**Niue, Tokelau and Vanuatu**); five countries had inclusive, integrated and special school settings (**FSM, Fiji, PNG, RMI and Tuvalu**); three countries reported both inclusive and integrated settings (**Cook Islands, Palau and Tonga**); three countries had inclusive and special education (**Kiribati, Nauru and Samoa**); and **Solomon Islands** reported the availability of only special schools as an option for students with disabilities.

Disproportionately lower numbers of students with disabilities enrol in and complete school across the Pacific region, which is in line with the situation in other low- and middle-income countries globally. UNESCO has used data from 49 countries between 2005 and 2015 to explore educational disparities between individuals with and without disabilities. This shows that individuals with disabilities are less likely to ever attend school, are more likely to be out of school and tend to have fewer years of education than people without disabilities. Additionally, people with disabilities are less likely to complete primary or secondary education and less likely to have basic literacy skills.¹⁴

Censuses in **Kiribati, Palau and Samoa** indicate that persons with disabilities **are substantially less likely to have ever attended school, are less likely to have completed secondary or tertiary education and have lower rates of literacy** compared with persons without disabilities (see Table 2). This is consistent with data from other countries in the region. The **Solomon Islands** Ministry of Education, for example, has estimated that less than 2% of children with disabilities are in school.¹⁵

12. Sharma, U., Armstrong, A.C., Merumeru, L., Simi, J. and Yared, H. (2018) Addressing Barriers to Implementing Inclusive Education in the Pacific. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*.

13. SPC (2021) Pacific Community Warns of Threat to Education Retention in the Wake of COVID-19.

14. UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2018) *Education and Disability: Analysis of Data from 49 Countries*.

15. Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development Solomon Islands (2013) National Education Action Plan 2013–2015.

In 2009, it was estimated that less than 10% of children with disabilities in the Pacific region had access to any form of education.¹⁶ However, with population datasets (Washington Group question sets) increasingly using a validated means of disability disaggregation of census data, data from the current censuses (Table 2) indicates that this may have been an underestimation.

The Pacific is a very heterogeneous region and comparable datasets from a wider variety of countries are required before it will be possible to provide an updated regional estimate. This is increasingly possible with more Pacific surveys using Washington Group questions. Nonetheless, **the gap in access, progression to higher levels and literacy rates is striking.**

In **Kiribati**, the adjusted net attendance rate (ANAR)¹⁷ among students without functional difficulties was 98% in primary and 81% in junior secondary. Among students with functional difficulties, ANAR was 91% in primary and 64% in junior secondary. The out-of-school rate for students with disabilities was 3% in primary and 15% in junior secondary, compared with 1% and 4% for students without disabilities. The primary completion rate was 97% for students without disabilities, compared with 87% for students with disabilities.¹⁸

Preliminary results from **Fiji's** MICS 2021 indicate that 8.8% of children aged 2–17 met the criteria for functional difficulties (a proxy for disability). Learning achievement among children with disabilities was significantly lower than for children without. As a proportion of children with foundational skills without disabilities, the percentage of children with foundational skills among children with disabilities was 76% for reading age and 55% for numeracy age.¹⁹

In **Vanuatu**, among 10–19 year olds, the gap in primary school attainment is more than 53 percentage points between children with and without disability (57% females; 51% males).²⁰ There is a steady decline in numbers of children with disabilities enrolled from early grades to Class 12, with peaks in dropout occurring after Grade 6 and again after Grade 10.

The **Tonga** Disability Survey 2018 shows that, of 5–17 year olds, 6.6% of those with disabilities have ever attended school, compared with 36.1% of children without disabilities.²¹ Data from the **Tonga** 2016 Population and Housing Census shows roughly comparable net attendance ratios for primary school-aged children with and without disabilities but a significantly lower level for students with disabilities at secondary school.²²

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) has reported a drop of 52.7% across the Asia Pacific region in numbers of children attending secondary school compared with primary school.²³ As Figure 3 shows, the four Pacific countries in the report have higher drops than the average. In **FSM** and **Samoa**, the proportionate drop among students in special schools is significantly less than in mainstream schools.

16. PIFS (2009) *Pacific Regional Strategy on Disability*.

17. ANAR measures the percentage of children of a given age who are attending an education level compatible with their age or attending a higher education level.

18. Kiribati Ministry of Education and UNICEF (2021) Kiribati Education Fact Sheets 2021.

19. Fiji Bureau of Statistics (2021) Fact Sheet: Preliminary Findings of the Fiji Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2021 (MICS).

20. UNICEF Pacific and Vanuatu National Statistical Office (2014) Children, Women and Men with Disabilities in Vanuatu: What Do the Data Say?

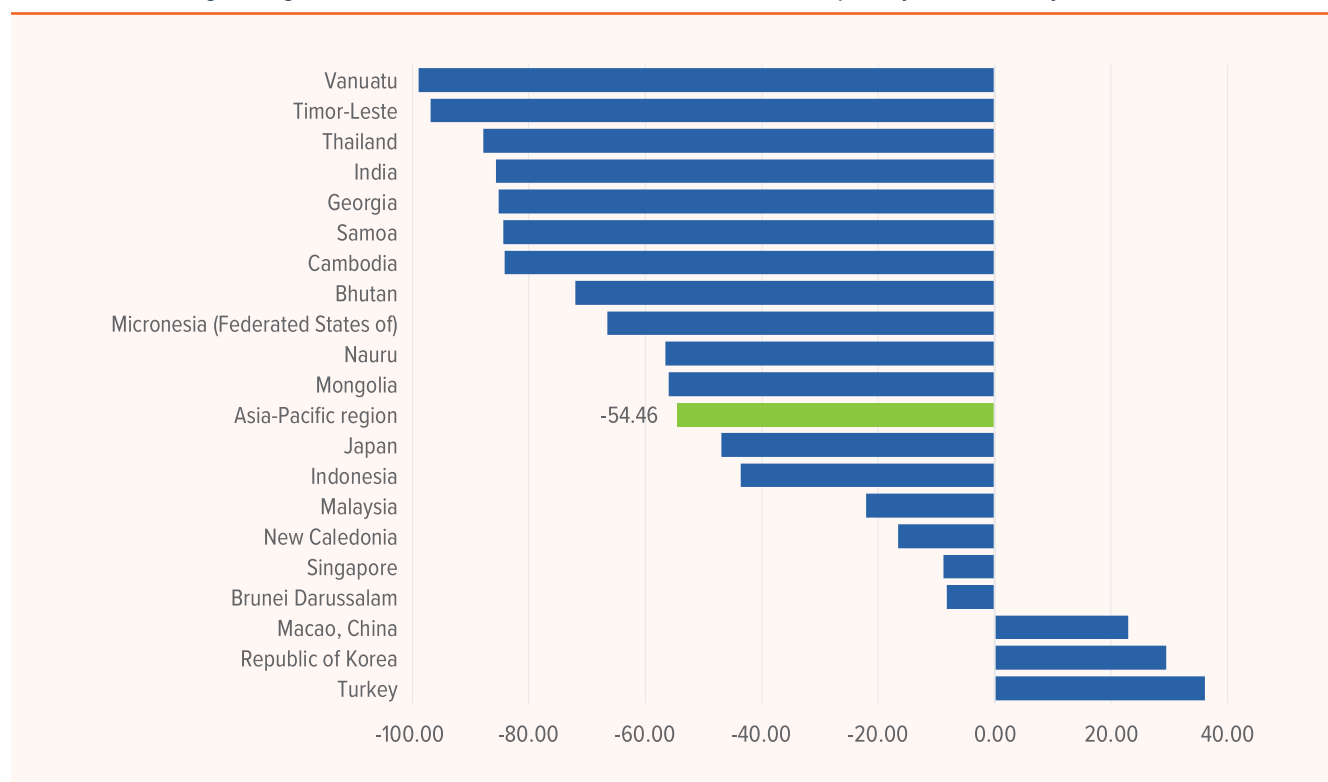
21. Tonga Statistics Department (2018) Tonga Disability Survey Report.

22. Tonga Statistics Department (2016) *Disability in Tonga: Analysis of the Situation of People with Disability Based on the 2016 Population and Housing Census*.

23. UNESCAP (2018) Building Disability-Inclusive Societies in Asia and the Pacific – Assessing Progress of the Incheon Strategy.

TABLE 2: Educational attainment and literacy rates, by disability status, based on census data using the 18–49 age bracket

	DISABILITY STATUS	HIGHEST LEVEL ATTAINED				LITERACY RATES (READING/WRITING)
		NEVER BEEN TO SCHOOL	PRIMARY SCHOOL	SECONDARY SCHOOL	HIGHER EDUCATION	
Samoa (2016) 18–49 years	With disability	17.1	18.1	44.4	10.3	51.3/48.9
	Without	0.6	6.8	67.9	24.0	97.3/94.5
Palau (2015) 18–49 years	With disability	23.3	20.6	46.6	8.2	48.0/48.0
	Without	1.3	4.7	48.8	45.2	98.6/98.6
Kiribati (2015) 18–49 years	With disability	13.7	10.6	25.4	3.2	64.9
	Without	3.8	5.7	50.8	3.9	83.6

FIGURE 3: Percentage change in the number of students with disabilities enrolled in primary and secondary education

PROMISING PRACTICE

Tokelau Standards for Education

Indicators embedded in the Standards for Education on Tokelau 2014 highlight the inclusion of inclusive education within the Standards: student progress for students with special needs is measured through standard student achievement measures as well as through progress in relation to Individual Education Plans, where relevant; parents of children with special needs are involved in decision-making regarding their child's programme, monitoring and assessment; buildings and facilities are easy to access; planning documents show differentiated work for students; there is evidence of assistive technology for students with special needs to access the curriculum.

Legislation, policies, plans and standards

Legislation, policies, plans and standards related to inclusive education vary widely across the region. Table 3 lists these by country, along with implementation plans and the ratifications of the most relevant UN conventions, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Linked to the processes related to signing and ratifying the conventions, many countries have worked hard to develop and pass legislation and create regulations that enable fulfilment of the convention obligations. As Figure 4 demonstrates, approximately 70% of countries have enacted legislation that is compliant with CEDAW, the CRC and the CRPD, or their governments are in the process of reviewing all related legislation to ensure compliance. **Nauru** is still in the process of reviewing the CRPD as a step towards developing disability legislation, despite having ratified it in 2012. **PNG** currently has draft legislation on disability that reportedly addresses gender and ethnicity. **Samoa** ratified the CRPD but does not yet have disability legislation. However, **Samoa** does have a national disability policy and has conducted a legislative review of compliance towards the CRPD.

Fiji reported that, while it has legislation and policy related to gender, this only addresses women and girls and does not provide safeguards for the male child and other gender identities and sexual orientations. This issue was also raised by participants in the **Nauru** survey workshop, who noted that bullying in schools was inhibiting attendance of students with non-binary gender identities. Participants from **Fiji** reported that equity in relation to ethnicity had been difficult to measure since the removal of ethnic initiatives and mechanisms for capturing this data. Additionally, while **Fiji's** inclusive education policy settings are strong in relation to disability, participants noted there were no clear policies focused on other types of marginalized learners.

Standards related to inclusive education exist in all countries to varying degrees. These include standards for a range of areas such as schools, exams, early childhood education (ECE) and building codes. Standards for teachers exist in **Cook Islands, FSM, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu** and **Vanuatu**.

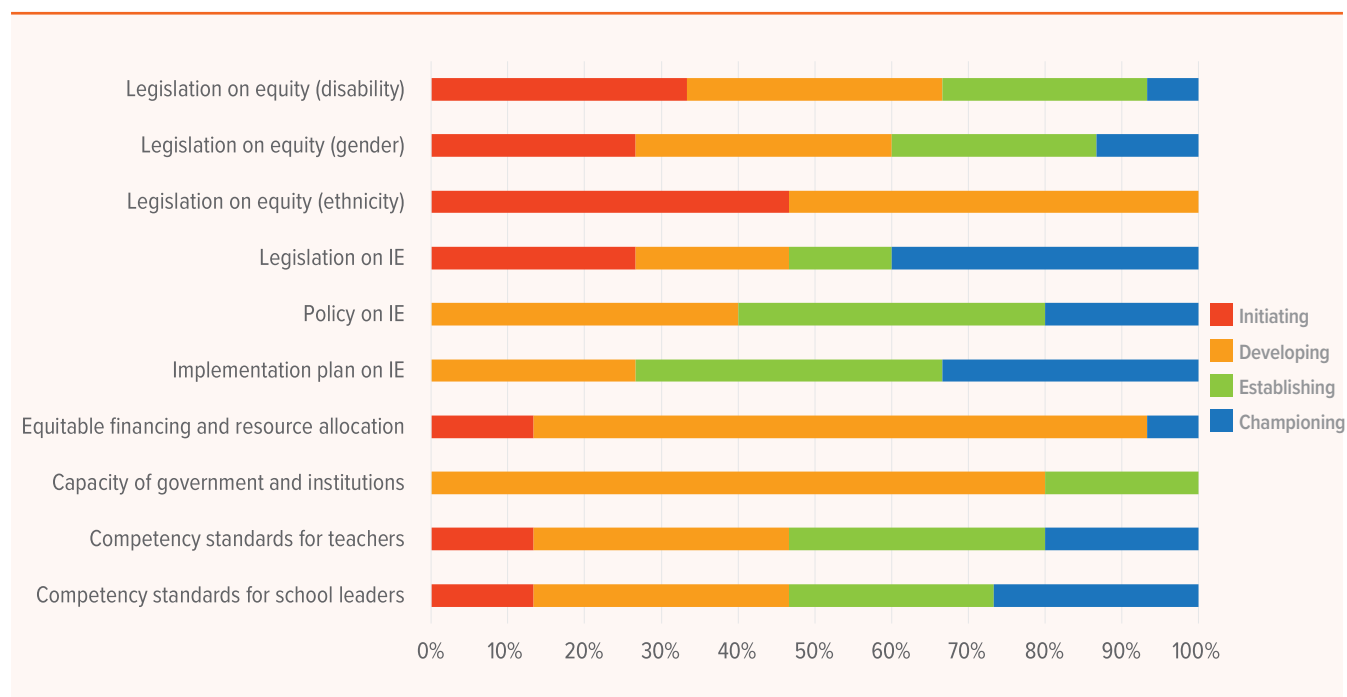
FIGURE 4: Status of inclusive education legislation policy, plans and standards, by percentage of Pacific countries

TABLE 3: Ratifications, legislation, policies and standards related to inclusive education in 15 Pacific countries

COUNTRY	CONVENTIONS RATIFIED	LEGISLATION	POLICIES	PLANS FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION	STANDARDS
Cook Islands	CRC 1997 CRPD 2009 CEDAW 2007	» Education Act 2012 » Family Protection and Support Act 2017	» Inclusive Education Policy 2017 » National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Plan 2019–2024 » National Policy Framework for Children 2017–2021 » Child Protection Policy (in progress)	» Inclusive education is in the Cook Islands Education Master Plan 2008–2023	» Teacher Professional Standards » Building Code 2019
FSM	CRC 1993 CRPD 2016 CEDAW 2004	» Public Law 14-08 "Free Appropriate Public Education" 2005 » Special Education Act 1993	» Special Education Procedural Manual Revised 2012 » Child Protection Policy design (in progress)	» Inclusive education is in the annual plan and the inclusive education policy implementation plan	» Accreditation standards » National Minimum Competency Standards » Teacher Certification Standards » Curriculum Standards and Benchmarks
Fiji	CRC 1993 CRPD 2017 CEDAW 1995	» Constitution 2013 » Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2018 » Child Welfare Decree 44 2010 » Human Rights Commission Decree 2009 » Child Care and Protection Bill (in progress)	» Special and Inclusive Education Policy 2016–2020 » National Policy on Persons Living with Disabilities 2008–2018 » National Gender Policy 2014 » Policy on Transportation Assistance 2015 » National Child Protection Strategic Plan A great deal of moderate amount of disabled students transport assistance specifically for disadvantaged or infrastructure funding for accessibility modifications Outreach / itinerant support to schools by specialists Assistive devices/technologies Training for school staff Teacher aides/assistants salaries 100% 90% 80% 70% 60% 50% 40% 30% 20% 10% 0% n (in progress) » Child Protection in Schools policy (in progress)	» Special and Inclusive Education Policy Implementation Plan	» Teacher competency standards » Disability-Inclusive Education Handbook for Teachers
Kiribati	CRC 1995 CRPD 2013 CEDAW 2004	» Kiribati Education Act 2013 » Te Rau N Te Mwenga Act 2014: for the protection of victims of domestic violence and the prevention and elimination of the crime of violence within domestic relationships » Children, Young People and Family Welfare Act 2012	» Inclusive Education Policy 2015 » National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Development 2019–2022 » National Approach to Eliminating Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Kiribati: Policy and National Action Plan 2011–2021 » National Disability Policy and Action Plan 2018–2021 » School Discipline Policy 2017 » Child Protection Policy and Plan (in progress) » Child Protection in Schools Policy (in progress)	» Inclusive education is in the annual plan and the inclusive education policy implementation plan	» National Teachers' Service Standards Framework 2017–2019 » National Infrastructure Standards for Primary Schools 2011

TABLE 3: Ratifications, legislation, policies and standards related to inclusive education in 15 Pacific countries

COUNTRY	CONVENTIONS RATIFIED	LEGISLATION	POLICIES	PLANS FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION	STANDARDS
Nauru	CRC 1994 CRPD 2012 CEDAW 2011	» Education Act 2011 » Child Protection and Welfare Act 2016 » Domestic Violence and Family Protection Act 2017 » Legislation related to the CRPD is under development	» Inclusive Education Policy and Guidelines 2017 » Multi-Sectoral Implementation Child Protection Plan 2019–2021 (in progress)	» Implementation guidelines are in the Inclusive Education Policy; inclusive education is in the Department's annual plan	» National Quality School Standards Framework » Code of Ethics
Niue	CRC 1995 CEDAW 1985	» Education Act 1989 18 (d)	» Department of Education Inclusive Education Policy 2012 » National Disability Policy 2011	» Inclusive education is in the ministry's annual plan	» Standards for the Niue Teaching Profession
Palau	CRC 1995 CRPD 2013 CEDAW 2011(s)	» Special Education Legislation – RPPL 3-9 1989	» Special Education Policy & Procedures 2008 » Child Protection Policy (in progress)	» Special and inclusive education is in the ministry's annual plans	» School Handbook » Teacher Certification » Assessment Policy Framework
PNG	CRC 1993 CRPD 2013 CEDAW 1995	» Education Act 1983 » Constitution of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea – National Goals and Directive Principles	» Inclusive and Special Education Policy and Minimum Standards 2020 » National Policy on Disability 2015–2025 » Gender Equity in Education Policy 2003 » National Behaviour and Management Policy	» Inclusive education is in the annual plan and the inclusive education policy implementation plan	» Inclusive and Special Education Policy and Minimum Standards 2020
RMI	CRC 1993 CRPD 2015 CEDAW 2006	» Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Public Notice 2015 » Public Law 2013–2023 » Public School System Act 2013 » Child Rights Protection Act 2015 (revision in progress) » Rights of Persons with Disability Act 2015 » Ministry of Education (Teacher Certification) Act 2007	» Special Education Policies and Procedures 2014 » National Policy on Disability Inclusiveness Development 2014–2018 » Child Protection Policy 2014 » Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), funded under the US government » National Gender Mainstreaming Policy » Ministry of Education's Regulations on Student Conduct » Public School System Child Protection Policy Implementation Plan (in progress)	» Special and inclusive education are in the ministry's annual plan	» Special Education Procedures to ensure free, appropriate public education consistent with the Marshall Islands Education Act and the IDEA, as amended, 2014
Samoa	CRC 1994 CRPD 2016 CEDAW 1992	» Constitution 1962 » Education Act 2009 » Family Safety Act 2013 » National Child Care Protection Bill (in progress)	» Inclusive Education Policy for Students Living with a Disability 2014 » National Policy for Children of Samoa 2010–2015 » Draft Disability Policy » Child Protection Policy (in progress) » Family Life Education Policy	» The Inclusive Education Policy is operationalized in the Education Sector Plan and annual implementation plans	» Ministry of Education Sports and Culture Minimum Service Standards

TABLE 3: Ratifications, legislation, policies and standards related to inclusive education in 15 Pacific countries

COUNTRY	CONVENTIONS RATIFIED	LEGISLATION	POLICIES	PLANS FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION	STANDARDS
Solomon Islands	CRC 1995 CRPD 2008(s) CEDAW 2002	» Tertiary Education and Skills Authority Act 2017 » Child and Family Welfare Act (in progress) » Education bill (in draft)	» National Disability Inclusive Education Policy 2016–2020 (to be replaced by inclusion within education legislative framework) » Gender Education Policy (in progress) » Child Protection Policy (in progress) » Child and Family Welfare System Policy 2012	» Inclusive education is in the Ministry's annual plan	» National Professional Standards for Teachers » Teaching Service Handbook 2011
Tokelau	As per New Zealand: CRC 1993 CRPD 2008 CEDAW 1985		» Inclusive Education Policy 2018 » National Policy and Action Plan for the Women of Tokelau 2010–2015	» Inclusive education is in the annual plan and the inclusive education policy implementation plan	» Standards for Education on Tokelau 2014
Tonga	CRC 1995 CRPD 2007(s)	» Education Act 2013	» Inclusive Education Policy 2008–2013 » National Disability Inclusion Policy (in progress)	» Inclusive education priorities are in the Ministry's annual plan	» Minimum Service Standards for Teachers
Tuvalu	CRC 1995 CRPD 2013 CEDAW 1999	» Education Act 1978	» Disability-Inclusive Education Policy 2021 » Disability Policy » National Gender Policy 2014–2016 » National Curriculum Policy Framework » National Youth Policy 2015–2019	» Tuvalu's inclusive education policy framework is emerging and not yet operationalized	» Tuvalu teacher competency standards
Vanuatu	CRC 1993 CRPD 2008 CEDAW 1995	» Education Act No. 9 2014 » Teaching Service Act No. 38 2013 » Convention on the Rights of the Child Act No. 26 1992 » Vanuatu Institute of Teacher Education Act No. 25 2001 » Child Protection Bill (in progress) » Family Protection Act 2008	» Inclusive Education Policy 2010–2020 » National Child Protection Policy 2016–2026 » Child Protection Policy Implementation Plan » New policies currently under development: » Child Safeguarding Policy » Gender Equity in Education Policy » Inclusive Education and Training Policy	» Inclusive education is in the Ministry's annual plan and in the Vanuatu Education Sector Strategy 2020–2030	» Vanuatu Minimum Quality Standards » Vanuatu Teachers' Standards » Ministry of Education and Training Infrastructure and Asset Management Standards » Early Childhood Care and Education Standards » Examination and Assessment Procedures » National Curriculum Statement

Inclusive education implementation plans

In relation to implementation plans for inclusive education, nearly 75% of the countries rated themselves as either “championing” (**Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati** and **Nauru**) or “establishing” (**Niue, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands** and **Vanuatu**). At the highest level, championing, the governments have in place an inclusive education policy implementation plan that outlines strategies to support action at national, sub-national and school levels to promote inclusive education. As Table 3 shows, plans for inclusive education exist as separate documents in some countries, and are embedded in annual, strategic or master plans in other countries. The presence of an inclusive education implementation plan is an important step; however, as noted under the section on monitoring and evaluation below, tracking implementation of these is quite weak in the region. Respondents in the survey workshop in **Kiribati** provided useful insights into the place of the implementation plan in their rollout of inclusive education :

***Kiribati** is a “champion” in the area of inclusive education for having a policy and implementation plan in place. This does not mean Kiribati is excellent in inclusive education and no longer needing support. The Inclusive Education Policy has been reviewed and, therefore, a review of the implementation plan is a priority to ensure effective and quality implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy. The five years of experience on inclusive education has put Kiribati in a better position to come up with a plan that will better serve the needs of all learners including learners with a disability.*

Inclusive education in Kiribati is mainly supported by donors in terms of financial and technical support. There has been an inadequate budget allocated by the government to support inclusive education activities. For example, to date DFAT is still paying for the interpreters.

PROMISING PRACTICE

Cook Islands

Integrated legislation, policy and plans to support inclusive education

To be truly inclusive we must mean it when we say “All means all.” Our inclusive education policies have evolved over time but the underpinning purpose of meeting the needs of all students with attention to the most vulnerable remains key. Our developments have always been community driven and supported by legislation, ministerial support and high-level policies. However, these developments have been equally driven by demands from teachers, principals and parents to support them in creating solutions and delivering education that meets our children’s needs no matter where they are. Good communication, mutual accountability and “taking things out of boxes” has meant the two approaches can align. It isn’t perfect and it will always be evolving – but it does have commitment from everyone. (Danielle Cochrane, Secretary of Education, Ministry of Education)

Cook Islands has a comprehensive and integrated set of legislation, policies, action plans and processes that work together as a structure for inclusive education. **Cook Islands** ratified the CRPD in 2009, after developing and passing the **Cook Islands** Disability Act 2008, which legislates access to education for all. The national CEDAW policy, developed by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the Ministry of Education’s Equity, Access and Participation Policy 2016 both support equitable access for all learners. The National Sustainable Development Plan 2016–2020, Goal 8, aims to achieve inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities.

The Education Act 2012 outlines the obligations of education entities and families to ensure enrolment of all children. This is supported by the **Cook Islands** Administrative Guidelines 2020 (CIAG One), which provide guidance for schools to develop operational-level policies and Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for students with disabilities. The Education Master Plan 2008–2023 “Learning for Life” highlights equitable access to quality learning and the experience of success through a range of programmes that meet individual needs and celebrate individual talents. It also highlights the role of community involvement in determining quality educational outcomes. The Ministry of Education Inclusive Education Policy 2011, updated in 2017, covers many facets of education and includes responsibilities of other ministries and NGOs, mandating an education system that is “inclusive, equitable, fair and just, and that the curriculum and programmes are accessible by all learners of the **Cook Islands**.” This is supported by the Student Progression Policy and the Assistive Technologies Policy.

These instruments are supported by in-school policies for inclusive education, widespread availability of teacher aides, IEPs for students with disabilities, inclusive education registers at the Ministry of Education, and human resource strategies for teacher aides and professional development of the education workforce.



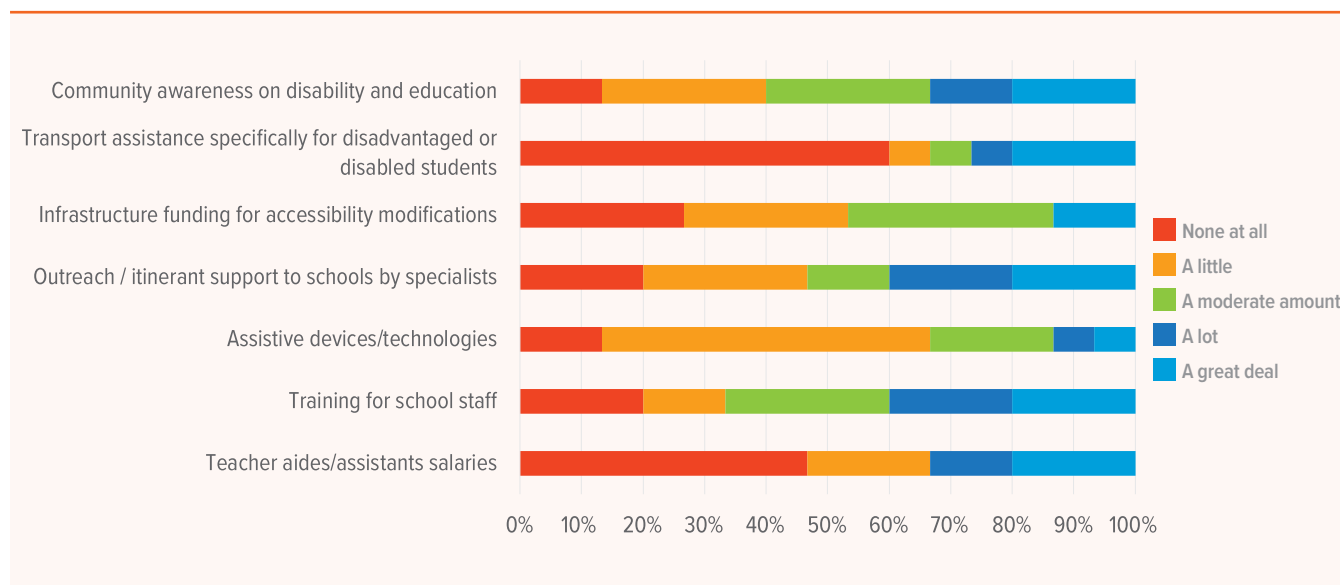
Budgetary allocation

Ministry of education budget for inclusive education

All countries have a specific budget for inclusive education in the ministry's budget except **Niue** and **Vanuatu**. Figure 5 provides a breakdown of how much is spent on categories of support. Although it provides no specific budget for inclusive education, **Niue** provides an intervention teacher, who works with students with additional support needs each week. **Fiji** has a Special and Inclusive Education Grant, which is provided to schools with students with disabilities; this covers a range of support costs including referrals to services.

Nauru funds teacher aides through the **Nauru** Education Assistant Trust Scheme. In addition to items outlined in Figure 5, **Palau** funds transition activities and a partnership between parental, governmental and community organizations. **PNG** provides national curriculum materials for all Inclusive Education Resource Centres, including teachers' guides, student resource books and activity books, and reading books. In **Samoa**, a budget is provided for sign language translation or interpreting of spoken films for cultural, historical information in the National Archives and Records Authority.

FIGURE 5: Budget spent on support for inclusive education, by percentage of countries



Other sources of funding for inclusive education

Beyond the ministry of education budget, other funding sources were reported by all countries except **FSM**, **Niue** and **Tonga**. The **Cook Islands** Infrastructure Committee funds school accessibility based on prioritization within other national commitments. In **Fiji**, inclusive education is supported predominantly through Australian aid bilateral education programmes (Access to Quality Education Program 2011–2017, **Fiji** Program Support Facility 2018–2024) and through volunteer agencies including the Australian Volunteer Program and the Peace Corps. In **Kiribati**, inclusive education has been supported through the **Kiribati** Education Improvement Program (KEIP). The **Kiribati** Ministry of Women, Youth, Sports and Social Affairs also provides funds to support students with disabilities. **FSM**, **Palau** and **RMI** receive support through a US Federal Grant from the Department of Education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B.

In **PNG**, a key system is the Inclusive Education Resource Centres (IERCs) located across the country and run by Callan Services and the Department of Education. IERCs receive core funding from the Department for Community Development and Religion; health grants and assistive devices from the Department of Health (including for all people with disabilities, in addition to students with disabilities); and funding from donor partners through Callan Services or the National Department of Education, including UNICEF, Save the Children, CBM, DFAT, Mary MacKillop, Light for the World and World Vision.

In **Samoa**, support comes through the Education Sector Support Program (ESSP) from DFAT and MFAT. Funding for specialist services and awareness-raising comes from DFAT's **Samoa** Disability Partnership programme. In **Solomon Islands**, support for inclusive education is provided by DFAT and UNICEF. In **Tokelau**, the health sector provides a budget for supporting children with disabilities at home, and support also comes through a UNESCO Fund for Social Protection project for students with disabilities. **Tuvalu** receives support through the Australia Support to Education in **Tuvalu** (ASET) programme. In **Vanuatu**, inclusive education is supported through UNICEF, DFAT funding via the **Vanuatu** Education Support Program (VESP) and Global Partnership for Education (GPE) accelerated funding support.

For special education, seven countries reported sources of funding other than the ministry of education. **Kiribati** receives support from Hear the World, which covers school health coordinators' salary, hearing testing and hearing aid provision. **Nauru** receives support through donor funds. In **Samoa**, the Disability Rights Fund provides support to special education. In **Solomon Islands**, special education is supported through NGOs and OPDs. In **Tuvalu**, support is received from the Ministry of Home Affairs and PDF.

PROMISING PRACTICE

Fiji Education Management Information System – disaggregation

Historically, most students with disabilities in **Fiji** were attending one of 17 segregated special education centres, in urban areas. Access in rural, remote and maritime areas was limited and many children with disabilities were out of school. With support from the Australian government, **Fiji's** Ministry of Education, Heritage and the Arts validated and implemented a method for disability disaggregation of the FEMIS, which has been recognized globally as a novel and useful solution. Disability data is now used to inform resource allocation, and mainstream schools enrolling verified students with disabilities receive an additional grant to ensure their learning needs can be met. Subsequently, enrolments of students with disabilities in inclusive education settings have grown rapidly and continue to increase. **Fiji's** approach to disability identification and disaggregation was highlighted in the recent Global Education Monitoring Report: *Inclusion and Education: All Means All*.

Identification mechanisms and data for inclusive education

Data collection and monitoring for inclusion are critical to enable equitable resource allocation, including grant disbursement to schools for education support and adjustments. Methods used as the basis for ministries of education to recognize a learner's disability vary across the region.

In 12 countries (80%), disability is captured in the EMIS, and many countries in the region are developing increasingly sophisticated EMIS that are capable of multi-variable analysis. However, disaggregated data is rarely connected to finance and resource allocation systems and frequently does not inform the monitoring of inclusive education policy implementation.

Disability identification has relied on diagnostic specialists but, increasingly, some countries are developing systems based on teacher observations of student functional status, as seen in the data below. This does not replace the need for specialists but mitigates a long-standing resourcing problem.

In **Cook Islands**, inclusive education advisors visit schools to undertake observations and assessments. Categories used include Learning needs – remedial learners; Medical needs – learners with a diagnosis; Multiple needs – learners with a physical, intellectual and medical need; Physical needs – sight and hearing impairment. Challenges include the cost of reaching all learners. The high cost of travel to more isolated islands limits the reach of advisors as well as visiting specialists.

In **FSM**, the Child Find process includes a formal diagnostic assessment using relevant standardized tools. An IEP team is responsible for making a formal determination as to whether the child has a disability and if it influences learning. Challenges include the need for more trained staff to diagnose specific disability categories and to provide appropriate intervention services – specifically, for autism, speech impairments, severe and multiple disabilities and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

In **Fiji**, teachers work with parents and other relevant people to complete the Student Learning Profile, which is based on functional observations and identification of learning and support needs. This data is entered into the **Fiji** Education Management Information System (FEMIS). Staff from the Ministry of Education at a central level, with support from the **Fiji** Program Support Facility staff (and soon with a new cadre of Ministry-engaged education advisers), conduct verification visits to confirm or revise the data in the form. This is used to determine an Educational Support Need category (severity category), which informs resourcing levels. Challenges include the need to increase training in use of the system, and to resource the backlog of verification visits required.

Kiribati is rolling out the implementation of identification tools in the **Kiribati** Disability Inclusive Teaching Guide, which assists teachers in recognizing characteristics of different types of disabilities. Further training is required to cover all teachers.

In **Nauru**, students with disabilities are enrolled in the Able Disable Centre so the school roll is used to count numbers of students with disabilities. Challenges include the need for specialists to diagnose disability. Increasingly, students with additional learning needs are being identified by teachers and assessed by inclusive education consultants providing information on students' level of learning and characteristic signs of impairment. Assessment results are being used to provide learning support even prior to a medical diagnosis being made.

In **Niue**, the public health nurse undertakes health checks early in the term and makes recommendations. In response to COVID-19, a psychologist is available on the island to assist with diagnoses.

Palau implements a system consistent with US Department of Education regulations, which includes a team at the school. Eligibility to receive special education services is the basis of recognizing learners with disability. Challenges include limited resources and local capacity in specialized areas such as educational psychology and speech pathology.

PNG has two means of counting students with disabilities: (i) through the registration of students in IERCs, which includes referral information from the Department of Health; and (ii) through data submitted to the National Department of Education EMIS, which is used for paying the Government Tuition Fee Subsidy and grants to IERCs. IERCs and community-based rehabilitation officers undertake screening in schools and communities to identify children with disabilities to enrol in the IERCs. Challenges include difficulties in reaching remote communities and schools, and difficulties parents face in taking their children with disabilities to the nearest IERC or health service.

RMI uses the SE Form 5 – Integrated Evaluation Report Form to determine disability in students. Challenges relate to undertaking identification across the distant and scattered locations in **RMI**.

Three non-government inclusive education service providers complete and submit a form for each student with disability to **Samoa's** Ministry of Education. This database is managed by the Ministry's inclusive education officer.

Solomon Islands uses the Solomon Island Education Management Information System (SIEMIS) form to collect data on disability. There are significant challenges in identifying students with disability. Most teachers use their own judgement based on visibly obvious disabilities, and further training is required to support in the identification of disability.

In **Tokelau**, technical assessments are not available; however, observable disabilities such as cerebral palsy are easily identified visually. In addition, patterns of achievement based on standard assessments are considered, for example students consistently achieving well below year level expectations, along with observations of speech, hearing impairments, cognition, repetitive behaviours and social interactions. The public health team assists with confirming eyesight, hearing and speech impairments. Challenges relate to the education staff not being experts, not having had technical training in this area and relying primarily on observations.

In **Tonga**, the Ministry of Education's Inclusive Education Unit records primary school children who are struggling to read, write and do maths as students with learning difficulties, in order to be able to respond to their special learning needs. Children with disabilities are referred to the special education class by a paediatric specialist following assessment. Challenges relate to a heavy reliance on the Inclusive Education Unit for informal diagnosis of learning difficulties.

In **Tuvalu**, health assessments are required in order to receive benefits as outlined in the Inclusive Education Policy. "Slow learners" are identified through teacher assessment of student performance. The disability module for the **Tuvalu** EMIS is currently being updated and will be undertaken via an annual survey.

In **Vanuatu**, there is a Teachers' Guidebook for Identifying Students with Disabilities, and UNICEF recently supported training for school principals and teachers in the identification of students with disabilities. This data has been entered into **Vanuatu's** EMIS and has been analysed. There are challenges related to sustainability of the training and the system.

Ministries of education provide funding or in-kind support to mainstream schools where learners with disabilities are enrolled in all countries, except in **Tokelau**, **Tonga** and **Vanuatu**. Figure 6 outlines the system used for determining funding or support among the other 12 countries.

Country representatives were invited to rate their current status in terms of identification of disability, disability disaggregation within the EMIS, and monitoring and evaluation of inclusive education. These self-reported ratings are in Figure 7; Table 4 presents the indicators from which countries selected

FIGURE 6: System used for determining funding or support for students with disabilities, by number of countries.

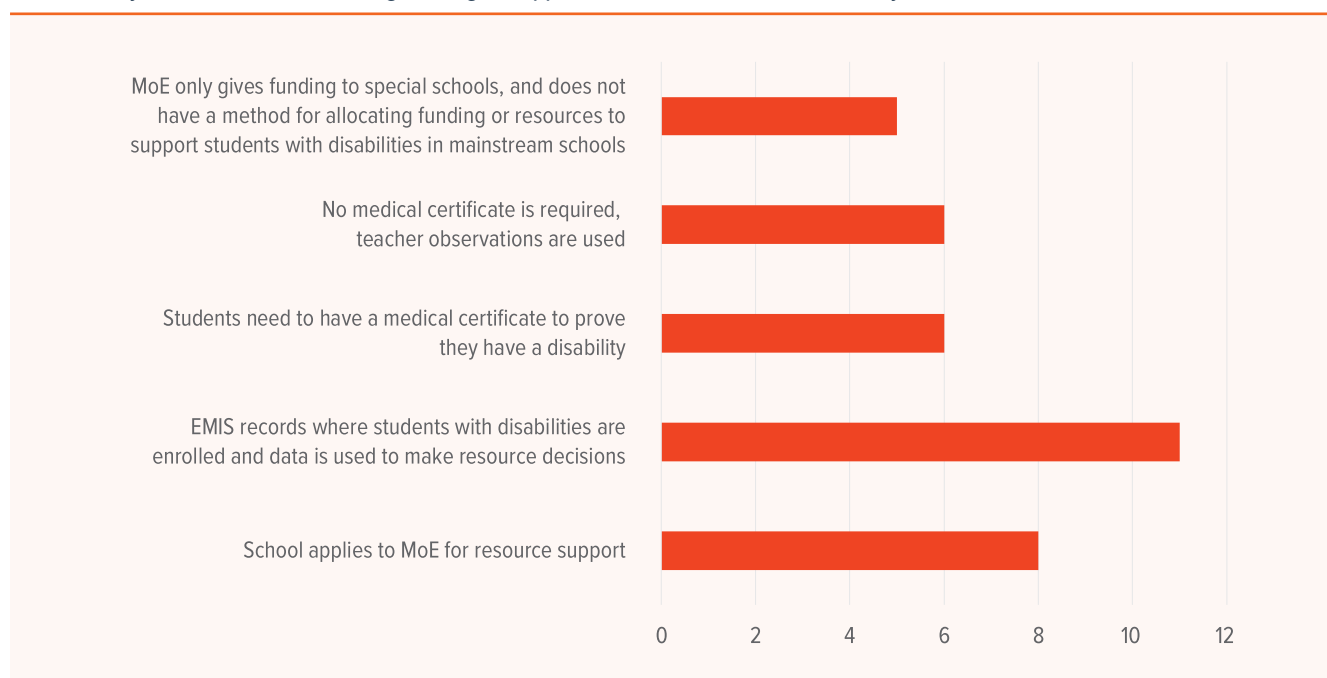
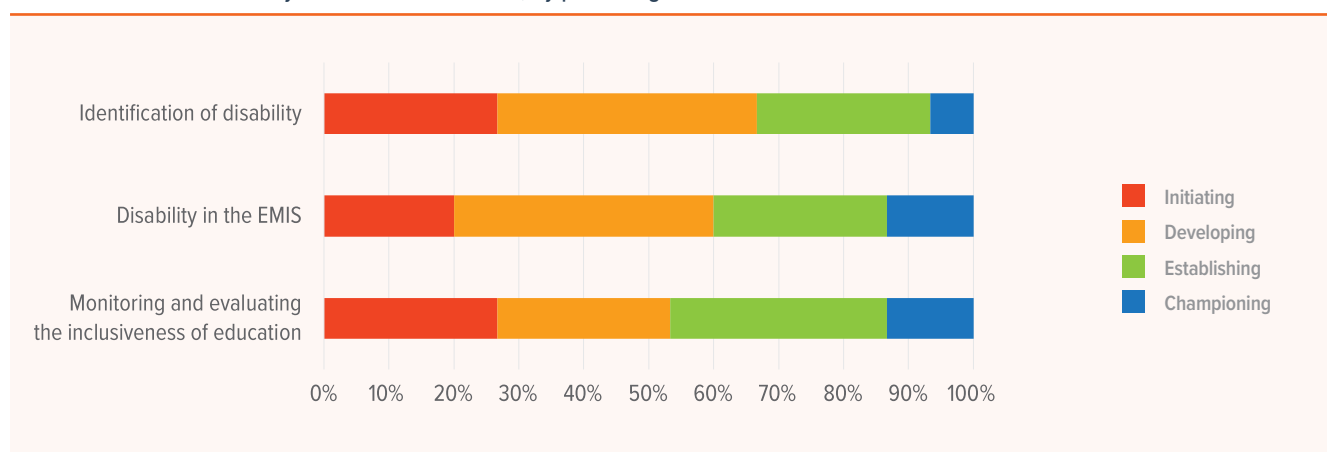


TABLE 4: Progress indicators for identification of disability, disability in the EMIS, and monitoring and evaluating inclusive education

	PROGRESS INDICATORS			
	Initiating	Developing	Establishing	Championing
Identification of disability	An identification system for students with disabilities has not been established. Or, medical diagnosis is the only method for identifying disability in students.	An identification system for students with disabilities has been established in alignment with the International Classification of Functioning (ICF) or Washington Group Child Functioning Module (i.e., not based on the medical model). This is utilized by some schools.	An identification system for students with disabilities based on the ICF or Washington Group Child Functioning Module has been established and is used to identify students with disabilities and data is entered into an EMIS database, but there are problems with some aspects of the system.	An identification system for students with disabilities based on the ICF Washington Group Child Functioning Module has been established and is used to identify students with disabilities, and data is entered into an EMIS database.
Disability in the EMIS	There is no data regarding children with disabilities in the EMIS.	There is data regarding children with disabilities in the EMIS but it is not used to inform enrolment, attendance and achievement reports.	There is data on children with disabilities (collected in accordance with the ICF or Washington Group Child Functioning Module) in the EMIS, and it is used to inform enrolment, attendance and achievement reports.	There is data on children with disabilities (collected in accordance with the ICF or Washington Group Child Functioning Module) in the EMIS, and it is used to inform ministry-level planning, resource allocation and reporting.
Monitoring and evaluating the inclusiveness of education	There are limited arrangements for monitoring the participation and achievement of all learners.	The government has a system for monitoring the education quality and achievement of learners and is starting to improve the system to include data on children with disabilities.	The government has a system in place to monitor the participation and achievement of all learners, including children with disabilities, within the education system.	The government has a working system in place to monitor the participation and achievement of all learners, including children with disabilities, within the education system. Reports are produced on a regular basis.

FIGURE 7: Status of disability identification and data, by percentage of countries

PROMISING PRACTICE

Solomon Islands Localized indicators of inclusive education

The **Solomon Islands** Inclusive Education Working Group plans to use the Pacific INDIE as the indicators for inclusive education efforts. These were developed through a collaborative process with education and disability stakeholders from Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

Monitoring and evaluation

The use of specific indicators for monitoring and evaluating inclusive education appears to be minimal in most countries. There are no indicators monitored in **Kiribati, Palau, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu** and **Vanuatu**. While **Kiribati** has not worked on criteria for measuring inclusive education, CRPD Article 24 was taken into consideration in the ESSP and senior education officers monitor progress. In **PNG**, teachers are monitored during inspection visits and students with special needs are monitored through IEPs and national examinations. IERC implementation plans are monitored by inspectors and IERCs have traditionally submitted annual reports to the Inclusive Education Unit, although this has lapsed; the Unit plans to revive this reporting process to enable a national biannual inclusive education report.

FSM's Division of Special Services at the National Department of Education conducts annual onsite and offsite service monitoring. The monitoring team includes a state special education coordinator or representative and the team focuses on service delivery based on IEPs, data verification, fiscal management, parent and community involvement, and interviews with principals and teachers. In **RMI**, the US Department of Education monitors the special education grant through performance reports. The Public School System Special Education Program undertakes annual monitoring of schools to check on implementation of policies and procedures.

Cook Islands measures the number of students receiving support through teacher aides, and in **Fiji** the Special and Inclusive Education Policy Implementation Plan indicators are the basis of the monitoring and evaluation; several indicators in **Fiji's** implementation plan are drawn from the Pacific Indicators for Disability Inclusive Education (Pacific INDIE).²⁴ In **Nauru**, the Bureau of Statistics collects data on education. In **Samoa**, the Inclusive Education Taskforce is responsible for monitoring; however, the work is largely undertaken by the Ministry of Education's Inclusive Education Unit, which informs the Taskforce of progress and activities that need core management approval to implement. The **Tuvalu** Inclusive Education Policy Implementation Plan is in development, after which it will be monitored by the CEO of the Ministry. Activities in **Vanuatu's** Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) Business Plan are monitored six-monthly.

Role of learners at risk of exclusion, their families and/or OPDs in monitoring inclusive education

Involvement of students and their parents in monitoring inclusive education is often only at the level of participation in IEP meetings. Participation in broader inclusive education monitoring occurs in **Kiribati** through involvement in evaluations but has not yet happened in **Nauru, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu** and **Vanuatu**. Involvement of OPDs in reviewing progress and challenges occurs in **Cook Islands** (through the Disability Council), **Fiji, PNG, RMI** (through the Special Education Advisory Council) and **Samoa**. In **PNG**, OPDs play a major role in ensuring accountability for the fulfilment of the rights of children with disabilities. In **FSM**, though not directly involved in monitoring, families of students with special needs are included in meetings to provide comments on services they received or did not receive. Advisory councils or inter-agency councils are also invited during conferences or state-level meetings.

24. The Pacific INDIE were developed and tested in **Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands** and **Vanuatu** between 2013 and 2016. They have been used to monitor inclusive education policies in each of these countries: <https://www.monash.edu/education/research/projects/pacific-indie>

Service provision and referrals

To enable active and quality participation in education, some students need referrals to support services, such as early intervention programmes, rehabilitation, medical interventions and the provision of assistive devices and technologies. The PRIEF emphasizes that these services must be provided in a manner that does not label, stigmatize or alienate a learner or their family from their classroom, school or community.

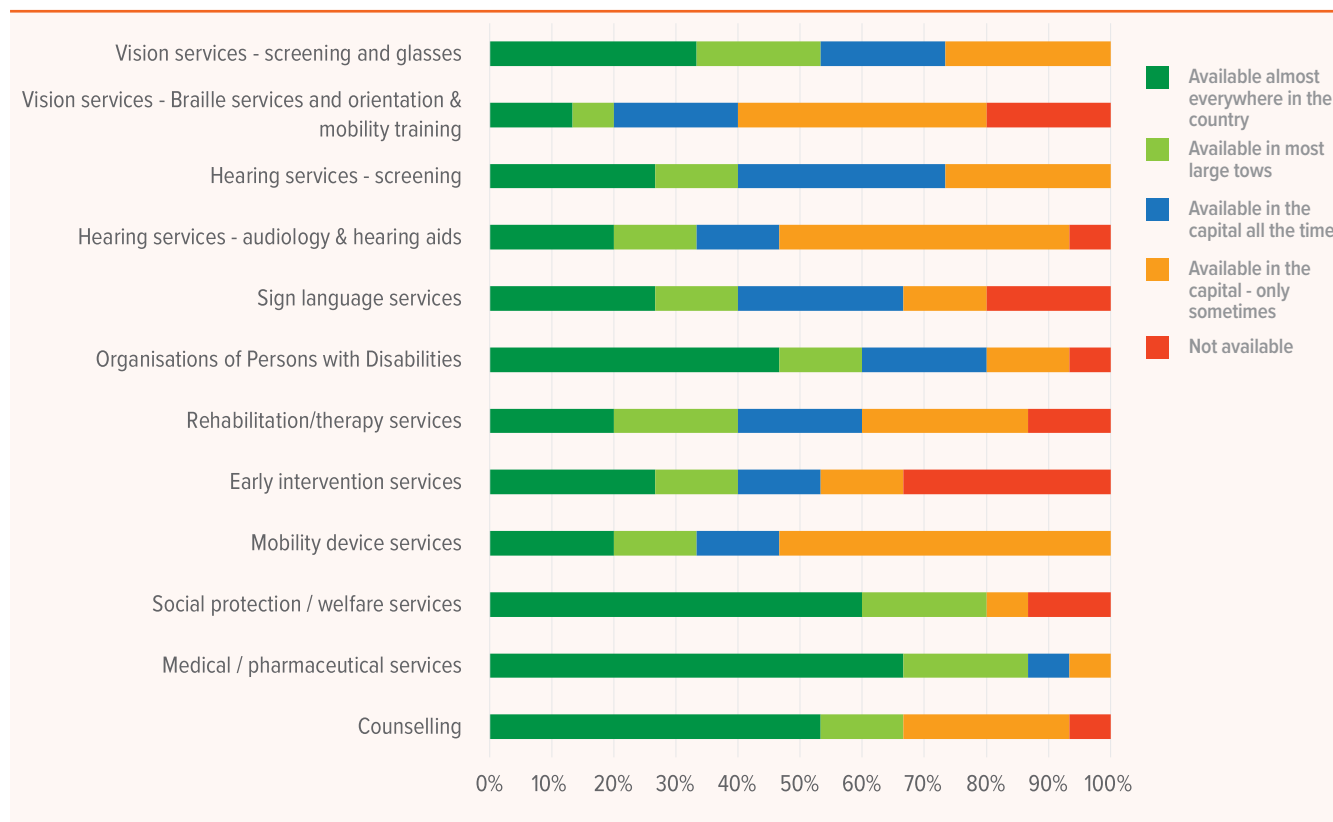
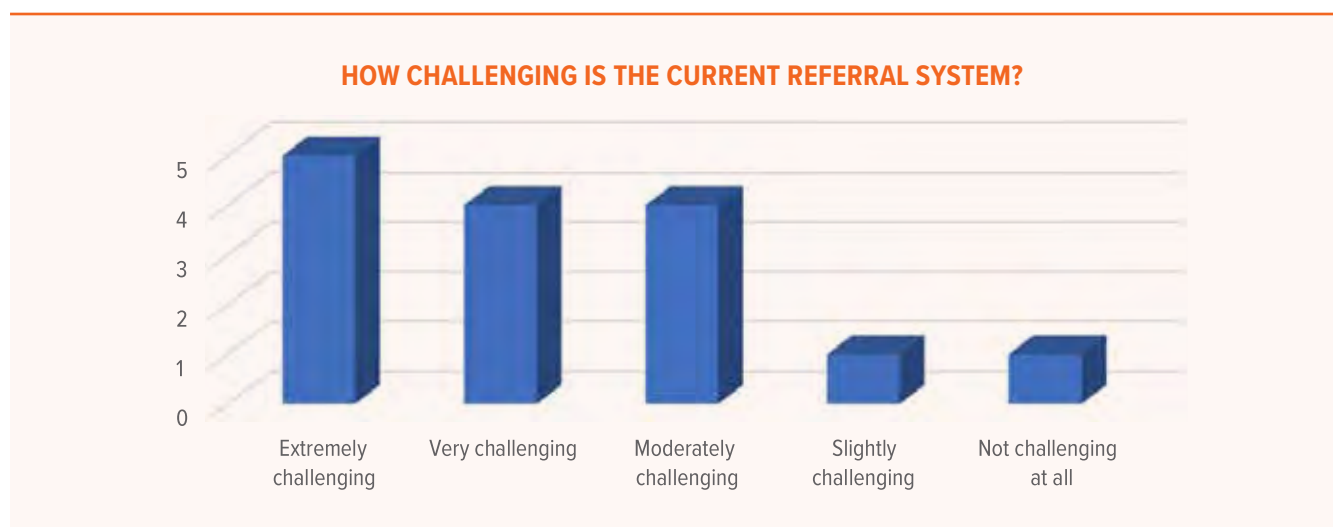
Figure 8 indicates the availability of support services as reported by the 15 countries. The most commonly available are medical/pharmaceutical services and social protection/welfare services, counselling, OPDs, vision screening and glasses, and hearing screening.

Services that are least available are Braille services and orientation and mobility; audiology and hearing aids; mobility device services (wheelchairs, etc.); early intervention; and rehabilitation/therapy services. Unlike other services that may only be needed periodically, sign language services are required on a daily basis for many people who are Deaf or hard of hearing. In 11 countries, sign language is available only in the capital or not at all. This forces students to relocate, or face exclusion. Where an agreed sign language is not available, for example in **Tonga** and **Vanuatu**, many Deaf and hard-of-hearing children are unable to participate in or benefit from school at all.²⁵

Many Pacific nations are small and do not have access to a range of different specialists in-country. Where these are available, they are generally available through the ministries of education and health, although in some countries (e.g. **Cook Islands** and **Niue**), highly specialized personnel are made available through visits by international experts supported by New Zealand.

Enabling access to and participation in education for students with diverse disabilities requires ministries of education and health to work together to plan, allocate funding, build a workforce of personnel with qualifications in priority specializations and/or identify external – sometimes international – sources of specialist support.

25. Jenkin, E., Waters, P., Sen, K. and Adam, R. (2019) Deaf People in Pacific Island Countries.

FIGURE 8: Availability of support services, by percentage of countries**FIGURE 9:** Level of difficulty using the referral system

PROMISING PRACTICE

FSM

Web-based tracking of referrals

In FSM's education system, referral and identification of children suspected to have disabilities follow an established process that is guided by procedures that personnel are trained in. A web-based database is utilized to track and maintain records of all children going through the system.

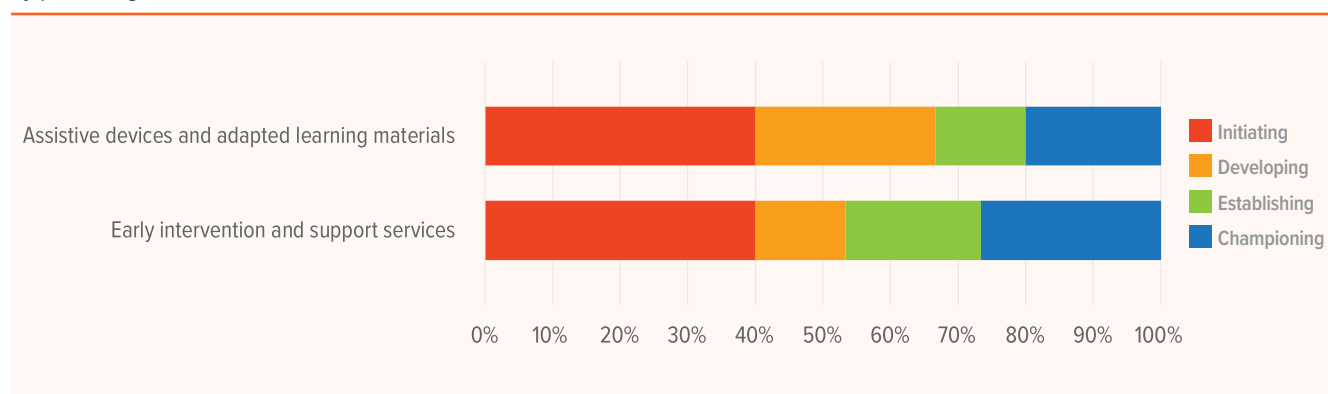
Figure 9 illustrates how challenging participants found using their current referral system. **Niue** was the only country that reported that the referral system was not challenging at all. Countries that found the current referral system “extremely challenging” were **Cook Islands, Kiribati, Tokelau, Tuvalu** and **Vanuatu**. Countries that found the referral system “very challenging” or “moderately challenging” were **FSM, Fiji, Nauru, Palau, PNG, RMI, Samoa** and **Solomon Islands**, with **Tonga** reporting it is “slightly challenging.” The most common challenges reported were:

- ▶ Lack of specialists in country, with those requiring services having either to wait for specialists to come to them or to find funds and time to travel to urban locations (where services are more likely to be based) or even overseas for assessments;
- ▶ Lack of communication between ministries, to make information, services and data accessible; positioning disability officers within ministries was suggested as a way of assisting the child and family to navigate the referral process;
- ▶ Parent or carer reluctance to act on the referral – potentially not valuing the effort, not believing it is their responsibility, fears of stigma or denial of a potential issue or problem;
- ▶ Difficulty providing personnel for specific services such as direct support for students with autism, students needing Braille materials, assistive devices, etc.;
- ▶ Limited access to ECD services, even though ECD coordinators are now reportedly present in a number of Pacific countries. For example, in **RMI**, the Special Education Program serves only children and youth with disabilities aged 3–21 years. Other than the Ministry of Health, no other agency is known to provide services to children from birth to two years (infants and toddlers) and their families. Insufficient information on and awareness of other agencies in the community makes it difficult to avoid duplication of efforts, so as to improve services and support for children with disabilities;
- ▶ Poor management and coordination between referring and receiving organizations, with lack of clarity around processes and forms, preventing smooth functioning of the referral system.

Country representatives were asked to rate their current status in terms of provision of assistive devices, adapted learning materials, early intervention and support services (see Figure 10). The indicators which countries selected from are outlined in Table 5. Approximately half of the countries reported that assistive devices and adapted learning materials are not generally available in schools, and a further quarter of countries reported that these are available in special schools, but not in mainstream schools. Slightly more countries reported progress on early intervention and support services, however 40% reported that there is no commitment to early intervention.

TABLE 5: Progress indicators – assistive devices and early intervention and support services

	PROGRESS INDICATORS			
	Initiating	Developing	Establishing	Championing
Assistive devices and adapted learning materials	Assistive devices and materials are not generally available in schools.	Assistive devices and materials are available in special schools but not in mainstream schools.	Assistive devices and other materials are available in special schools but in less than half of mainstream schools.	The ministry of education facilitates the development/ adaptation of teaching and learning materials to fit the context and needs of individual learners. Assistive devices and materials are available in most mainstream schools.
Early intervention and support services	There is no commitment to early intervention.	Establishment of early intervention programmes is in planning discussions.	Early intervention is occurring in some places but is not coordinated by the government.	There is a national early intervention plan in place, and efforts are coordinated by the government.

FIGURE 10: Status of assistive devices and adapted learning materials and early intervention and support services, by percentage of countries

Assistive technologies

Assistive devices or technologies are items or equipment that can be used to maintain, increase or improve functional capabilities of people with disabilities. These include items such as glasses, hearing aids, wheelchairs and other mobility devices such as crutches, orthotics or prosthetics; through to communication boards, screen reading software, Braille machines, voice recognition software, fidget/stress balls, pencil grips, etc. Adapted learning materials include Braille, large font-sized papers and books, and sign language accompanying videos.

Cook Islands, Palau and **Samoa** rated themselves at the highest level, with assistive technologies available in most mainstream schools. **Cook Islands** reported that assistive devices, including hearing devices as well as iPads and tablets, were assigned to any student who had been referred and found to need assistive technology, for example to access the curriculum or to communicate. The Ministry of Education reported that, if there were more requests or referrals than devices available, additional funding support could be sourced through quarterly budget proposals. The Ministry also reported that no student had been denied a device because of lack of availability. Countries reporting low access to assistive devices in schools were **Niue, RMI, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tuvalu** and **Vanuatu**.

PROMISING PRACTICE

RMI

Early Hearing Detection and Intervention

In RMI, the Early Detection and Intervention Programme identifies newborns and babies who are Deaf or hard of hearing and enables enrolment in the Early Intervention Programme.

Early intervention

As part of an ECD approach, early intervention describes the services and support for young children and their families to facilitate cognitive and emotional development and to prevent developmental disability or delay. It may include services such as speech therapy, occupational therapy or physiotherapy, audiology or medical interventions. Early intervention traditionally supports very young, pre-school-age children; however, in locations where there is limited access to services, early intervention can provide support for those of any age.

As Figure 10 shows, the majority of countries in the region rank themselves as experiencing low access to early intervention (**Cook Islands, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tuvalu** and **Vanuatu**). In **Vanuatu**, the **Vanuatu Society for People with Disability (VSPD)** provides early intervention services and MoET provides early intervention in mainstream ECE centres.

Countries with strong relationships with the USA (**FSM, Palau** and **RMI**) and New Zealand (**Niue**) rank themselves as championing on this issue. **Fiji, Samoa** and **Tonga** reported that early intervention was occurring in some places but was not coordinated by the government. In **Tonga**, Mango Tree Centre, an NGO, provides early intervention for children with cerebral palsy. **Nauru** reported that the establishment of early intervention programmes was in planning discussions.

Measures taken to provide early intervention services vary widely across the region. In **Cook Islands**, assessments **can** be requested and support provided for ECE-age children; however, learners with intellectual difficulties cannot be picked up early as specialist services are not available and characteristics of intellectual disability are not readily identifiable until later. In **FSM**, the Child Find programme works with the Department of Health and other agencies to screen and identify children in and out of school who are suspected to have disabilities and refers them for formal evaluation.

PROMISING PRACTICE

PNG

Early intervention and parent involvement

In PNG, IERC pre-schools provide early intervention programmes. Additional technical assistance and training from development partners, including UNICEF PNG and Save the Children, support early intervention programmes in selected provinces.

Where pre-schools are not established, educated parents and volunteers are trained by community-based rehabilitation officers and teachers to assist children in the communities.

In **Fiji**, early detection and early intervention are a priority in the Special and Inclusive Education Policy; however, in practice this is limited. Early intervention services are available mainly in the capital Suva through a CSO, the Frank Hilton Organization, with some services available in other larger towns. **Kiribati** does not have early intervention services. In **Nauru**, early identification is made by teachers and early intervention services are provided by external consultants and the disability coordinator.

In **Samoa**, NGOs provide early intervention services. The **Solomon Islands** Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development ECE Policy is under review. The Ministry of Health community-based rehabilitation programme undertakes assessments and works with children in the community. The Red Cross Special Development Learning Centre provides early intervention services.

Measures to encourage student retention

Education systems across the region work hard in various ways to encourage students to continue education and to prevent “dropout.” Children who experience marginalization as a result of gender, disability, remoteness, poverty, ethnicity, language, migration, sexual orientation and gender identity are more likely to experience barriers to their ongoing participation in education. These can include stigmatizing social norms and negative attitudes, limited teacher capacity and inaccessibility of schools that are far from home. For children with disabilities, these barriers may also include limited access to specialist support services and inaccessible school infrastructure.

In **Niue**, students can discuss their issues with the school counsellor and students dropping out of school is not really an issue. As soon as students miss school without any notice, the special needs teacher or the principal visits the home and talks to parents. Respondents noted, however, that in future it would be useful to offer vocational programmes, such as crafts or weaving, for students from Year 9 onwards who were not keen to participate in mainstream classes.

In **Tokelau**, village laws for compulsory attendance during school age are enforced to encourage school retention; students are not allowed to go to the village work sector until after compulsory school age. To improve retention in **Solomon Islands**, the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development undertook a pilot of the vernacular language policy and eliminated high-stakes exams such as the **Solomon Islands** Secondary Entrance Examination for Year 6. The Education Bill is drafted and in progress, which will make education compulsory for those aged 5–16 years.

In **PNG**, the No Child Left Behind Policy requires all students to complete 13 years of education (Kindergarten 1 to Grade 12). The Child Friendly School Policy and School Improvement Plans support this aim. The Flexible Open Distance Education and Technical Vocational Education Training supports the education of all students. The National Department of Education, through its E-learning Division, telecasts television lessons with sign language to remote schools, which also supports retention.

PROMISING PRACTICE

Tonga Encouraging retention

The Truancy, Reconciliation and Enforcement Unit of the Ministry of Education and Training tracks children who miss school without informing the school. Staff meet with children who are at risk of dropping out and their parents or guardians to discuss issues and offer support to enable students to return and stay at school.

Tuvalu has an automatic promotion policy for students from ECE to Year 8. At ECE level, clinical screening for learning disabilities on enrolment aims to identify difficulties and provide early support to increase the likelihood of the student successfully participating in education.

In **Vanuatu**, the school grant disbursement per number of enrolled children was initiated in 2015. This establishes incentives for schools to work hard to achieve enrolment and retention.

In **Palau**, strategies in place to minimize the risk of students dropping out include free bus transport and quarterly progress reports for each student to identify and address any issues. To participate in sport activities, students are required to maintain a grade point average of 2.0, which can motivate students to stay in school and maintain their grades. Where students are at risk of dropping out, schools contact parents about prolonged unexplained absences through phone calls and home visits.

In **Fiji**, school-based retention programmes include strengthening parental engagement through home visits, provision of counselling for both parents and children, and the Children At Risk Of Leaving Schools (CAROLS) programme.

Kiribati uses various strategies, including the Ministry of Education's inclusive education officer working with principals, teachers and teacher assistants in IEP development; hearing testing in class; teacher assistant training; training of inclusive education coordinators and teachers; a student expulsion policy; discouraging teachers or schools displaying student results and giving prizes; and using checklists instead of teachers awarding marks for students.

RMI encourages retention by providing training for parents to enable their involvement in promoting school attendance, undertaking weekly home visits when a child does not come to school and public awareness-raising at multiple points during the year.

Cook Islands has compulsory schooling for those aged 5–16 years and the Ministry of Education regularly reviews educational programmes to ensure high student engagement. The Attendance, Truancy and School Transition Policy requires monitoring of students, and the Student Support Hub supports implementation of this by promoting attendance through social support networking, inter-agency dialogue and referrals. The inclusive education advisor supports and facilitates transition between classes, schools and out of school for all inclusive education students.

In **FSM**, state special education programmes implement dropout prevention activities and monitor students with IEPs as part of annual Local Performance Plans (LPPs). The LPP includes a performance indicator on “dropout.” Vocational programmes exist in secondary schools to different extents; vocational training programmes such as in home arts/economics, agriculture, auto mechanics and construction are available to all high school students, including those with disabilities.

In **Nauru**, enrolled students with disabilities generally do not drop out because there are more opportunities for them at school than at home. In the community, the **Nauru** Disabled People's Organisation offers classes for students with disabilities as well as their carers and parents.

PROMISING PRACTICE

PNG

Supporting out-of-school children

Under PNG's National Literacy Policy, students who leave school for various reasons can re-enrol the following year. Bridging courses in Flexible Open Distance Education (FODE) centres are open to students with disabilities. Life skills training for out-of-school children and youth is provided by the IERCs and community-based rehabilitation officers. The Department of Community Development and Religion and the Department of Education run literacy and numeracy training for youth and mothers; this is open to students with disabilities. Programme reach is limited in rural and remote areas.

Out-of-school children and youth

Children and youth who have dropped out of school do so in response to a variety of factors, including remoteness, disasters, poverty, ethnicity, language, migration, gender, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity.

Two countries – **Niue** and **Tokelau** – reported that this was not an issue; most other countries need to provide programmes that help meet the needs of out-of-school children and youth. In **Solomon Islands**, support programmes are available for early school leavers, including literacy programmes, life skill programmes and pathways to further skills for tertiary education. The Just Play programme provides sports skills. Scholarships are available for the Regional Training Centres.

Tonga's Ministry of Education and Training has established the Ako Tu'uloa Programme for out-of-school students. It is open to students who have left school before completing secondary school.

In **Tuvalu**, a Technical and Vocational Skills Development (TVSD) pathway is available as an alternative to the general academic pathway. Students are allowed to repeat Years 8 and 10. The Matua programme is a TVSD programme targeted at out-of-school students beyond primary school age.

In **Vanuatu**, out-of-school children are supported by Open Distance Learning, which is guided by a draft policy. This provides an opportunity to learn by distance; however, opportunities for children with disabilities to benefit from this were not reported. The Ministry of Youth and Sports engages youth in psychosocial activities and the Just Play programme. The Australian Football League also has programmes with out-of-school children in Port Vila.

The **Palau** Community College's Adult High School programme and the Ministry's HiSet programme provide opportunities for out-of-school students to receive diplomas that are equivalent to regular high school diplomas. **Fiji** has no defined ministry guideline related to provision for out-of-school children.

The **Samoa** Children Initiative, led by the Ministry of Women, supports child vendors who are not in school, or who vend after school hours. The Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano **Samoa** pastoral care programme supports children who are out of school to prevent them from getting involved in bullying, gang violence and domestic violence. TVET and Oloamanu programmes cater for children who have dropped out of school, introducing teaching basic literacy and numeracy skills. Out-of-school children are supported by home visits, which incorporate a thorough assessment and the development of strategies to improve access to education. An internship programme led by the Ministry of Women in partnership with the Small Business Hub and **Samoa** Chamber of Commerce targets school dropouts to address the high number of unemployed youth.



The **Kiribati** Institute of Technology (KIT) offers a bridging course that is not a direct entry course. Selection is via community consultation using ChildFund youth workers to determine suitable applicants from across communities. KIT has a Certificate I in Vocational Preparation, being trialled on Abemama with some of the local recent bridging graduates. Teachers of **Kiribati** Community Studies need inclusion training; more attainable skills should be taught, such as sewing, cookery, carpentry.

In **RMI**, a truancy office has been established and out-of-school children are located and supported to re-enter schools. Additionally, partner agencies conduct outreach to find out-of-school children/youth and report to the Ministry of Education's Special Education Office. Special education teachers at local sites also follow up on out-of-school children.

In **Cook Islands**, the Creative Centre provides bridging programmes that focus on work and life skills and offer sheltered employment as well as many varied activities for members (adults with disabilities) to help them enjoy and live a fuller, more social life. Tupuanga Rakau is an alternative learning programme supporting transition back into school. The Tumanava programme at **Cook Islands** Trades and Training Institute (CITTI) is for early school leavers transitioning into workplaces.

In **FSM**, education is compulsory to age 14. Little educational support is provided to out-of-school youths, and rarely do these include youth with disabilities. In **Nauru**, measures are required to support out-of-school children with disabilities. Ideas reported included the creation of an office for persons with disabilities to ensure the rights of students are recognized and interventions are provided, and a life skills programme for out-of-school youths with and without disabilities.

PRIEF Priority 2:

Raising Awareness

Results in this section incorporate data on issues related to PRIEF Priority 2: Raising Awareness, outlined in Figure 11.

FIGURE 11: PRIEF Priority 2

2.1 Intent

Society is responsive to the rights of children with disabilities or at risk of being excluded and their families, recognizes the benefits of inclusive education to their communities and supports an inclusive approach to schools and learning centres in those communities.

2.2 Purpose

Negative community attitudes towards the education of children with disabilities or at risk of being excluded have been shown to be one of the greatest barriers to accessing education. Community-based programmes frequently have multiple positive benefits, such as changing negative attitudes, increasing awareness of opportunities available to people with disabilities through programmes and services, linking people with disabilities and those at risk of exclusion and their families to community networks and identifying out-of-school children with disabilities. Promoting the establishment of community awareness programmes will assist in improving awareness of the educational needs of children with disabilities or at risk of being excluded and in generating demand for quality inclusive education.

Headline findings

- ▶ **Most governments spend at least a moderate amount on community awareness-raising for inclusive education.**
- ▶ **Commonly used platforms for awareness-raising include cultural events, sports, media, celebrations timed around international awareness days, FBOs, drama and music.**
- ▶ **OPDs play a pivotal role in creating community awareness and positive attitude change.**

Stigmatizing attitudes are a major barrier to the engagement of children with disabilities in education, and their wellbeing and achievement of educational outcomes. Awareness-raising activities can challenge this; likewise, the positive experiences and outcomes of children with disabilities in school send positive messages about the benefits of inclusive education, and inclusive communities.

Raising awareness

Awareness of inclusive education and disability rights is fundamental in enabling all learners to be enrolled and to succeed within education systems. This awareness needs to exist in communities as well as in school settings and structures. In alignment with the structure of the PRIEF priorities, this section includes information related to community awareness. Findings related to awareness and the culture of inclusion within school settings and structures is included under PRIEF Priority 5.

Raising awareness in communities is critical to address attitudes that prevent parents or carers from enabling and supporting access to education for their children with disabilities or at risk of being excluded. Parent empowerment programmes can be pivotal in overcoming fear of stigma and in linking families to services and support.

The role of OPDs is central to raising awareness of inclusive education and of disability rights, and awareness-raising programmes should be designed and implemented in partnership with OPDs. **Samoa's** Nuanua O Le Alofa (NOLA), Te Toa Matoa of **Kiribati** and **Niue's** Tolomaki Ki Mua Association undertake community awareness programmes.

PROMISING PRACTICE

Tuvalu

Raising awareness through partnerships

The World Bank Tuvalu Learning Project conducts public awareness and supports child protection and positive behaviour management strategies as well as messaging for inclusive education and disability screening. In addition, the project supports implementation of recommendations outlined in the disability and inclusive education plan developed with support from the ASET programme.

PROMISING PRACTICE

FSM

Raising awareness and screening students for early identification of reading problems

Project LIFT – or Project Literacy Intervention for **FSM** leaders of Tomorrow – improves language development and reading through the Response to Intervention Initiative. It screens students for early identification of reading problems and provides instructional interventions for struggling students and professional development and coaching for teachers.

During quarterly parent-teacher association meetings, special education staff and coaches or liaison staff from **FSM** Project LIFT share inclusive education information and updates. Project LIFT conducts a Parent Literacy Night activity that brings together parents, school personnel, children and teachers (both general and special education). This provides an opportunity for children to challenge parents in literacy games, for teachers to improve on skills in working with children and parents, for parents to learn to appreciate the challenges teachers face every day and for everyone simply to get together to have fun.

Fiji's OPDs are perennially involved in awareness-raising in various ways; one notable programme was a roadshow in which representatives of all OPDs travelled together with inclusive education coordinators from the Australian-funded Access to Quality Education Program, promoting inclusive education in communities surrounding the newly established Inclusive Education Demonstration Schools. Communities were able to see OPD representatives in paid professional roles, and to hear their stories and learn about rights and inclusive education policies, and to be linked to services and networks. This was a successful programme that contributed to enrolments of out-of-school children with disabilities and community awareness of inclusive education and enabled strong networking between OPDs, the Ministry and schools.

Promoting inclusive education

Most countries reported activities that promote positive attitudes to inclusive education. **Vanuatu's** Parent Support Programme made parents aware of the Inclusive Education Policy, including providing a safe teaching environment for children with disabilities; however, this programme covered only Penama province. Inclusive Case Study schools in Port Vila and Efate also promoted positive attitudes.

Tokelau promotes inclusion through sports days, religious days, **Tokelau** Language Day and English Day; all students are involved in religious and cultural celebrations and sporting events. **Solomon Islands** has undertaken mass advocacy and awareness-raising of education authorities on the Inclusive Education Policy to promote enrolment of children with disabilities in mainstream schools.

Inclusive education is promoted in **RMI** through the Special Education Advisory Council, parent organizations and the Early Hearing Detection and Intervention, which promotes school readiness and links to the Early Intervention Programme. Alumnae from the Deaf Centre have formed the Deaf flourish Association, which promotes inclusive education. The Disabilities Awareness Week Working Group organizes activities on inclusive education with a particular focus on accessibility.

In most countries, sports and cultural activities are common platforms for raising awareness and promoting inclusion. In **Fiji, Palau** and **PNG**, international/national disability days are used as an opportunity for students and adults with disabilities to display their talents through games, music, drama, sports and crafts. These include International Day of Persons with Disabilities, Down Syndrome Day, Autism Day, Albinism Day, White Cane Day, etc. Inclusive education is also promoted through media channels including newspapers, TV news, radio and newsletters.

In **PNG**, IERCs provide awareness, screening and referrals in communities and mainstream schools on inclusive education and assistive devices, and church organizations are involved in promoting inclusive education. **Kiribati** runs consultation and awareness workshops in communities to promote inclusive education, youth drama groups and inclusive education song, and the Ministry of Education community consultation team contributes to raising awareness of inclusive education.

PRIEF Priority 3:

Training and Professional Learning

Results in this section incorporate data on issues related to PRIEF Priority 3, outlined in Figure 12.

FIGURE 12: PRIEF Priority 3

3.1 Intent

A workforce that sees learner diversity as an opportunity and is knowledgeable, competent and committed to implementing quality inclusive education.

3.2 Purpose

The focus on training and professional learning is to prepare the education workforce to understand the philosophy behind inclusive education and to acquire the skills to implement effective practice. The priority area also advocates for a mandatory course and practicum experiences on quality inclusive education as part of national training programmes and ensuring in-service programmes provide ongoing support to teacher to meet the needs of a diverse classroom.

Headline findings

- ▶ **Ten Pacific countries require teachers to study inclusive education as part of their pre-service training and are in the process of establishing these courses.**
- ▶ **In-service training in inclusive education is available in all Pacific countries; however, delivery is limited. It is compulsory in only half of them.**
- ▶ **Teacher aides are available in nine countries, but qualifications are required in only six of these. Teacher aide availability across urban, rural and remote areas is mixed, and skills in supporting students with disabilities are generally insufficient.**
- ▶ **Pacific regional development partners and organizations identify teacher training to support inclusive education as a gap.**

Country representatives were invited to rate their current status in terms of provision of pre- and in-service education to support inclusive education. Table 6 outlines the indicators that countries were invited to consider.

TABLE 6: Progress indicators for pre- and in-service education

	PROGRESS INDICATORS			
	Initiating	Developing	Establishing	Championing
Pre-service teacher education	Inclusion is not an integral part of the pre-service curriculum. Instead of preparing all teachers to teach a range of diverse students, a small proportion of teacher trainees participate in specialized special education courses.	Planning is underway to review the pre-service teacher education curriculum to ensure teachers are supported to respond to diverse learners. Knowledge and experience from specialized training programmes are beginning to be transferred to mainstream teacher preparation.	The pre-service teacher education curriculum has been reviewed and reformed to ensure teachers are supported to respond to diverse learners.	Inclusion principles are integrated in the national teacher education curriculum. Inclusion practices are taught to all teacher trainees through the mainstream pre-service teacher education curriculum.
In-service teacher education	In-service teacher education does not incorporate inclusive education messages, approaches and/or strategies.	Some in-service teacher education incorporates inclusive education messages, approaches and/or strategies.	All teachers participate in in-service training on inclusive education, at least once annually.	The ministry of education oversees a national in-service training programme that prioritizes inclusive education messages, approaches and/or strategies, delivering professional development opportunities to all teachers at least once per year and monitoring its impact.

Pre-service teacher education

Pre-service education prepares teacher trainees for classroom teaching. This can be delivered through universities, colleges or other teacher training institutions and/or courses. Limited teacher preparedness has been well documented as having a major negative impact on the effective implementation of inclusive education in the region.²⁶

As Figure 13 demonstrates, a majority of countries (67%) reported that they were mid-progress in the development or establishment of pre-service teacher training to support inclusive education (**Cook Islands, FSM, Fiji, Kiribati, Palau, PNG, RMI, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu**). Three countries, all small island states, all reported that they were championing pre-service teacher training to support inclusive education (**Nauru, Niue and Tuvalu**).

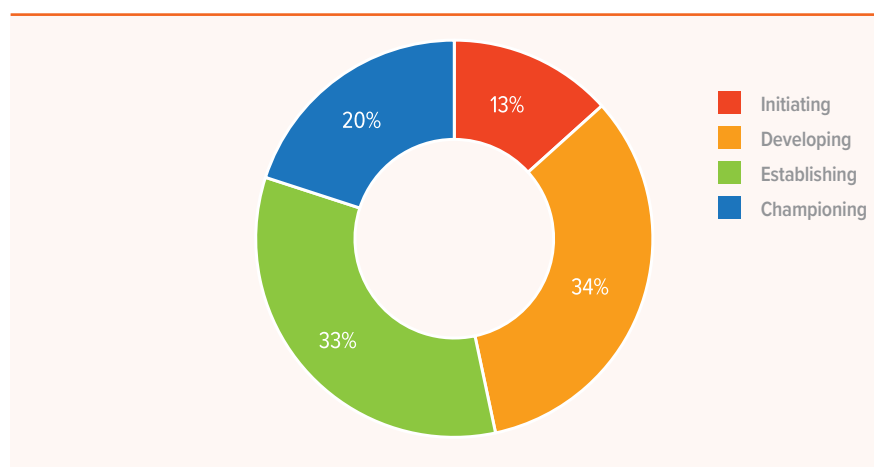
In 10 countries (66.7%), it is mandatory for teachers to complete a module in special or inclusive education: **Cook Islands, FSM, Kiribati, Niue, PNG, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu**.

Two countries stated that they were at the very beginning stages of initiating inclusive education pre-service training for teachers (**Solomon Islands and Tokelau**). In **Fiji, Nauru, Palau, RMI and Samoa**, this is not yet compulsory.

In **Niue and Tuvalu**, teachers generally undertake their teacher training through USP, which offers an elective module in Inclusive Education in its Certificate programme, as well as a dedicated Bachelor in Special and Inclusive Education. Additionally, in the past, APTC offered a Certificate IV in Disability Studies, which a number of **Tuvalu** teachers attended.

In **Cook Islands**, the Ministry of Education runs a training programme for teachers that covers inclusive education through two courses. In other countries, dedicated inclusive education subjects are offered as part of teacher training programmes offered by local training providers. Table 7 presents these.

FIGURE 13: Pre-service teacher training to support inclusive education, by percentage of countries



26. Sharma et al. (2019) Addressing Barriers to Implementing Inclusive Education in the Pacific.

TABLE 7: Pre-service teacher training programmes that support inclusive education

COUNTRY	PRE-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMME
Cook Islands	The three-year teacher training programme covers: » Inclusive Education in The Cook Islands: Recognizing Our Resources, Policies and Environment » Inclusive Education Pedagogy in Cook Islands Schools
FSM	» ED225 Differentiated Instruction » ED338 Teaching Students with Special Needs in the Regular Classroom » ED414 Assessment and Diagnosis of Students with Special Needs » ED415 Methods of Teaching Students with Special Needs
Kiribati	» LEA420 A Component of Disability, Gender and Social Inclusion
Niue	USP offers an elective module in Inclusive Education in its Certificate programme
PNG	Teacher training colleges offer courses on Inclusive Special Education 3 credit points, in four modules: » Introduction to Inclusive Education (6 sessions) » An Inclusive Classroom » Planning and Supporting Learning in an Inclusive Classroom (15 sessions) » Assessing and Recording in an Inclusive Classroom (3 sessions) Other institutions that provide inclusive education training include: » All teacher training colleges for pre-service training » University of Goroka, Bachelor's Degree – in-service for teachers and compulsory for pre-service » Divine Word University Bachelor's Degree – in-service for teachers and compulsory for pre-service teacher trainees » Callan Inclusive Education Institute – Applied Diploma in Inclusive Education for Teachers » Papua New Guinea Education Institute – Diploma in Inclusive Education All institutions have their own time allocation, credit points, course content and practicum and assessment for inclusive education teacher training.
Solomon Islands	» Inclusive Education and Special Needs » Sign Language » Autism
Tonga	All teacher trainees in ECE, primary and secondary education are required to take an inclusive education course and pass this to earn their Diploma in Education. The course focuses on how to include all learners in a mainstream classroom.
Tuvalu	» Bachelor of Education in Special and Inclusive Education, USP » Certificate IV in Disability, APTC
Vanuatu	The Vanuatu Institute of Teacher Education offers the Inclusive Education Module (6 months)

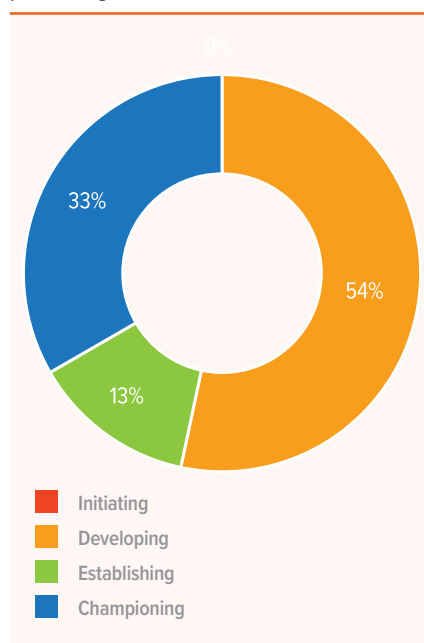
PROMISING PRACTICE

Nauru

In-service teacher training

In-service teacher training in Nauru includes face-to-face school support to enable implementation of the Nauru Inclusive Education Policy and Guidelines. Professional Development Sessions establish systems and school processes and help define roles and responsibilities in relation to inclusive education. Through modelling good practices and collaborative planning, teachers are assisted to learn how to differentiate their teaching to meet student learning needs and to focus on literacy and numeracy areas. Professional support is provided to teachers in relation to screening and referral advice, assessment, defining learning needs, developing IEPs, educational casework, teaching strategies, intervention, and monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and intervention.

FIGURE 14: In-service teacher training to support inclusive education, by percentage of countries



In-service teacher education

In-service education provides professional development for teachers. While literature from across the region demonstrates that both pre- and in-service education for teachers is insufficient,²⁷ all country representatives reported that they were beyond the beginning stages of initiating in-service teacher training in inclusive education.

As Figure 14 shows, the majority of countries reported being in the development or establishment phase (**Cook Islands, FSM, Fiji, Kiribati, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu** and **Vanuatu**), while five countries reported that they were champions in the delivery of in-service teacher training to support inclusive education (**Nauru, Niue, PNG, RMI** and **Tokelau**). In **PNG**, for example, in-service training workshops are conducted by IERCs to mainstream schools.

However, countries across the region reported that delivery of inclusive education professional development for teachers, school leaders and teacher aides was a challenge. Coverage varies widely, from as little as 0.05% (**Vanuatu**) to as much as 90% (**Tokelau**) of the teaching workforce having ever participated in in-service training in inclusive education.

In **Tonga**, the importance of inclusive education is recognized by development partners including New Zealand and Australia, which offer scholarships in inclusive education to upgrade skills and knowledge. The Japanese government continuously offers short- and long-term training on inclusive education, with the intention of developing skills and knowledge. In **Tokelau**, a UNESCO-supported project will provide training for teachers in inclusive education strategies to enhance educational opportunities for children with disabilities.

While in-service training or professional development in inclusive education is reportedly available in all countries, it is mandatory in only seven: **Cook Islands, Kiribati, PNG, RMI, Samoa, Tonga** and **Vanuatu**. In-service training is offered once per year in six countries and less than once per year in six countries. Two countries were unsure as to how frequently training was offered, and in **Tokelau** in-service training in inclusive education is offered more than once per year. Table 8 lists topics covered by recent inclusive education in-service training. On average, 46% of Pacific teachers are estimated to have participated in in-service training related to inclusive education.

Information regarding teacher, teacher aide and school leader professional development in the provision of wellbeing and psychosocial support for children was not reported. However, this is essential to promote positive school experiences for all children, including those with disabilities. In addition, training in identifying and reporting violence, abuse and neglect of marginalized children, noting the particular vulnerability of those with disabilities, is critical.

27. Sharma et al. (2019) Addressing Barriers to Implementing Inclusive Education in the Pacific.

TABLE 8: In-service training in inclusive education

COUNTRY	COMPULSORY IN-SERVICE TRAINING?	FREQUENCY	TOPICS COVERED	% OF TEACHERS WHO HAVE RECEIVED THIS OR SIMILAR TRAINING
Cook Islands	Yes	Once per year	» Inclusive Education Pedagogy and an Understanding of Inclusive Education in the Cook Islands. » Face-to-face visits » Professional development sessions and support available from the inclusive education advisor on request/referral » Training relevant to individual student needs	45%
FSM	No	Less than once per year	Not available	40%
Fiji	No	Once per year	» Identifying students with disabilities and entering data into FEMIS » Use of the disability-inclusive education toolkit, especially the handbook for teachers	10%
Kiribati	Yes	Less than once per year	Social inclusion	20%
Nauru	No	Less than once per year	» Face-to-face school support services to support implementation of the Nauru Inclusive Education Policy and Guidelines » Professional Development Sessions to establish systems and school processes and to define roles and responsibilities in relation to inclusive education » Assisting teachers in learning how to differentiate their learning to meet student learning needs and to focus on literacy and numeracy areas by modelling sound practices and collaborative planning with teachers » Professional support to teachers on screening and referral advice, assessment, defining learning needs, developing IEPs, educational casework, teaching strategies, intervention, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of teaching and intervention	80%
Niue	No	Once per year	No response	70%
Palau	No	Once per year	» Accommodations, modifications and intervention training for a specific school » Early literacy training for all teachers in the primary grades and differentiated lesson plan training	55%
PNG	Yes	Once per year	Teacher training colleges offer in-service courses on inclusive special education in four modules: » Introduction to Inclusive Education (6 sessions) » An Inclusive Classroom » Planning and Supporting Learning in an Inclusive Classroom (15 sessions) » Assessing and Recording in an Inclusive Classroom (3 Sessions) Other institutions that provide in-service training on inclusive education are: » University of Goroka, Bachelor's Degree – in-service (2 years) for teachers » Divine Word University Bachelor's Degree – in-service (2 years) for teachers » Callan Inclusive Education Institute – Applied Diploma in Inclusive Education – in-service for teachers » Papua New Guinea Education Institute Diploma in Inclusive Education – in-service » All institutions have their own course content, practicum and assessment priorities and credits points.	3%
RMI	Yes	Once per year	IEP training	75%
Samoa	Yes	Less than once per year	Samoa Inclusive Education Handbook (online)	10%
Solomon Islands	No	Unsure	Not known	5%
Tokelau	No	More than once per year	» Differentiation and accommodations » Accelerated learning	90%
Tonga	Yes	Once per year	» What Is Inclusive Education? » Learning Disabilities/Difficulties » Learning Styles » IEP » Modification and Accommodation	70%
Tuvalu	No	Not sure	» Diversity of disabilities and support strategies.	5%
Vanuatu	Yes	Less than once per year	» A Teacher's Guidebook for Identifying Students with Disabilities across Vanuatu » Child Protection and Awareness on the Child Safeguarding Policy and on Citizenship	0.05%

Teacher aides

The mapping found that teacher aides were part of the education workforce in 11 countries. Of these countries, qualifications are required in six. Where qualifications are required, they are generally at the Certificate or Diploma level, and are available locally. In-service training for teacher aides is available in six countries, and in half of these teacher aides attend the same training offered to teachers; however, none of the nine countries reported that teacher aides had sufficient skills in all required areas. Table 9 provides an overview.

Distribution of teacher aides across urban, rural and remote areas is mixed. Teacher aides are available in all areas, including in rural and remote schools, in four countries, but only in major cities and towns in four countries. Allocation of teacher aides requires school staffing formulae to ensure appropriate and priority distribution.

Teacher aide skills

Representatives of three countries that engage teacher aides reported that skills in Braille, sign language, augmentative and alternative communication, and working with learners with intellectual disabilities and behaviour and attention and social difficulties were insufficient. No countries reported that sufficient skills were available in all areas, and only four countries reported that one of these skills was available to a sufficient degree. This finding, illustrated in Table 10, reveals a severe lack of teacher aide skills in supporting students with disabilities across the Pacific.

Regional perspectives

When asked about the inclusive education professional development opportunities available for teachers and teacher aides/assistants across the Pacific, three regional organizations reported that they offered support for teacher training. USP is a major provider, offering Diploma and Degree level courses, as well as non-certified short courses if requested and funded by a partner organization. UNICEF and EQAP reported that training in inclusive education was, at times, integrated into general teacher professional development activities.

MFAT reported that, in 2021, it would fund a regional programme working with teacher training institutions in up to five countries to strengthen training for teachers, teacher aides and school leaders in inclusive education. In previous years, APTC offered a Certificate IV Disability and Certificate III in Individual Support; some teachers and teacher aides in some countries have completed one of these courses.

TABLE 9: Teacher aide – qualifications, training and geographic availability

COUNTRY	TEACHER AIDES?	QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED	TRAINING AVAILABLE	GEOGRAPHIC AVAILABILITY
Cook Islands	Yes	» School leavers qualification » NCEA Level 2 minimum » Work experience » First aid certificate » Teacher aide certificate preferred	» Ministry of Education induction » In-service training is provided by the inclusive education advisor when teacher aides start working with their students as well as whenever requested through the referral system	In all provinces (or divisions), including in remote schools and outer islands
FSM	Yes	» Not required	» Same as for teachers	In all provinces (or divisions) but only in major towns
Fiji	Yes	» Diploma in Special/Diverse Educational Needs	N/A	In all provinces (or divisions) but only in major towns
Kiribati	Yes	» Kiribati Teachers College Certificate III	» Continuous professional development	Only in the capital city
Nauru	Yes	» Not required	» Not required	In all provinces (or divisions), including in remote schools and outer islands
Niue	Yes	» Certificate in Teacher Aiding	» No response	No response
Palau	Yes	» High school diploma » Work experience	» Same as for teachers	In all provinces (or divisions) but only in major towns
PNG	Yes	» Diploma in ECE	» Teacher aide training is conducted by unregistered colleges » Sonoma Teachers College offers a Diploma in Early Childhood Teacher Training for two years » Diplomas in ECE are offered by the University of Goroka and Papua New Guinea Education Institute and Pacific Adventist University offers a Bachelor in ECE	In five provinces out of 22
RMI	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
Samoa	Yes	» Education Support Certificate 3 at APTC	» IEPs » Understanding disability	In all provinces (or divisions), including in remote schools and outer islands
Solomon Islands	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A
Tokelau	Yes	» Not required	» Same as for teachers	In all provinces (or divisions), including in remote schools and outer islands
Tonga	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
Tuvalu	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
Vanuatu	No	N/A	N/A	N/A

TABLE 10: Teacher aide skills, and sufficiency to meet demand

Country	Braille skills	Sufficiency	Sign language skills	Sufficiency	Augmentative and alternative communication	Sufficiency	Working with learners with intellectual disabilities	Sufficiency	Working with learners with behavioural, attention and social difficulties	Sufficiency
Cook Islands	No	Greatly insufficient	Yes	Sufficient	No	Greatly insufficient	No	Greatly insufficient	Yes	Sufficient
FSM	Yes	Greatly insufficient	Yes	Greatly insufficient	Yes	Greatly insufficient	Yes	Greatly insufficient	Yes	Greatly insufficient
Fiji	Yes	Greatly insufficient	Yes	Greatly insufficient	No response	Sufficient	No response	Moderately insufficient	No response	Greatly insufficient
Kiribati	Yes	Greatly insufficient	Yes	Greatly insufficient	Yes	Greatly insufficient	Yes	Greatly insufficient	Yes	Greatly insufficient
Nauru	No	Greatly insufficient	No	Greatly insufficient	No	Greatly insufficient	No	Greatly insufficient	No	Greatly insufficient
Niue	No	Greatly insufficient	No	Greatly insufficient	No	Greatly insufficient	No response	Greatly insufficient	No response	Sufficient
Palau	No	Greatly insufficient	Yes	Sufficient	No	Greatly insufficient	No	Greatly insufficient	No	Greatly insufficient
Samoa	No	Greatly insufficient	Yes	Moderately insufficient	No	Greatly insufficient	Yes	Moderately insufficient	Yes	Moderately insufficient
Tokelau	No	No response	No	No response	No	No response	No	No response	Yes	No response

PRIEF Priority 4:

Strengthening Partnerships

Results in this section incorporate data on issues related to PRIEF Priority 4, outlined in Figure 15.

FIGURE 15: PRIEF Priority 4

4.1 Intent

Collaborative efforts are made between ministries (including between government agencies), schools, special schools, service providers, organisations of persons with disability, civil society organisations, faith-based organisations, community organizations, persons with disabilities and families to enhance inclusive education for children with disabilities or at risk of being excluded.

4.2 Purpose

The nature of community and systems in the Pacific means that efforts to ensure access to quality inclusive education for all learners who may be vulnerable or at risk depends on multiple stakeholders working collaboratively. Challenges to access, regular participation, required family support and other factors that are barriers to participation can be more effectively and sustainably met through meaningful partnerships.

Underpinning the partnerships must be the voices of recipients of services. To maximise participation in education, it is important that learners with disabilities or at risk of being excluded are enabled to manage a range of activities for themselves and to self-advocate regarding their learning and support needs to school staff, other students, family members and the wider community.

Headline findings

- ▶ Responsibility for inclusive education is often held by a single education officer with limited capacity and authority to work effectively with other divisions, ministries and stakeholders.
- ▶ Cross-sectoral inclusive education coordination mechanisms are critical for inclusive education, including ECD, and must have multi-sectoral representation and a commitment from respective jurisdictions and agencies to collaboratively develop and implement required actions.

Country representatives were invited to rate their current status in terms of cross-sectoral coordination, coordination between national and sub-national levels, and participation of OPDs in supporting inclusive education (Figure 16). Table 11 outlines the indicators from which countries selected.



TABLE 11: Progress indicators for cross-sectoral coordination and partnerships

	PROGRESS INDICATORS			
	Initiating	Developing	Establishing	Championing
Cross-sectoral coordination	There is no system/ mechanism for cross-sectoral coordination among government and civil society relating to inclusive education.	Ministry is initiating a system/ mechanism for cross-sectoral coordination that sets out clear responsibilities of government and civil society stakeholders relating to inclusive education.	Ministry has an established working system for cross-sectoral coordination that sets out clear responsibilities among government and civil society stakeholders relating to inclusive education.	Ministry has an established and working system for coordination among government departments that sets out clear responsibilities. As a result, multi-disciplinary support services for children are established and provided.
Coordination – national and sub-national	There is no system/ mechanism for coordination between schools and government education offices.	There is a system/ mechanism for coordination between schools and government education offices. However, implementation could be improved.	Ministry has an established mechanism for coordination between national and local education government units, down to the school level. The mechanism enables the regular exchange of information.	Ministry has an established mechanism for coordination between national and local education government units, down to the school level. The mechanism promotes regular consultation, increases collaboration and enhances planning and monitoring.
Participation of OPDs	Participation of OPDs in programmes relating to education of children with disabilities is low and needs to be strengthened.	The government has taken initial steps to increase the participation of OPDs in programmes relating to children with disabilities.	Legislation, policy and national programmes relating to children with disabilities have been developed through extensive consultation with OPDs.	Legislation, policy and national programmes relating to children with disabilities have been developed through extensive consultation with OPDs. OPDs are actively involved in the implementation of inclusive education.

Inclusive education leadership

In 12 countries, inclusive education is managed by a single officer within the education agency (ministry or department). In at least four of these countries, that officer has multiple other responsibilities.

Quality inclusive education outcomes rely on inclusion embedded within relevant policies and processes in various parts of ministries of education, including, for example, divisions responsible for exams and assessment, curriculum, textbooks and learning materials, workforce, training and development, finance, information management systems, information technology, infrastructure and assets, and disaster management. In order to embed inclusion in these systems, the inclusive education officer needs to have time, capacity and authority to work with these divisions.

PROMISING PRACTICE

Samoa – cross-sectoral Inclusive Education Reference Group

Samoa's Ministry for Education, Sports and Culture has incorporated indicators related to inclusive education within its Education Sector Plan and a budget has been identified to progress efforts in line with its Inclusive Education Policy for Students Living with Disability. A cross-sectoral **Inclusive Education Reference Group** steers this work. The Ministry is supporting selected model schools to utilize an inclusive education approach and has developed a handbook and rubric to help principals and teachers to identify strengths and areas for development, develop strategies to progress inclusive education, and implement and monitor these. The Ministry partners with OPDs to identify out-of-school children with disabilities and to support them to enrol and attend. In partnership with disability service providers, the Ministry funds teacher aides to support students with disabilities attending mainstream schools.

Cross-sectoral coordination to support inclusive education

Partnerships and collaborations between education agencies and other ministries and government and non-government stakeholders are fundamental in achieving the wide-ranging conditions to enable inclusive education. Some education agencies (including ministries and departments) in the region struggle to sustain regular working partnerships and co-commitment to build the enabling factors required for inclusive education. However, there are many examples of collaboration.

In **Kiribati**, the Ministry of Education has partnered with other ministries to achieve financial assistance for wheelchairs; with the Ministry of Infrastructure and Sustainable Energy to work on an accessible building code for schools; with the Ministry of Health to organize free medical check-ups for students with disabilities; with the special school to arrange sign language interpreters in mainstream schools; and with the Ministry of Labour, through KIT, in designing and offering courses for students with disabilities.

Kiribati and **RMI** rated themselves as “championing” in cross-sectoral coordination, meaning there is an established and working system for coordination among government departments that sets out clear responsibilities, and that, as a result, multi-disciplinary services for children are established and provided. Five countries (**FSM**, **Niue**, **Samoa**, **Solomon Islands** and **Vanuatu**) reported that they were “establishing” this level of coordination. **Fiji**, **Palau**, **PNG** and **Tokelau** were “developing” a system for cross-sectoral coordination, and **Cook Islands**, **Nauru**, **Tonga** and **Tuvalu** rated themselves at the lowest level, which indicates that there is no system/mechanism for cross-sectoral coordination among government and civil society relating to inclusive education.

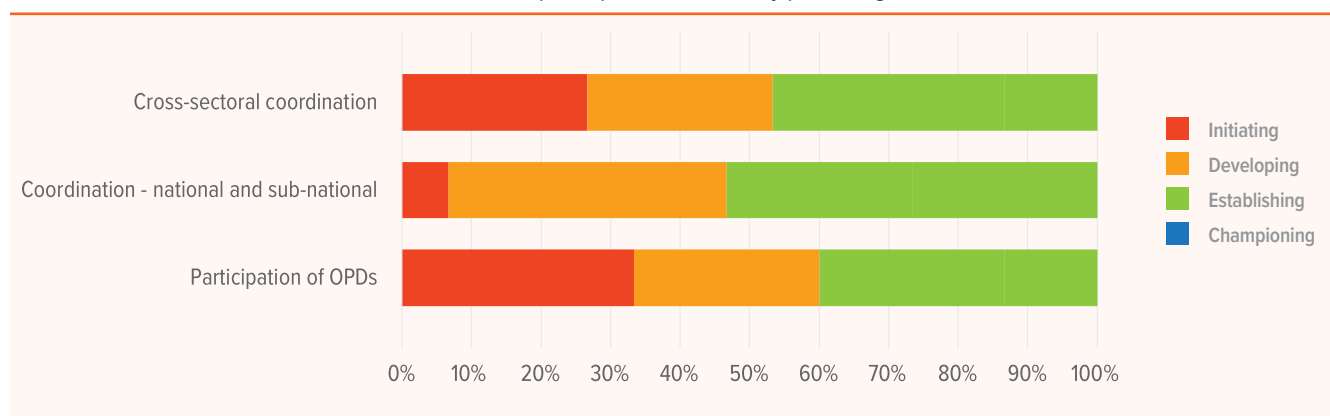
In **RMI**, the Special Education Advisory Council ensures that all the Indicators in Special Education are met and makes recommendations to the National Board of Education. **Kiribati** has a working group made up of the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Women, Youth, Sports and Social Affairs, and NGOs.

The **FSM** Interagency Agreement (November 2009) established a general agreement between the Department of Health and Social Affairs and the Department of Education for the early identification of and interventions for children with special needs. Other agencies were subsequently invited and became members (Department of Justice, Social Security Administration, Disabled Peoples Organization, College of Micronesia, SPC, NGOs, FBOs and women's groups). At the state level, similar organizations were established with similar partner members.

Inclusive education within school-based committees or working groups

Most countries reported that school-based committees or working groups were encouraged to support inclusive education to some extent. In **Tokelau**, community groups are fully engaged and contribute strongly to school events that support inclusive education, such as culture days and career days. School committees in **Cook Islands** contribute to schools' strategic plans, which must meet the standards of the **Cook Islands** Administration Guidelines, which mandate inclusive education. Similarly in **FSM**, School Improvement Planning teams are required to consider accessible instructional materials and environments, aligned with national accreditation standards. This opportunity allows the team to build on good inclusive education practices.

FIGURE 16: Status of cross-sectoral coordination, and participation of OPDs, by percentage of countries



Multi-sectoral collaboration to promote early childhood development

ECD is a comprehensive approach to policies and programmes for children from birth to age of school entry, their parents and caregivers. Pacific regional organizations including PIFS and UNICEF promote multi-sectoral coordination for ECD to improve the delivery of essential services, including health and education, which promote caregiving behaviours, demand for services and positive parenting.

Multi-sectoral ECD services strongly support inclusive education. Access to early intervention, health services, social protection support and ECE can maximize wellbeing and education outcomes for all children, including those with disabilities.

At the 2019 Pacific ECD Forum, ministers from across the region endorsed the Terms of Reference for a Pacific Regional Council for ECD, with ministerial representation at the Council level and permanent secretary representation at the Steering Committee level. Ministers called on all governments to implement the nine-point Pasifika Call to Action on ECD (Figure 17). Pacific leaders called for the transitioning of the Pacific Regional Council on Early Childhood Care and Education (PRCECCE) to a more multi-sectoral Pacific Regional Council for ECD.

A recommended mechanism for supporting ECD at the national level has been the establishment of ECD focal points in each country. While the presence of these was not reported in the data collected during this mapping exercise, PIFS has been working with ECD stakeholders across the Pacific to encourage the establishment of these roles.

ECD systems across the Pacific region are still emerging. While **FSM** and **Palau** stakeholders rated their ECD system as “championing,” **Solomon Islands** reported that it was developing ECD services, and **Cook Islands** stakeholders reported that they were in the initiating phase for inclusive ECD services.

In **PNG**, the Early Childhood Care and Development Policy 2007 is pending review with the Department of Community Development. UNICEF **PNG** is supporting the Office of Child and Family Services to review this so that it is multi-sectoral and addresses children with and without disabilities, in school, out of school and during emergencies.

FIGURE 17: Pasifika Call to Action on Early Childhood Development (ECD)



Coordination between national and sub-national authorities

Effective coordination between national and sub-national levels of education enables critical information flow, in both directions, regarding issues such as policies, resources, support, assessments, challenges and positive practices. Some countries have a three-tiered system – central, island/district/provincial and school (**FSM, Fiji, Kiribati, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu**). Other countries have a direct link between the ministry and schools (**Cook Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, RMI, Tokelau and Tuvalu**). The highest level of coordination between national and sub-national levels was reported by **FSM, Kiribati, Palau and Solomon Islands**, with most other countries ranking themselves in the middle of the continuum, except **Nauru**, which identified itself as having no system for coordination related to inclusion between schools and government.

Organizations of Persons with Disability and other civil society organizations

OPDs, FBOs, NGOs and other CSOs, including women's groups, have played a central role in both advocating for and providing special and inclusive education in the Pacific over many years. PDF is the peak body of OPDs in all Pacific Island Countries and has played a strong role in advancing the voices and interests of people with disabilities through advocacy, research, capacity development, policy advice and partnership-building.

In some countries, civil society has been the main service provider, such as in **PNG** (where Callan Services supports the IERC programmes), in **Fiji** (where NGOs and FBOs run special schools and many mainstream schools) and in **Samoa** (where NGOs deliver special education and support inclusive education on behalf of the Ministry of Education).

The CSO Forum aims to forge better awareness of PacREF and solicit the support of CSOs for the achievement of its aims, which embed inclusive education. The CSO Forum comprises the Pacific Islands Association of Non-Government Organisations (PIANGO), Save the Children, Live and Learn, COPE, the Pacific Council of Churches, the **Fiji** Council of Social Services, the Pacific Youth Council and PDF.

PRIEF Priority 5:**Inclusive Practices and Accessibility**

Results in this section incorporate data related to issues in PRIEF Priority 5, outlined in Figure 18.

FIGURE 18: PRIEF Priority 5

5.1 Intent

There should be increased enrolment, attendance/retention and achievement of children with disabilities or at risk of being excluded in accessible education facilities. Children should be assessed not only academically but also in terms of social emotional skills and self-management capacity. School curriculum and assessment processes should be inclusive and acknowledge the diverse learning needs and modalities of learning and expression of all children. The concept of universal design to meet learners' different needs and different learning styles should be applied. Children with disabilities or at risk of being excluded should be able to transition through the various educational settings from early childhood to post-secondary options.

5.2 Purpose

Implementation of inclusive education requires that children with disabilities or at risk of being excluded are intentionally and actively engaged in schools by being enrolled, attending, actively participating and achieving using an assortment of learning theories (see 5.1 above). It also requires that children with disabilities or at risk of being excluded are able to access education facilities including physical access of the buildings, access to teaching and learning materials, and access to transport. Reasonable accommodations are important if all students are to participate fully in the curriculum and assessment practices. This may require providing differentiated curricula and student-focused pedagogy. Transition from lower to higher grades is an expected pathway for all children. Progress to higher education and/or employment should be possible for all children including those with disability or at risk of exclusion.

Headline findings

- ▶ Skills and guidance to enable adapted delivery of mainstream curricula to a range of diverse learners are limited.
- ▶ Policies that enable accessible assessment processes are not commonly in place or implemented.
- ▶ IPEs are in place in most countries but are not yet used for all students with disabilities.
- ▶ Lower-cost reasonable accommodations/adjustments are implemented to enable inclusive education more frequently than are higher-cost modifications.
- ▶ Systems to promote a smooth transition between educational levels for the general student population are in place in most countries. However, few countries have established processes to enable transition for students with disabilities.
- ▶ Access to post-school education and training varies greatly across the region. The most common form of training available for marginalized learners is TVET, literacy and numeracy, and bridging training; however, access to these requires strengthening.
- ▶ While policies and awareness-raising programmes are in place, the culture of inclusion in schools falls short of expectations.
- ▶ Policies and practices to promote gender-balanced access and to mitigate and address bullying and violence against children are insufficient, and policies to support learners of diverse sexual orientation and gender identity are not yet in place.
- ▶ Schools are more likely to have accessible classrooms, handwashing and sanitation facilities, and less likely to have accessible menstrual hygiene management facilities.

Country representatives were invited to rate their current status in terms of enabling inclusive practices and accessibility to support inclusive education. Table 12 outlines the indicators that countries were invited to consider.

TABLE 12: Progress indicators for inclusive practices and accessibility

	PROGRESS INDICATORS			
	Initiating	Developing	Establishing	Championing
Inclusive curriculum	The national curriculum is rigid and does not respond effectively to the varying needs of all learners.	Discussions are ongoing to review and reform the national curriculum so that it responds to all learners.	Actions have been taken by government to reform the standard national curriculum to ensure it is flexible, adaptable and responsive to all learners.	The country is implementing an inclusive and flexible national curriculum that is accessible to all learners.
Inclusive assessment	The national assessment system is rigid and does not provide reasonable accommodations to enable the participation of all learners in assessment.	The national assessment system is rigid and does not provide reasonable accommodations to enable the participation of all learners in assessment.	Actions have been taken by government to reform the standard national assessment system to ensure it is flexible, adaptable and responsive to all learners.	The country is implementing an inclusive and flexible national assessment system that is accessible to all learners.
Transition from ECE to primary education	There are no mechanisms in place to ensure children with disabilities transition from ECE to primary education.	Some schools support the effective transition of children with disabilities from ECE to primary education, while others do not.	The ministry of education provides accommodations and adaptations to ensure children with disabilities transition from early childhood care and education to primary education.	The ministry of education provides accommodations and adaptations to ensure children with disabilities transition from early childhood care and education to primary education. This is enshrined in national policy.
Safe and child-friendly learning environment (procedures for safeguarding, anti-bullying, anti-abuse and ensuring child protection)	The government acknowledges the importance of developing inclusive school communities to tackle stigmatization, bullying, abuse and discrimination, but implementation is limited.	The ministry of education has in place procedures for safeguarding the rights of children but these are not widely implemented.	The ministry of education has institutionalized procedures for safeguarding the rights of children based on the principles of inclusion and equity. Effective measures to prevent abuse and bullying are in place at the school level.	The ministry of Education has institutionalized procedures for safeguarding, anti-bullying, anti-abuse and ensuring child protection. Effective measures to prevent abuse and bullying are in place. Programmes aimed at creating inclusive, safe and positive learning environments in the schools are implemented.
Physical accessibility of learning environment	Almost all schools and education facilities are physically inaccessible for students with disabilities.	The government has started drafting a national guideline/ policy to guarantee that all school buildings, facilities, resources and services are accessible to all learners.	National guidelines based on universal design are in place to ensure that students with disabilities have full equitable access to buildings, facilities, resources and services.	National guidelines based on universal design are in place to ensure that students with disabilities have full equitable access to buildings, facilities, resources and services. Needed adjustments are included in the school improvement plan.

PROMISING PRACTICE

Palau

Inclusive curriculum and assessment practices

In Palau, although actions have been taken to reform the standard curriculum, the Ministry of Education still plays an active role in ensuring students with disabilities participate and progress in the standard curriculum, providing services and supports including assistive technology devices and services to meet their unique needs. Measurable annual academic and functional goals, services and supports are identified and stated in the IEP that is developed by the school team (including parent/s) and implemented at the school where the child is enrolled, in collaboration with service providers to address health issues as appropriate.

Students with disabilities in school are required to participate in state-wide assessments and provided accommodations to meet their unique needs. Accommodations are identified during the development of the child's IEP and are provided by school personnel during the administration of each assessment. Students with significant cognitive disabilities participate in the alternate assessment in place of the regular state-wide assessments. With the new improvements in the Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PILNA), students with disabilities will be able to participate, as two accommodations (big print and extended time) are now allowed.

Inclusive curriculum and assessment

While all learners have the right to the same curriculum, the curriculum must be responsive and accessible to a diverse range of learners. Likewise, assessment must be accessible to a diverse range of learners. As Figure 19 demonstrates, the majority of countries reported that they were in the process of developing, establishing and/or championing inclusive curricula (**FSM, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, PNG, RMI, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga and Vanuatu**) and assessment processes (**FSM, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, PNG, RMI, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga and Vanuatu**).

Fiji reported that it was in the initiating stage, as a review of the curriculum is currently underway, with a focus on how fit-for-purpose it is for students with disabilities.

In **Kiribati**, workshops and other support have been provided to personnel at the Curriculum Unit to ensure the national curriculum is inclusive; however, staff turnover is high, and this has hindered the implementation of inclusion in the curriculum. A guide on how to mainstream inclusion in the curriculum is under development. Examination instruction guidelines are provided to remind examiners of how to include a child with disability during an exam. Further, the Exams Unit is provided with IEPs, which highlight the reasonable accommodations needed by students with disabilities. This includes large fonts, double time and interpreters.

In **Nauru**, a continuous seamless inclusive curriculum, and assessment throughout the different levels of learning, has yet to be developed.

In **PNG**, IERCs adapt the national standard-based curriculum to suit the needs of all learners. Teachers in some schools provide enrichment work to students who need it, including students with learning difficulties. Students with disabilities are assessed on different areas: developmental, social and communication skills, and academic skills and knowledge. These assessments identify children's functional capacities, as well as the skills they are developing. The assessment provides information that helps teachers and parents plan the child's IEP.

Solomon Islands stakeholders agreed that the national curriculum had captured inclusive education and that all learners were considered. However, application of the national assessment policy is rigid and does not yet allow for the application of reasonable accommodations during examinations.

In **Tokelau**, the development of inclusive curricula and assessment processes is a focus for development partners. **Tonga** stakeholders reported that the current curriculum was inclusive of all learners although there were no specific adapted learning materials for students with vision and hearing impairments. However, the current curriculum is due to be reviewed.

In **Vanuatu**, the review of the primary school curriculum and senior secondary school curriculum found that key documents (syllabus, policy and teacher support materials) described approaches to promote inclusive education. The guidelines are very general and there is limited advice and support across the system on how to support students with different physical and specific learning difficulties. The curriculum developed for early childhood care and education

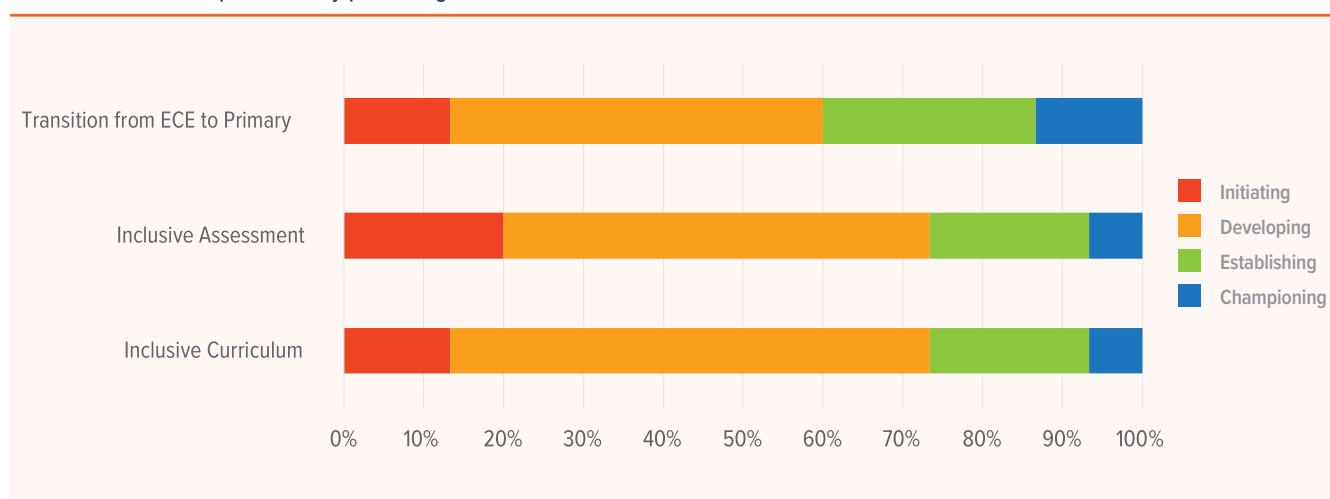
is currently under review. The few inclusive education teachers working in schools have been trained in making adaptations to their lessons to suit the needs of children; however, there are few available resources across the system to support this. Some schools are trialling the use of inclusion kits that comprise materials for students with disabilities. Generally, across all schools, teachers lack the knowledge, understanding and ability to adapt lessons to suit the learning needs of children with different types of disabilities. National assessments cater for children with disabilities if school principals notify the National Examination Office; however, the flexibility to respond is limited.

Cook Islands and **Tuvalu** stakeholders reported that the use of an inclusive curriculum and inclusive assessment processes was at the initiating stage. In **Cook Islands**, stakeholders reported that the mainstream curriculum was utilized and adapted for all students. In terms of assessment, at National Certificate of Educational Achievement level, there is the opportunity for senior-level students to apply for a special assessment coordinator to assist with assessments by way of reader and writer, extra time, separate accommodations and access to devices.²⁸

In **Tuvalu**, there is no existing inclusive curriculum, although there is an existing guide. Stakeholders reported that PILNA employed the use of an increased font size and extended duration for students requiring those adjustments.

RMI reported that it was championing the use of an inclusive curriculum and assessment; however, no additional information was provided about this.

FIGURE 19: Inclusive practices, by percentage of countries



28. This response demonstrates the subjectivity involved in the survey, as countries with similar strategies in place assessed themselves to be “establishing” or “championing.”

Use of Individual Education Plans

IEPs determine student strengths as well as their learning goals, strategies and assessment plans. IEPs are developed by teachers and/or teacher aides with students with disabilities, their parents and other key people, including specialists. IEPs take a holistic view of the child and of learning, and guide adaptation of the curriculum so that all children can benefit. IEPs are generally not used with all students with disabilities but rather with those who need extensive assistance to participate in lessons and assessment according to the curriculum.

As Table 13 outlines, all countries except for **Solomon Islands** and **Tokelau** reported using IEPs to support the learning of students with disabilities. All of these countries reported that the IEPs considered the strengths of students with disabilities, alongside areas for development. **RMI** representatives reported that the establishment of an IEP was compulsory before a child with disabilities was placed in a school.

Availability of reasonable accommodations

Reasonable accommodations are adjustments made to accommodate the needs of the individual learner. Reasonable accommodations enable learners to gain access to education on an equal basis with others. As Table 14 shows, reasonable accommodations are mandated by policy in all countries, although their availability varies. Lower-cost accommodations such as adaptations to classroom seating, lesson plans or activities are more widely available than more costly assistive technologies and personal assistance.

In **Cook Islands** and **Fiji**, all accommodations are reportedly available on request or referral. In addition to the reasonable accommodations outlined in Table 14, **Cook Islands**, **Fiji**, **Palau** and **Tuvalu** reported that sign language was made available to Deaf students. In **Cook Islands**, one-to-one support is available for students requiring it. **Palau** reported that small group instruction was used during lessons, and periodic breaks were provided to students with disabilities during assessment. **PNG** reported that people with disabilities who needed transport and separate toilets were provided with these, and in **Tokelau** students with disabilities have flexible start and finish times if required.

TABLE 13: Use of IEPs

COUNTRY	IEPs IN USE	IEPs USED IN MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS	IEPs USED IN SPECIAL SCHOOLS
Cook Islands	Yes	Yes	Yes
FSM	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fiji	Yes	No	Yes
Kiribati	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nauru	Yes	Yes	Yes
Niue	Yes	Yes	Yes
Palau	Yes	Yes	Yes
PNG	Yes	Yes	Yes
RMI	Yes	Yes	Yes
Samoa	Yes	Yes	Yes
Solomon Islands	No	No	Yes
Tokelau	No	N/A	N/A
Tonga	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tuvalu	Yes	Yes	Yes
Vanuatu	Yes	Yes	N/A

TABLE 14: Availability of policy-mandated reasonable accommodations in classrooms

Country	Student sits close to board or teacher	Lessons are modified or reduced in complexity	Enlarged printed materials are provided	Additional time is provided during assessments	Personal assistance is provided during assessments (e.g. note-taking)	Physical education activities are modified	Personal assistance is provided (e.g. assistance with note-taking, communication, managing behaviour)	Assistive technologies are provided (e.g. magnifier, electronic devices, computers, communication boards)
Cook Islands	Widely available	Widely available	Widely available	Widely available	Widely available	Widely available	Widely available	Widely available
FSM	Widely available	Widely available	Available to a small extent	Available to a small extent	Available to a small extent	Not available	Available to a small extent	Available to a small extent
Fiji	Widely available	Widely available	Widely available	Widely available	Widely available	Widely available	Widely available	Widely available
Kiribati	Widely available	Widely available	Moderately available	Available to a small extent	Available to a small extent	Moderately available	Available to a small extent	Available to a small extent
Nauru	Widely available	Widely available	Widely available	Moderately available	Moderately available	Moderately available	Moderately available	Widely available
Niue	Widely available	Widely available	Widely available	Widely available	Moderately available	Widely available	Moderately available	Moderately available
Palau	Widely available	Widely available	Widely available	Widely available	Widely available	Widely available	Not available	Widely available
PNG	Widely available	Widely available	Widely available	Widely available	Moderately available	Moderately available	Moderately available	Moderately available
RMI	Widely available	Widely available	Widely available	Widely available	Widely available	Moderately available	Moderately available	Widely available
Samoa	Available to a small extent	Available to a small extent	Available to a small extent	Not available	Available to a small extent	Available to a small extent	Available to a small extent	Available to a small extent
Solomon Islands	Available to a small extent	Available to a small extent	Available to a small extent	Available to a small extent	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available
Tokelau	Widely available	Widely available	Moderately available	Widely available	Widely available	Widely available	Moderately available	Moderately available
Tonga	Widely available	Moderately available	Available to a small extent	Not available	Not available	Available to a small extent	Available to a small extent	Not available
Tuvalu	Widely available	Widely available	Moderately available	Widely available	Moderately available	Available to a small extent	Moderately available	Moderately available
Vanuatu	Available to a small extent	Available to a small extent	Available to a small extent	Available to a small extent	Available to a small extent	Available to a small extent	Available to a small extent	Available to a small extent

Early childhood education

ECE supports the development and preparedness of all children, including those with disabilities, for school. Stakeholders in each country were invited to rate the degree to which ECE was established and the situation regarding transition of children with disabilities from ECE to primary education.

The majority of countries reported that they were developing or establishing inclusive ECE services (Fiji, **Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, PNG, RMI, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu** and **Vanuatu**) and supporting children with disabilities to transition from ECE to primary school (**Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, PNG, RMI, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga** and **Vanuatu**).

In **Kiribati**, the Ministry of Education, with the support of UNICEF, has established a section to manage ECE and developed a policy to guide implementation. The standard/requirement for a standard pre-school is in place and now being used to assess the eligibility of providers' registration. Transition from ECE to primary school is not yet compulsory. Some children do not attend ECE, for various reasons, and ECE is not yet considered part of the education system.

PNG's National Executive Council endorsed the ECE Policy in 2020. **Papua New Guinea** Education Institute has institutionalized an ECE Diploma qualification, from which the first cohort of 56 teachers graduated in 2020. A draft ECE curriculum for children aged four and five will be finalized in 2021. The IERCs are implementing inclusive ECE programmes. Children with disabilities transition from ECE to pre-primary, including Kindergarten 1 (age four), Kindergarten 2 (five) and Preparatory Class (six).

In **Tokelau**, measures to support pre-school children with disabilities include parents attending ECE with their child, a reduction in the teacher-pupil ratio and resources purchased to meet children's needs. Supports in **Palau** for pre-school children with disabilities include transportation to and from school, reasonable accommodations, training for teachers and parents, and Culturally Responsive Teaching within ECE.

In **Tonga**, all pre-schools are open to children with disabilities. **Tonga** stakeholders reported that UNICEF was providing support to review the ECE curriculum. This aims to be inclusive of all learners. The Ministry of Education's Inclusive Education Unit provides in-service training for ECE teachers on inclusive education approaches. ECE centres can also request specific support from the Unit.

Tuvalu reported that transition of students with disabilities from ECE to primary was automatic from the perspective of the Education Department but parents would make the ultimate decision. Despite identifying ECE services as "developing," **Vanuatu** reported that the ECE curriculum did not include provisions for learners with disabilities, and teachers frequently lacked skills in adapting it.

Solomon Islands reported that it was developing ECE services but at the earlier initiating stage of supporting the transition of children with disabilities from ECE to primary school. This is identified as a challenge. The Ministry of Education has developed an ECE policy recognizing the inclusion of children with disabilities in ECCE; this is now under review.

Cook Islands stakeholders reported that they were in the initiating phase for inclusive ECE services. ECE centres do not exclude children with disabilities on purpose; however, at some centres staff are unsure of how to meet their needs. Most schools will notify inclusive education advisors through the referral system. Advisors visit the centre and work together with them and the family. If a child has a diagnosis, the advisors are better equipped to support the child, teacher and family. However, if there is no diagnosis, it is a challenge. A diagnosis helps families and teachers better understand what the child is experiencing and how to help. There are still families that are reluctant to accept a diagnosis. Advisors try and focus on how the child can be included in class rather than focusing on their disability. Making the child feel included is paramount.

FSM stakeholders rated their ECE system as “championing.” **FSM** has a procedural manual specific to Early Childhood Special Education and the evaluation of performance. This requires pre- and post-testing of children with disabilities upon entry and before exiting ECE. Although public ECE is made available to five year olds, three and four year olds with disabilities can enrol.

Palau stakeholders also identified their system as championing ECE. The Ministry of Education collaborates with the Belau Head Start Program to ensure pre-schoolers (ages three to five) with disabilities participate in activities with their same-aged peers without disabilities and receive the support/services to meet their unique requirements. Annual goals with support and services are identified and indicated in each child’s IEP. The same IEP process is followed as for school-aged children with disabilities at the schools.

Transition between educational levels

Systems to promote a smooth transition between educational levels for the general student population are in place in most countries. However, few countries have established processes to enable transition for students with disabilities. Table 15 demonstrates that five countries have established policies to support this.

In **Cook Islands**, policies and EMIS reporting support and monitor transitions. The inclusive education advisor encourages students and is available for consultation to support all transitions, even between classes at school. Students are monitored through the IEP process, and transition meetings are encouraged and facilitated by the advisor.

In **FSM**, the Division of Special Services guides and supports state special education programmes to implement transition support services to students with disabilities, who have IEPs and Individual Transition Plans (ITPs). Beginning at age 14, students with IEPs must have an ITP that maps out their academic or vocational goals, their study course and how they will transition from secondary school to college, employment, self-employment or independent living.

In **Palau**, the Ministry of Education collaborates with the Head Start Program to conduct student orientation before the beginning of each school year for all incoming first graders at each public elementary school. Similarly, the Ministry of Education conducts a Grade 8 Transition Workshop for two days in April each year for students and parents to access information to assist in easing their transition to the new school. The Ministry of Education conducts a College Night twice a year for 12th graders and their parents in preparation for college. As well as participating in these activities, students with disabilities participate in a more individualized transition process at the school level. A transition meeting is conducted between the student's current school and the new school, involving school administrators, teachers, special education specialists from both schools and the student, parent/s and related service providers. A transition meeting is conducted for each student with disability advancing from elementary (Grade 8) to high school (Grade 9).

Vanuatu stakeholders reported that, although inclusive education was an important agenda item, it was not sufficiently reflected in existing policies. While transition from one education level to another is inclusive of all children/students regardless of their disability status, there is a need to determine whether students with disabilities require additional support to enable transition.

In **Nauru**, there are no supports to enable students with disabilities to transition between educational levels. In **Tokelau**, there are transition programmes between ECE and primary, and students transitioning from primary to secondary participate in a briefing session.

TABLE 15: Transition between educational levels

COUNTRY	STRATEGIES IN PLACE TO SUPPORT TRANSITION						
	Policy requires students to progress with age-appropriate cohorts	Policy/legislation mandates compulsory schooling	EMIS reporting on transition	ITPs for students with IEPs	Individual monitoring of students	Orientation/transition workshop	Transition meetings between students, parents and teachers
Cook Islands	X	X	X	X	X		X
FSM	X	X		X			
Fiji				X			
Kiribati				X			
Niue					X		
Palau					X	X	X
PNG	X	X		X	X	X	X
RMI				X			
Samoa	X	X		X			
Solomon Islands		X					
Tokelau						X	
Tonga		X					
Tuvalu	X						
No data available for Nauru and Vanuatu							

Transition to post-school education and training

Countries were invited to identify the programmes available to prepare people with disabilities for post-school education, training and work. They were then invited to indicate the level of accessibility for people with disabilities of various post-school education, training and work programmes, and then to describe them, their adequacy and/or how they could be strengthened.

As Table 16 outlines, generally, across the Pacific, students with disabilities are more likely to have access to TVET, literacy and numeracy, and/or life skills training compared with other options. Where access to these was rated positively, it was more likely to be ranked as “somewhat good” rather than “extremely good.” This suggests there is still work to be done to improve access. Bridging courses were the least available post-school training options.

Access to post-school education and training reportedly varies greatly across the region. **Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands** and **Tonga** reported that access to at least four out of five types of training was either somewhat or extremely good. **Tonga** provides financial support to enable youth from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds and outer islands to enrol in TVET schools.

Fiji reported that life skills training was part of students with disabilities’ non-formal learning, “silently” embedded in the special education curriculum delivered through the IEPs. This leads to enrolment in either literacy and numeracy programmes, bridging courses or work preparation courses. **Fiji** National University offers bridging courses, and scholarships for students with disabilities. Stakeholders reported that group courses would make bridging courses more affordable for more students with disabilities.

Kiribati Institute of Technology offers a bridging course but this is not a direct entry course. There are specific criteria for eligibility and the selection process is carried out via community consultation using ChildFund youth workers to determine the most suitable applicants from across a particular community. KIT does have a Certificate I in Vocational Preparation, currently being trialled. **Kiribati** stakeholders reported that teachers needed to be given proper training, and more realistic attainable skills, such as sewing, cookery and carpentry, should be taught.

Samoa reported that while learning practical TVET skills is of interest to students with disabilities, the theory is less interesting, potentially because it is introduced late in schools. Lack of support means there is limited sustainability of life skills programmes. There are also insufficient human resources to deliver training courses. Bridging courses are offered at the National University of **Samoa**, and literacy and numeracy training through APTC, which has partnered with **Samoa’s** OPD NOLA to develop accessible pathways to numeracy and literacy. One issue is that training courses are infrequently matched with jobs, resulting in unemployment and dissatisfaction among learners with disabilities.

Solomon Islands reported a major barrier in the lack of professionalism among trainers within rural training centres, who are less likely to accept students with disabilities. In **Tonga**, TVET programmes offered are reportedly good, and there

is high enrolment of students with disabilities; however, challenges such as lack of resources, inaccessible facilities and limited trained teachers limit outcomes.

FSM, Niue, Palau, PNG and **RMI** reported that access to post-school education and training for students with disabilities was positive in multiple areas, with some areas for development.

FSM reported that existing programmes showed some level of support to prepare people with disabilities for post-school education, training and work. However, these need support from the community, private sector, civil society, etc. in order to ensure the effective transition of people with disabilities in the community as a whole. In addition, there is a need for consistent and monitored coordination of cross-sectoral efforts and provision of support to people with disabilities.

Niue High School is looking at adding horticulture/agriculture to its TVET opportunities. There are no bridging courses available but there is an appetite to introduce these if development partners are interested. There are plans in the pipeline to introduce work preparation courses to support the transition from secondary school into the workforce; however, there is limited capacity to tailor such a course. USP is planning to introduce some outreach courses.

Palau Community College offers vocational training programmes, including automotive and electronic programmes that individuals with disabilities can access after high school. The college also offers continuing education programmes on specific skills such as wood carving, sewing, cooking, etc., which are accessible by community members including individuals with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities access support from the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programme, such as On the Job Training, for six months and receive monetary support for that duration. The challenge lies in whether the employer will hire the person at the end of the training period. Koror state government sometimes provides summer training programmes and work opportunities for students with disabilities after high school.

TVET institutions in **PNG** are willing to accept students with disabilities; however, teachers have had insufficient training on how to support and educate students with disabilities. The College of Distance Education holds bridging courses to upgrade marks. Students with disabilities have access to the facilities to upgrade their qualification before moving to other higher learning programmes. Life skills training for people with disabilities is provided mainly by IERCs and community-based rehabilitation officers. The Department for Community Development and Religion has officers working in provincial offices and provides grants for people with disabilities to establish small income-generating projects in their community. However, people with disabilities have limited access to the funds and the services do not reach the bulk of population in rural and remote areas. The National Department of Education has literacy and numeracy training programmes for youths, mothers and people with disabilities.

Although **RMI** already has an Inclusive Education Policy, this is implemented only by formal education providers. Locally available TVET programmes do not implement the policy. There is a need for training on what the policy means for TVET providers.

PROMISING PRACTICE

Vanuatu Inclusion in the TVET sector

Vanuatu's MoET works with post-school education and training providers to implement a disability-inclusive approach. In line with Vanuatu's National Disability Inclusion Policy for the TVET Sector, and with support from the Vanuatu Skills Partnership, training providers have developed and implemented disability inclusion action plans. These include awareness-raising to promote opportunities for people with disabilities, improvements to accessibility, enrolment procedures and data collection. Trainers participate in professional development to strengthen their skills and confidence in teaching people with disabilities. These efforts have resulted in increased numbers of people with disabilities participating in skills development opportunities across Vanuatu.

Cook Islands, Nauru, Tokelau, Tuvalu and **Vanuatu** reported pockets of good practice alongside inadequacies in access to post-school education and training for students with disabilities.

In **Cook Islands**, a dual pathways programme with **Cook Islands** Trades and Training Institute provides skills in trades such as carpentry, electrical work, mechanics and hospitality skills. This is a one-year course, and students learn skills and by the end of the year gain employment. The course is open to everyone, including students with disabilities. In schools, a careers advisor coordinates with schools and teachers. New Zealand-accredited life skills programmes are offered at all schools as well as in the outer islands. The courses are contextualized to suit the needs of each island and include the expertise of the community – for example fishing, carving, weaving, making jewellery from natural resources, etc. Stakeholders reported that life skills provision needed improvement. Bridging courses exist but are not inclusive of students with disabilities. Work preparation courses and literacy and numeracy training are available but nothing was known on their accessibility for students with disabilities.

In **Nauru**, disability-inclusive post-school education and training options are yet to be developed. **Nauru** stakeholders expressed a particular interest in establishing life skills training.

Tokelau has some very limited literacy and numeracy programmes but these are generally not available for students with disabilities. **Tokelau** stakeholders reported that a stronger assessment system was required, for the identification of disabilities and needs and the exploration of appropriate post-school education and training priorities.

In **Tuvalu**, TVET and life skills courses are open to everyone but registrations are limited. There are currently no bridging courses or work preparation courses available. Literacy and numeracy programmes are available but not fully utilized.

In **Vanuatu**, TVET centres provide trainings that include students with disabilities. MoET has developed a post-school education and training policy that highlights TVET as an opportunity through which students with disabilities can be trained to find work and contribute to the economic development of the country. A CSO, Wan Smol Bag, offers life skills training to school dropouts; its programmes are for everyone. However, MoET and disability service providers such as VSPD need to strengthen the network with Wan Smol Bag to better enable transitions.

TABLE 16: Accessibility of post-school education and training for students with disabilities

COUNTRY	ACCESSIBILITY OF TVET	ACCESSIBILITY OF LIFE SKILLS COURSES	ACCESSIBILITY OF BRIDGING COURSES	ACCESSIBILITY OF WORK PREPARATION COURSES	ACCESSIBILITY OF LITERACY AND NUMERACY COURSES
Cook Islands	Neither good nor bad	Somewhat bad	Somewhat bad	Somewhat bad	Somewhat bad
FSM	Neither good nor bad	Neither good nor bad	Neither good nor bad	Neither good nor bad	Somewhat good
Fiji	Somewhat good	Somewhat good	Somewhat good	Somewhat good	Somewhat good
Kiribati	Somewhat good	Extremely good	Somewhat good	Neither good nor bad	Somewhat good
Nauru	Extremely bad	Extremely bad	Extremely bad	Extremely bad	Extremely bad
Niue	Somewhat good	Somewhat good	Neither good nor bad	Neither good nor bad	Extremely good
Palau	Somewhat good	Extremely bad	Extremely bad	Extremely good	Extremely bad
PNG	Somewhat good	Somewhat good	Neither good nor bad	Neither good nor bad	Somewhat good
RMI	Neither good nor bad	Somewhat good	Neither good nor bad	Somewhat good	Neither good nor bad
Samoa	Somewhat good	Somewhat good	Somewhat good	Somewhat good	Neither good nor bad
Solomon Islands	Somewhat good	Somewhat good	Somewhat good	Somewhat good	Extremely good
Tokelau	Somewhat bad	Somewhat bad	Somewhat bad	Somewhat bad	Neither good nor bad
Tonga	Somewhat good	Somewhat good	Somewhat good	Somewhat good	Somewhat good
Tuvalu	Neither good nor bad	Neither good nor bad	Extremely bad	Extremely bad	Neither good nor bad
Vanuatu	Somewhat good	Extremely bad	Extremely bad	Extremely bad	Somewhat good

Diverse and learning-friendly environments

Country representatives were invited to reflect on the extent to which schools are encouraged to implement strategies that support students to build a school environment that is positive for all. This may include encouragement or incentives from stakeholders including the ministry of education, parents, school management committees and others to ensure schools are accessible and support the enrolment and wellbeing of diverse populations.

As Table 17 outlines, the most common strategies to promote diverse and learning-friendly environments include the development of national policies, followed by awareness-raising programmes and training, and the development of school policies. Only three countries identified monitoring of policy implementation, and only four schools referred to the importance of involving parents in school management to promote a positive school environment. Particular strategies to support a positive school environment for girls and boys, or students of diverse sexual orientation and gender identities, were not mentioned at all.

Inclusive education requires an accepting and child-friendly learning environment for all students, regardless of their differences. As Figure 20 shows, all countries reported that they were either developing (**Cook Islands, FSM, Fiji, Nauru, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tonga**) or establishing these in their classrooms (**Kiribati, Niue, Palau, PNG, RMI, Tokelau, Tuvalu and Vanuatu**). No country representatives identified that they were at the initiation stage or at the championing stage.

FIGURE 20: Child-friendly learning environments, by percentage of countries

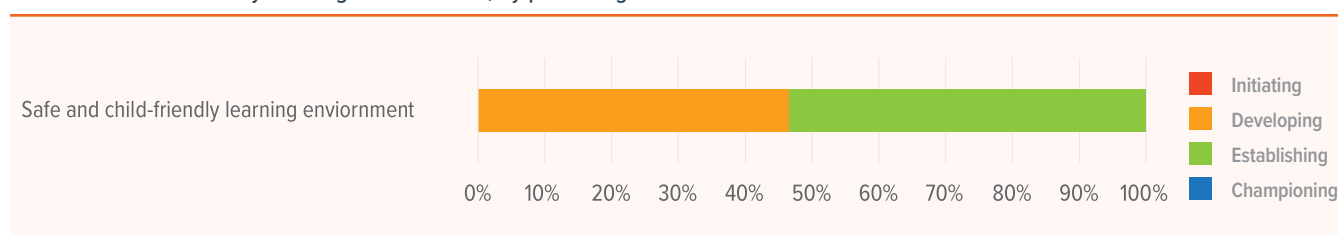


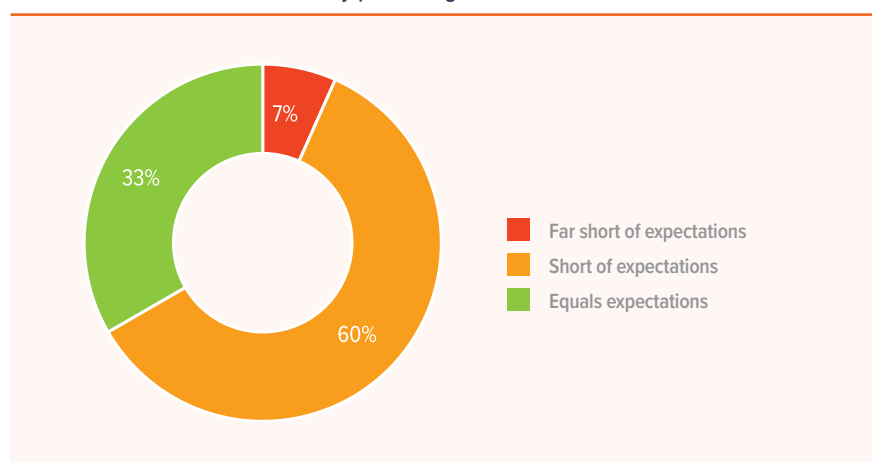
TABLE 17: Diverse and learning-friendly environments

COUNTRY	EXTENT TO WHICH SCHOOLS ARE ENCOURAGED TO BUILD A SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT THAT IS POSITIVE FOR ALL	STRATEGIES				
		National policies encourage a diverse and learning-friendly environment	Parents are involved in school management committees	Awareness-raising activities, e.g. celebrating disability, training for staff and students	School policies and plans encourage a diverse and learning-friendly environment	Monitoring of policy implementation
Cook Islands	A great extent	X	X	X	X	X
FSM	A moderate extent	X			X	X
Fiji	A moderate extent					
Kiribati	A moderate extent	X		X		
Nauru	A little					
Niue	A lot					
Palau	A lot			X		
PNG	A lot	X	X	X	X	X
RMI	A great extent	X				
Samoa	A moderate extent	X	X		X	
Solomon Islands	A lot					
Tokelau	A great extent				X	
Tonga	A lot		X			
Tuvalu	A moderate extent					
Vanuatu	A moderate extent	X		X	X	

Culture of inclusion

Country representatives were invited to reflect on the extent to which there was a culture of inclusion at the national, sub-national and school levels. As Figure 21 shows, the majority of countries (10) reported that the culture of inclusion fell short or far short of expectations (**FSM, Fiji, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu** and **Vanuatu**). Only five countries reported that the culture of inclusion equalled expectations (**Cook Islands, Kiribati, Palau, PNG** and **RMI**). No country reported that the culture of inclusion in ministries of education or schools exceeded expectations.

FIGURE 21: Culture of inclusion, by percentage of countries



Country representatives identified a wide range of approaches used to build a culture of inclusion at the national, sub-national and school levels. Table 18 provides a snapshot of these. By far the most common approach is awareness-raising, utilized by 11 countries. Interestingly, only three countries reported partnership with OPDs to conduct awareness-raising, suggesting that relevant government departments may lead this themselves.

Samoa representatives reported that awareness-raising was a critical contributor to building an inclusive culture, and was led by the Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development to emphasize the educational and health services available to assist school-age children with disabilities. “By working together as ministries, we can achieve a national accessible health and education system for all children regardless of social status.”

Incorporation of inclusive education strategies within annual and operational plans was identified as a key approach in four countries and was the second most common method. Stakeholders in **Solomon Islands** reported that the demonstration effect of screening and referring students, and providing reasonable accommodations, was critical – for example through the delivery of televised lessons using sign language and the braille of examination papers.

TABLE 18: Approaches to building a culture of inclusion used in each country

COUNTRY	Multi-sectoral approach to inclusion	Partnership between ministries	Partnership with OPDs	Partnership with NGOs	Funding	Building awareness and understanding	Incorporation of inclusive education in annual plans	Incorporation of inclusive education in policies	Identification of students with disabilities in schools	Referrals to relevant services	Provision of reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities	Support work experience programme	Inclusive education policy	Training for teachers	Early Intervention	Additional teaching positions to support inclusion	School inspection/ monitoring
Cook Islands	X	X	X	X													
FSM					X	X	X										
Fiji					X	X	X	X	X	X	X						
Kiribati			X			X											
Nauru						X						X					
Niue													X				
Palau						X								X	X		
PNG						X			X	X	X			X		X	X
RMI						X											
Samoa	X	X				X											
Solomon Islands						X											
Tokelau						X											
Tonga	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X		
Tuvalu					X												
Vanuatu							X						X				

Supporting rural and remote students

Children from rural and remote locations often experience reduced access to education. Schools might be further away and harder to get to, there might be no school that is inclusive of children with disabilities nearby, teachers might not speak the local language, which makes learning difficult, especially for children in the early grades, or there might be less access to teaching and learning resources. Children may be less likely to transition between school levels as secondary schools are too far away. Household survey data from around the world indicates that education gaps between people in rural and urban settings are often wider than those between women and men.²⁹

Some countries described measures undertaken to support the educational needs of children living in rural and remote areas, related to attendance, dropout and transition. **Cook Islands** reported that, while the Ministry of Education provided the same support to all students regardless of location or geographic isolation, scholarships were available for students from the outer islands.

In **FSM** and **Kiribati**, there is local-level outreach by principals and teachers to encourage enrolment and attendance. In **FSM**, there is also outreach by inter-agency team members. In **Kiribati**, transitioning is managed by the school leader, who completes a transfer form. In **FSM**, the same special education transition services offered to all students with disabilities on the four main island communities are also made available to all students with disabilities in outer island community schools. Outer island students with disabilities have transition training as part of their ITP. However, one challenge is that transition training programmes in outer island communities have limited resources. In almost all instances, students are trained in the limited job skills that are available in their remote island community because the distance to the main island prevents commuting back and forth for on-the-job training.

In **Fiji**, the Special and Inclusive Education Grant is applied in rural and maritime schools that enrol students with disabilities, as well as in urban schools. However, **Fiji's** stakeholders reported that services were limited and not well coordinated.

In **PNG**, outreach services are provided to identify and support rural and remote children to attend school. This includes community-based rehabilitation services for students with disabilities, training for teachers and nurses in remote locations, counselling services and support to parents. Students from remote villages often move to schools in other locations and stay with local families.

In **Nauru** and **Palau**, incentives such as free bus transport are offered; **Nauru** also offers uniforms. In **Palau**, teachers are provided for remote schools. The Ministry of Education provides boat transportation for students, parents and school personnel from the outlying islands to travel to the capital to participate in transition activities when a student is advancing from elementary to high school. For a student with disabilities receiving special education services, living accommodation and a stipend are also provided if overnight stay is required to participate in a transition meeting.

29. UNESCO (2020) *Global Education Monitoring Report 2020* (p.209).

RMI offers special education technical assistance by radio, internet and phone. All three atolls in **Tokelau** are remote; however, dropout is rare as the villages have strict rules about students being in school. There are literacy, numeracy and vocational pathways for non-academic students. At the tertiary level, a scholarship scheme provides support to those studying outside of **Tokelau**; all three villages have USP centres that support online learning.

In **Tonga**, there is no transition option for students with disabilities who complete primary school but lack literacy skills. Conversely, for students who can transition to TVET programmes, the Skills and Employment for **Tonga** project pays TVET programme school fees for qualifying students from the outer islands, as well as offering a monthly cash disbursement to assist with food and other related costs while they are away from home. Agreement is sought from parents and students that students will attend 80% of school days and also have passing grades.

Solomon Islands and **Vanuatu** reported that, while grants and teachers were provided to rural and remote schools, improving access to education for children in rural and remote locations was an area for development. In **Vanuatu**, transition from one class to another is in line with the current automatic promotion policy from Year 1 to Year 10. Currently, urban schools are overcrowded, as many parents working in urban settings in Port Vila or Luganville choose to enrol their children in urban schools. There is ongoing discussion within MoET on establishing schools of excellence in the provinces.

Supporting gender equality

Worldwide, discrimination based on gender persists as a result of inequalities in school attendance and learning outcomes.³⁰ Across the Pacific, while enrolment in secondary school is still low, gender gaps are more likely to favour girls, except in **PNG**, where they favour boys.³¹

Countries described measures undertaken to support the educational needs of both girls and boys, related to attendance, dropout and transition. More than half the countries reported that these measures were the same for both boys and girls and did not report any gendered approaches to promoting attendance and transition (**Cook Islands, FSM, Nauru, Niue, Palau, PNG, Tonga** and **Tuvalu**).

In **Fiji** and **Tokelau**, vocational training is offered to students with disabilities along gender lines. For example, girls can attend weaving and cooking training while male students can participate in carpentry training. **Kiribati** has taken some practical steps to try to improve the balance of male and female students at **Kiribati Teachers College (KTC)**.

Specific, gender-informed approaches are emerging in some countries. **PNG** respondents reported that IERCs provides training for teachers, nurses and parents of students with disabilities regarding gender-related issues. In **Tokelau**, there are opportunities for young girls who fall pregnant to return to school to complete their schooling. **Vanuatu's** policies are beginning to reflect a gender perspective.

30. UNESCO (2020) *Global Education Monitoring Report 2020* (p.14).

31. ADB (2016) *Gender Statistics: The Pacific and Timor-Leste* (p.22).

TABLE 19: Measures to promote attendance and transition

COUNTRY	GENDERED APPROACHES	APPROACHES TO REACH RURAL AND REMOTE STUDENTS
Cook Islands	» No specific approaches	» Outer islands scholarship programme to assist those wishing to continue with senior level education on Rarotonga
FSM	» No specific approaches	» Local-level outreach » Transition training in ITP
Fiji	» Gendered ³² vocational training for students with disabilities » Gender Policy guides action	» Technical colleges in rural and maritime locations » Special and Inclusive Education Grant
Kiribati	» Students with disabilities are assisted by teacher assistants of the same gender » Counselling is provided to students by staff of the same gender » KTC is looking at balancing number for intake recruitment for boys and girls	» Local-level outreach » Parents can submit a transfer request
Nauru	» No specific approaches	» Funding for transport and uniforms
Niue	» No specific approaches	» No specific approaches
Palau	» No specific approaches	» Funding for transport to support preparation for transition
PNG	» No specific approaches	» Universities have online courses that can be completed through distance mode » Special arrangements made to accept students from very remote schools into boarding schools; most often, parents do not allow girls to be accommodated by other family members or friends
RMI	» No specific approaches	» Special education technical assistance by radio, internet and phone
Samoa	» Transition options, e.g. work experience placements, are negotiated through the multi-sector Inclusive Education Working Group	» No specific approaches
Solomon Islands	» IERCs provide training for teachers, nurses and parents of students with disabilities regarding gender-related issues » Senior Secondary Strategic Plan under development to address the need for special ablution blocks specifically for girls » Improved dormitories for girls in boarding school implemented through infrastructure programme for schools	» No specific approaches
Tokelau	» Gendered vocational training for students with disabilities ³³ » Young girls who fall pregnant return to school to complete their schooling » Boys are encouraged to attend maritime college	» Scholarships for tertiary study » USP centres for online learning in all three villages
Tonga	» No specific approaches	» The Skills and Employment for Tonga project assists students who are enrolled in TVET schools, by paying for school fees and providing a living allowance for those students from the outer islands who attend school on the main island, while living with relatives and family friends; set to continue until 2023
Tuvalu	» No specific approaches	» No specific approaches
Vanuatu	» Policies beginning to reflect a gender perspective » USP offers tertiary scholarships for male and female students with disabilities	» Automatic promotion policy means students automatically transition

32 & 33. Girls study what were traditionally considered “female” subjects, for example flower-arranging, and boys study traditionally “male” subjects. This can limit opportunities.

However, despite pockets of good practices, this is still an area for development across all countries. **Solomon Islands** respondents reported that gendered approaches to promoting enrolment and education outcomes still represented a challenging area, and several countries did not respond to the question (**Niue**, **RMI** and **Samoa**).

Overall, efforts to ensure optimal access to education, and transition between school levels, lack a gendered approach. This is likely contributing to poor educational outcomes. Table 19 outlines strategies utilized.

Preventing violence against children

Violence against children in school settings can include exposure to verbal, emotional, sexual and physical abuse from a teacher, school personnel or peer; corporal punishment; adult–child relationships; sexual harassment; and online or in-person bullying. It can affect both girls and boys.

While there is a paucity of data on violence against children across the Pacific, a UNESCO compilation from various sources found that, in the Asia-Pacific region, students are at risk of different forms of violence in school settings, including corporal punishment; physical, psychosocial and sexual violence abuse; and bullying, including cyber-bullying, the prevalence of which is rising. The causes of school-related violence are closely linked with broader societal norms and acceptance of violence, ingrained gender inequalities and rigid gender expectations, and the situation at home and in the family.³⁴

Evidence on violence against children in Pacific school settings is limited, largely because of social norms and systems that limit its identification and reporting. However, UNESCO found that the evidence available “merits programmatic and policy responses to ensure children’s rights including to education and health.”³⁵ Children marginalized by disability are particularly vulnerable to violence.

Two countries reported that they had child protection or safeguarding policies, and seven are in the process of developing these (see Table 20). Seven countries reported that they were in the process of developing procedures to prevent and address violence against children in schools (**Cook Islands**, **FSM**, **Fiji**, **Nauru**, **Samoa**, **Solomon Islands** and **Tonga**). Seven countries reported that they had moved a step beyond this, towards the establishment of child protection procedures (**Kiribati**, **Niue**, **Palau**, **PNG**, **RMI**, **Tokelau**, **Tuvalu** and **Vanuatu**). No countries reported that they were championing the implementation of procedures to prevent violence against children.

As Table 20 outlines, bullying is reportedly governed by national legislation, policies or handbooks in six countries (**Fiji**, **Nauru**, **Palau**, **PNG**, **RMI** and **Tokelau**). Schools in three countries are required to develop their own bullying policies (**Cook Islands**, **Kiribati** and **Tuvalu**). Table 21 demonstrates that measures to address bullying are reportedly in place in most or all schools in 10 countries (**Cook Islands**, **Kiribati**, **Nauru**, **Palau**, **PNG**, **RMI**, **Solomon Islands**, **Tokelau**, **Tonga** and **Tuvalu**). Based on responses to the various surveys,

34. UNESCO (2014) *School-Related Gender-Based Violence in the Asia-Pacific Region*.

35. Ibid. (p.41).

there are no policy provisions and few school-based processes to eliminate or address bullying in **FSM**, **Niue**, **Samoa** and **Vanuatu**.

Only one country mentioned the use of proactive anti-bullying strategies. Particular strategies to support a safe and positive school environment for girls and boys, or students of diverse sexual orientation and gender identities, were not mentioned at all.

It was found that gender-based violence was moderately well covered by policies, but processes and procedures for ensuring safety and reporting gender-based violence were not reported. Nine countries reported that policies were in place to prevent gender-based violence. In **Cook Islands**, this is covered by the National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Plan 2019–2024. **Kiribati** reported that schools developed their own policies and implemented them accordingly. In **Palau**, gender-based violence procedures are covered in the Ministry of Education's school handbook. In **PNG**, the National Department of Education's Gender Policy is reportedly in use in schools and institutions. Gender-based violence is reportedly covered in **Samoa's** newly established Family Life Education Policy, in **Solomon Islands'** Family Protection Act and in **Tokelau's** general provisions within laws against violence. **Nauru** and **Vanuatu** also reported that policies covered gender-based violence.

TABLE 20: Violence against children in schools – policies

COUNTRY	CHILD PROTECTION POLICY	POLICIES ON BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT	GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE POLICY
Cook Islands	In progress	All schools are required to have a student behaviour policy. Schools are encouraged to develop their own bullying policy.	National Policy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Plan 2019–2024
FSM	In progress	No	No
Fiji	In progress	Policy on Behaviour Management in Schools	No
Kiribati	In progress	Schools develop and implement their own policies	Schools develop and implement their own policies
Nauru	In progress	Education Act 2011	Not clear
Niue	No	No	No
Palau	In progress	Ministry of Education handbook Bullying free zone strategy	Ministry of Education handbook
PNG	No	National Behaviour and Management Policy	National Gender Policy
RMI	Yes	Ministry of Education's Regulations on Student Conduct	No
Samoa	In progress	No	Family Life Education Policy
Solomon Islands	In progress	No	Family Protection Act
Tokelau	No	Specific guidelines on steps to follow in the event of physical, verbal or cyber-bullying	No specific provisions
Tonga	No	No	No
Tuvalu	No	Incorporated into policies and school rules	No specific policy provisions
Vanuatu	Yes	No	No

PROMISING PRACTICE

Kiribati

The potential of Model Inclusion Schools

The Kiribati Development Plan 2016–2019 outlines the aim to ensure that 50% of children with disabilities are enrolled in regular schools. In 2016, six Model Inclusion Schools (three primary, two junior secondary and one senior secondary) were established in South Tarawa through the Kiribati Education Improvement Program (KEIP). The schools support the mainstream inclusion of students with disabilities, including transition from the Kiribati School and Centre for Children with Special Needs (KSCCSN). The Model Inclusion Schools provide access to assistive devices, inclusive teaching resources, accessible infrastructure, teacher assistants and teachers trained in inclusive education practices. Schools are supported to use IEP to support the learning of students with disabilities, and IEPs include transition checklists to support students progressing onwards through education. Te Toa Matao OPD plays a central role in community advocacy for education of children with disabilities, as does the Ministry of Education community consultation team.

The usefulness of the Model Inclusion Schools is strongly based on partnership between KEIP, the Ministry, KSCCSN, Te Toa Matao and KTC. KTC commenced a one-year Certificate III Teacher Assistant course in 2018, with the support of KEIP. The course trains teacher assistants to support the mainstream inclusion of children with disabilities. Graduate teacher assistants now work in the six Model Inclusion Schools. Deaf teachers from KSCCSN provide sign language training to teacher assistants at KTC. KTC also has a course in Inclusive Education, which is compulsory for pre-service teacher trainees and is being rolled out for in-service training. Teacher aides in the special school have Braille skills. Sign language interpreters are available in the special school too. Kiribati sign language interpreters have been introduced to support Deaf and hard-of-hearing students.

KEIP has worked with the Ministry of Education, Te Toa Matao, KTC and island education coordinators to develop and disseminate the Kiribati Disability Inclusive Teaching Guide (2017), which includes ideas on teaching strategies for students with a range of disability types. Workshops have been held with the national curriculum unit on curriculum differentiation, and a guide on how to mainstream inclusion in the curriculum is underway.

Accessible schools

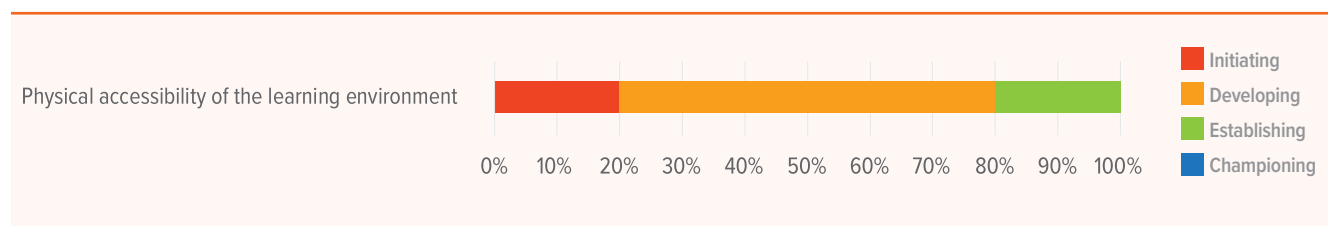
Country respondents reported on the accessibility of the built environment within schools and other learning environments (see Figure 22). **Cook Islands, Tuvalu** and **Vanuatu** reported that they were at the initiation stage of developing accessible schools. **FSM, Fiji, Nauru, PNG, RMI, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau** and **Tonga** reported that they were developing national guidelines or policies to guarantee that all school buildings, facilities, resources and services were accessible to all learners. **Kiribati, Niue** and **Palau** reported that they were establishing accessibility through national guidelines for schools.

Country respondents were invited to report in greater detail on the accessibility and safety of schools in each country; Table 21 presents responses.

Schools in countries across the region are somewhat likely to have accessible handwashing and sanitation facilities. Schools are least likely to have accessible menstrual hygiene management facilities, with five countries reporting that only a small proportion of schools had these and three countries reporting that none did.

Cook Islands, Palau, RMI and **Tokelau** all reported that all or most of their schools were accessible and safe. These four countries have specific funding arrangements with the governments of New Zealand and the USA, which may account for this.

Reflecting the high risk of disasters across the region, the data indicates that inclusive school disaster response plans are in place in most or all schools in eight countries.

FIGURE 22: Physical accessibility of the learning environment, by percentage of countries**TABLE 21:** Accessibility and safety of schools

	ACCESSIBLE AND SAFE CLASSROOMS	ACCESSIBLE AND SAFE HANDWASHING FACILITIES	ACCESSIBLE AND SAFE SANITATION (TOILET) FACILITIES	ACCESSIBLE AND SAFE MENSTRUAL HYGIENE FACILITIES	INCLUSIVE SCHOOL DISASTER RESPONSE PLAN	SCHOOL MEASURES TO ADDRESS BULLYING
Cook Islands	Most schools	All schools	Most schools	All schools	All schools	All schools
FSM	About half of all schools	Small proportion of schools	About half of all schools	Small proportion of schools	Small proportion of schools	Small proportion of schools
Fiji	Small proportion of schools	Small proportion of schools	Small proportion of schools	Small proportion of schools	Small proportion of schools	Small proportion of schools
Kiribati	About half of all schools	About half of all schools	About half of all schools	About half of all schools	Most schools	All schools
Nauru	Small proportion of schools	All schools	All schools	All schools	All schools	All schools
Niue	Most schools	About half of all schools	About half of all schools	About half of all schools	About half of all schools	About half of all schools
Palau	Most schools	Most schools	Most schools	Most schools	All schools	All schools
PNG	Small proportion of schools	About half of all schools	About half of all schools	Small proportion of schools	Small proportion of schools	Most schools
RMI	Most schools	Most schools	Most schools	Most schools	All schools	All schools
Samoa	Small proportion of schools	Small proportion of schools	Small proportion of schools	Small proportion of schools	About half of all schools	No schools
Solomon Islands	Small proportion of schools	About half of all schools	About half of all schools	Small proportion of schools	Most schools	All schools
Tokelau	All schools	All schools	Most schools	Most schools	All schools	All schools
Tonga	Small proportion of schools	Most schools	Small proportion of schools	No schools	All schools	All schools
Tuvalu	Small proportion of schools	About half of all schools	About half of all schools	No schools	No schools	All schools
Vanuatu	Small proportion of schools	About half of all schools	Small proportion of schools	No schools	Small proportion of schools	No schools



Country-specific summaries of the current situation at the national level

These summaries can be downloaded as individual files from the Pacific Data Hub: www.pacificdata.org



Inclusive Education Country Profile

COOK ISLANDS



This information was provided by government and civil society during a regional mapping of inclusive education undertaken in 2020–2021. Led by the Inclusive Education Taskforce, the mapping supports implementation of the Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Framework (PRIEF) and the Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF).

Inclusive Education Policy Framework

Legislation: Cook Islands Education Act 2012

Inclusive Education Policy: Cook Islands Inclusive Education Policy 2017
Assistive Technologies Guideline

Operationalizing Inclusive Education: Implementation is embedded in the Cook Islands Education Master Plan 2008–2023

Inclusive Education Standards: Cook Islands Teacher Professional Standards
Cook Islands Building Code 2019

Inclusive Education in the Budget

What does the budget cover?

- \$\$\$\$ Community awareness on disability and education
- \$\$\$\$ Teacher aide/assistant salaries
- \$\$\$\$ Training for school staff
- \$\$\$\$ Assistive devices/technologies
- \$\$\$ Outreach/itinerant support to schools by specialists
- \$ Infrastructure funding for accessibility modifications
- Transport assistance specifically for disadvantaged or disabled students

Legend: Extent to which inclusive education activities are covered in the Ministry of Education (MoE) budget:

- \$\$\$\$ = A great extent
- \$\$\$ = A lot
- \$\$ = A moderate amount
- \$ = A little
- = Not at all



- ☒ Special/inclusive education a mandatory part of teacher training

Frequency of teacher in-service training in inclusive education

- ☒ More than once a year
- ☐ Once a year
- ☐ Less than once a year
- ☐ Not sure

45% of teachers have participated in in-service training on inclusive education

- ☒ Teacher aides/assistants are part of the workforce

To what extent are schools encouraged to implement strategies that support students to build a school environment that is positive for all?

☒ **A great extent**

A lot

A moderate amount

(Median for the region)

A little

Not at all

School options for students with disabilities:

☒ **Integrated**

(Special classroom in mainstream school)

☒ **Inclusive**

Special

None

Use of Individual Education Plans? ☒

Availability of reasonable accommodations across the country:

Student sits close to board or teacher

Not available

Small extent

Moderately available

Widely available

Lessons are modified or reduced in complexity based on individual student

Enlarged printed materials are provided

Additional time is provided during assessments

Personal assistance is provided during assessments (e.g. note-taking)

Physical education activities are modified

Personal assistance is provided (e.g. assistance with note-taking, communication, managing behaviour)

Assistive technologies are provided (e.g. magnifier, electronic devices, computers, communication boards)

Culture of inclusion: To what extent is there a culture of inclusion at all levels (national, sub-national, schools)?

Far exceeds expectations

Exceeds expectations

☒ **Equals expectations**

Short of expectations

(Median for the region)

Far short of expectations

What proportion of schools have...

classrooms that are accessible and safe for all?
(people with difficulties moving and seeing can get in and around)

handwashing facilities that are accessible and safe for all?

sanitation (toilet) facilities that are accessible and safe for all?

menstrual hygiene management facilities that are accessible and safe for all?

a disaster response plan in place that is inclusive of all students?

measures to address bullying?

No schools

Small proportion of schools

About half of all schools

Most schools

All schools

Encouraging retention

- Schooling is compulsory from 5 to 16 years; MoE reviews educational programmes to ensure high student engagement.
- The MoE Attendance, Truancy and School Transition Policy requires monitoring of students.

Encouraging transition

- The Student Progression Policy requires progression with age-appropriate cohorts from Year 1 to Year 11.
- Internal reporting systems via the Education Management Information System (EMIS) and Term Returns assist monitoring transition.

Supporting out-of-school children

- Bridging courses are available, although not specifically for students with disabilities. Tupuanga Rakau is a programme working on alternative learning and transitioning back into school. The Tumanava programme at Cook Islands Tertiary Training Institute (CITTI)

is for early school leavers transitioning into work places.

Supporting post-school pathways

- The careers advisor coordinates with schools and teachers.
- Accessibility for people with disabilities to technical and vocational education and training includes a dual pathways programme with CITTI that provides a one-year course in trades such as carpentry, electrical work, mechanics and hospitality; the courses are open to everyone.
- Life skills programmes through New Zealand Qualification Authority are implemented by all secondary schools; courses are tailored to suit the needs of each island.
- CITTI has literacy and numeracy support available to all learners, including a specific IE policy for vocational learning.

Partnerships for Inclusive Education

How much are school committees or working groups encouraged to support inclusive education? (e.g. student associations, school boards, parent-teacher associations)

☐ A great extent

☐ A lot

☒ A moderate amount

☐ A little

☐ Not at all

Inclusive education coordination mechanism

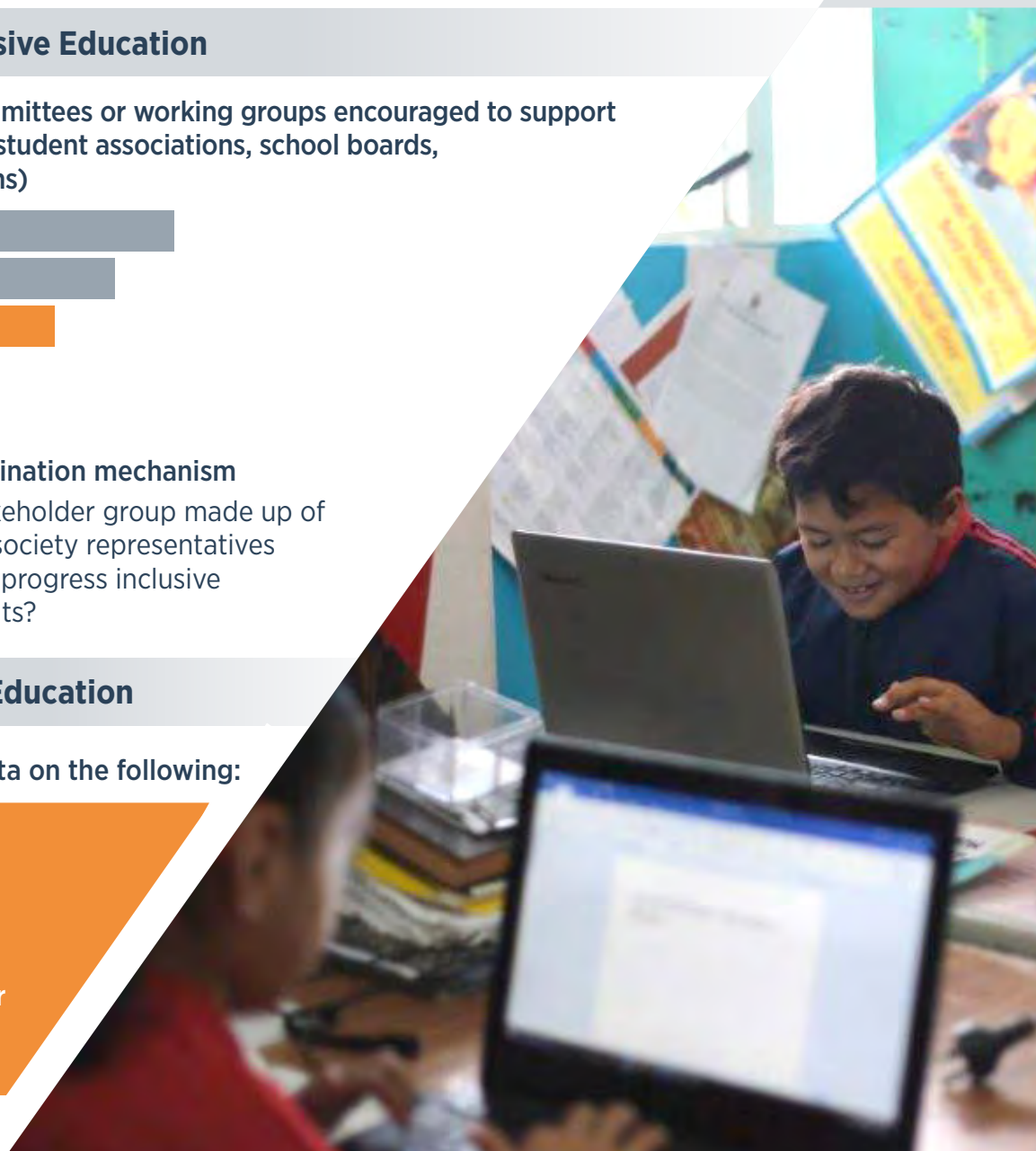
- ☒ Is there a national stakeholder group made up of government and civil society representatives that meet regularly to progress inclusive education commitments?

Monitoring Inclusive Education

Does the EMIS include data on the following:

YES

- Disability?
- Students who have dropped out?
- Rural/remote ?
- Cultural, linguistic or ethnic minorities?





Looking Forward

ENABLERS:

- Awareness programmes in schools implemented by inclusive education advisors have seen positive outcomes for school staff and parents.
- Sustained relationship between Autism Cook Islands and MoE.
- Support for teacher aides by the inclusive education advisor.
- The 2017 review of the Inclusive Education Policy involved consultation with schools and communities, which provided clarity and information.
- There is a move towards assessing and planning for students' actual and apparent learning needs in schools and a move away from focusing on diagnosis alone.

CHALLENGES:

- Attitudes of teachers and leaders: low expectations of children with disabilities; perceptions that children are "dumb" or "being naughty."
- Expectations that all students with disabilities need a teacher aide.

- Getting families to support their children to become independent.
- Working with families that do not believe their child has additional needs.
- Diagnosis services.

FUTURE PRIORITIES:

- In-house support for all education advisors so they can support students with disabilities.
- Upskill ALL school leaders, then work with teaching staff and teacher aides.
- Upskill inclusive education advisors.
- Increase partnerships and communication between MoE and organizations that are active in schools.
- Improved monitoring and evaluation processes for inclusive education across the Cook Islands.
- Increase transparency between ministries and non-governmental organizations for sharing data and information.



COOK ISLANDS

Ministry of Education

Maraurau o te Pae Api'i



Inclusive Education Country Profile

FIJI



This information was provided by government and civil society during a regional mapping of inclusive education undertaken in 2020–2021. Led by the Inclusive Education Taskforce, the mapping supports implementation of the Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Framework (PRIEF) and the Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF).

Inclusive Education Policy Framework

Legislation: Constitution 2013, Act 4/2018 Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Child Welfare Decree 44/2010, Human Rights Commission Decree 2009

Inclusive Education Policy: Special and Inclusive Education Policy 2016–2020 (under review)

Operationalizing Inclusive Education: The Special and Inclusive Education Policy is operationalized through an accompanying implementation plan

Inclusive Education Standards: Fiji Schools Teachers Competency Framework 2009

Inclusive Education in the Budget

What does the budget cover? (these figures relate to pre-COVID budget cuts)

\$\$\$\$	Transport assistance specifically for disadvantaged or disabled students
\$\$\$	Community awareness on disability and education
\$\$\$	Teacher aide/assistant salaries
\$\$\$	Training for school staff
\$\$\$	Assistive devices/technologies
\$\$	Infrastructure funding for accessibility modifications
\$	Outreach/itinerant support to schools by specialists

Legend: Extent to which inclusive education activities are covered in the Ministry of Education (MoE) budget:

- \$\$\$\$ = A great extent
- \$\$\$ = A lot
- \$\$ = A moderate amount
- \$ = A little
- = Not at all



☒ Special/inclusive education a mandatory part of teacher training

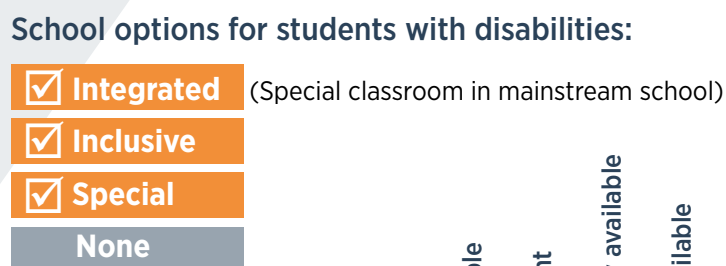
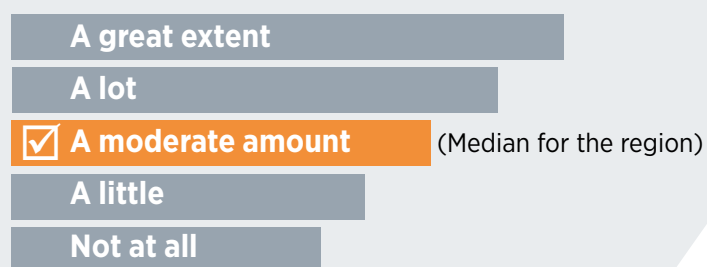
Frequency of teacher in-service training in inclusive education

- ☐ More than once a year
- ☒ Once a year
- ☐ Less than once a year
- ☐ Not sure

10% of teachers have participated in in-service training on inclusive education

☒ Teacher aides/assistants are part of the workforce

To what extent are schools encouraged to implement strategies that support students to build a school environment that is positive for all?



Use of Individual Education Plans? ☒

Availability of reasonable accommodations across the country:

	Not available	Small extent	Moderately available	Widely available
Student sits close to board or teacher	☐	☐	☐	☒
Lessons are modified or reduced in complexity based on individual student	☐	☐	☐	☒
Enlarged printed materials are provided	☐	☐	☐	☒
Additional time is provided during assessments	☐	☐	☐	☒
Personal assistance is provided during assessments (e.g. note-taking)	☐	☐	☐	☒
Physical education activities are modified	☐	☐	☐	☒
Personal assistance is provided (e.g. assistance with note-taking, communication, managing behaviour)	☐	☐	☒	☐
Assistive technologies are provided (e.g. magnifier, electronic devices, computers, communication boards)	☐	☐	☒	☐

Culture of inclusion: To what extent is there a culture of inclusion at all levels (national, sub-national, schools)?



What proportion of schools have...

	No schools	Small proportion of schools	About half of all schools	Most schools	All schools
classrooms that are accessible and safe for all? (people with difficulties moving and seeing can get in and around)	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
handwashing facilities that are accessible and safe for all?	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
sanitation (toilet) facilities that are accessible and safe for all?	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
menstrual hygiene management facilities that are accessible and safe for all?	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
a disaster response plan in place that is inclusive of all students?	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
measures to address bullying?	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐

Encouraging retention

- School-based retention programmes to reduce the likelihood of students dropping out include strengthening parental engagement through home visits, provision of counselling for both parents and children, and the CAROLS programme (Children At Risk Of Leaving Schools).

Encouraging transition

- There are no specific programmes to support the transition of students from one year level to the next. Current practice is that students automatically progress to subsequent grades without a hurdle requirement of a final examination.
- The MoE supports and encourages special schools to transition students into inclusive schools where possible.

Supporting out-of-school children

- Enrolment of out-of-school children occurs based on availability of space in schools, and age appropriateness of the child. However, there is no defined MoE guideline.

Supporting post-school pathways

- Life skills training is embedded in the special schools, delivered according to Individual Educational Plans.
- Several secondary and vocational training institutions provide education that is inclusive of students with disabilities. Fiji National University runs 14 technical colleges which include students with disabilities.
- Many special schools run Work Ready programmes with local employers who provide training and employment for special school graduates.

Partnerships for Inclusive Education

How much are school committees or working groups encouraged to support inclusive education (e.g. student associations, school boards, parent-teacher associations)?

A great extent

A lot

A moderate amount

A little

Not at all

Inclusive education coordination mechanism

- ☒ Is there a national stakeholder group made up of government and civil society representatives that meets regularly to progress inclusive education commitments?

Monitoring Inclusive Education

Does the Education Management Information System (EMIS) include data on the following:

YES

- Disability?
- Rural/remote?
- Socioeconomic status/ poverty?
- Students who have dropped out?

NO

- Cultural, linguistic or ethnic minorities?



Available almost everywhere in the country	Available in the capital all the time
Available in most large towns	• Vision services (screening and glasses) • Vision services (Braille services and orientation and mobility training) • Sign language services • Organizations of Persons with Disabilities • Early intervention services
Available in the capital all the time	Available in the capital only sometimes
Available in the capital only sometimes	• Hearing services (screening) • Hearing services (audiology and hearing aids) • Rehabilitation/therapy services • Mobility device services • Social protection/welfare services • Medical/pharmaceutical services • Counselling
Not available	

Looking Forward

ENABLERS:

- Acts/legislation and policies to promote inclusive education are in place.
- Disability data collection and entry into Fiji's Education Management Information System (FEMIS) allows schools to understand how to optimize the inclusion of students with disabilities in classrooms. This also enables the MoE to provide evidence-based resourcing to schools to support the costs of inclusion.
- There is a standard IEP and it is consistently used across special schools.
- Reasonable accommodations are applied in classrooms, including to enable the completion of exams by people with disabilities.
- The MoE has a dedicated special and inclusive education officer in the Curriculum Advisory Services Team.
- A Disability-Inclusive Education Handbook for Teachers is available in all primary and secondary schools.
- Additional staff to support special and inclusive education is provided through a partnership between the MoE and the Australian aid programme.
- Resources to support inclusive and differentiated use of the national curriculum framework are being developed in response to a curriculum review.

CHALLENGES:

- Persistent negative attitudes towards the education of children with disabilities keep them out of school.
- Special and inclusive education is managed by one person at the MoE; Collaborative input is needed across MoE.
- Skilled and confident human resources are lacking at the Ministry and in schools, which limits the effective implementation of inclusive education.
- The work required to support special and inclusive education nationally is huge and requires collaborative input across the MoE.
- Budgetary impacts of COVID are restricting the ability of schools to employ teacher aides.

FUTURE PRIORITIES:

- Curriculum needs review and redevelopment so that it can be adapted for children depending on their learning needs.
- Compliance with mandated acts & policies in schools, including the Child Protection Policy and all other policies, needs to be boosted.
- Expanded professional development in inclusive education, including online teacher training modules.





Inclusive Education Country Profile FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA



This information was provided by government and civil society during a regional mapping of inclusive education undertaken in 2020–2021. Led by the Inclusive Education Taskforce, the mapping supports implementation of the Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Framework (PRIEF) and the Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF).

Inclusive Education Policy Framework

Legislation: FSM Public Law 14-08 "Free Appropriate Public Education" 2005
FSM Public Law 8-21 "Federated States of Micronesia Special Education Act 1993"

Inclusive Education Policy: FSM Special Education Procedural Manual Revised 2012

Operationalizing Inclusive Education: Inclusive education is embedded in the Department's annual plan and is operationalized through an inclusive education policy implementation plan

Inclusive Education Standards: FSM Accreditation Standards; FSM National Minimum Competency Standards; FSM Teacher Certification Standards; FSM Curriculum Standards and Benchmarks

Inclusive Education in the Budget

What does the budget cover?

- \$\$ Community awareness on disability and education
- \$\$ Training for school staff
- \$\$ Outreach/itinerant support to schools by specialists
- \$\$ Transport assistance specifically for disadvantaged or disabled students
- \$ Teacher aide/assistant salaries
- \$ Assistive devices/technologies
- Infrastructure funding for accessibility modifications

Legend: Extent to which inclusive education activities are covered in the Ministry of Education (MoE) budget:

\$\$\$\$ = A great extent

\$\$\$ = A lot

\$\$ = A moderate amount

\$ = A little

-- = Not at all

☒ Special/inclusive education a mandatory part of teacher training

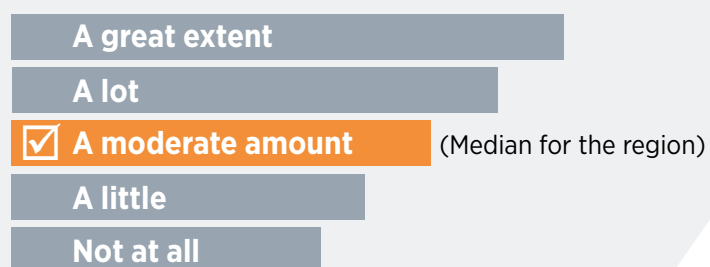
Frequency of teacher in-service training in inclusive education

- ☐ More than once a year
- ☐ Once a year
- ☒ Less than once a year
- ☐ Not sure

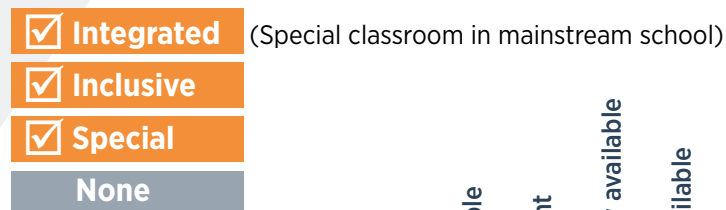
40% of teachers have participated in in-service training on inclusive education

☒ Teacher aides/assistants are part of the workforce

To what extent are schools encouraged to implement strategies that support students to build a school environment that is positive for all?



School options for students with disabilities:

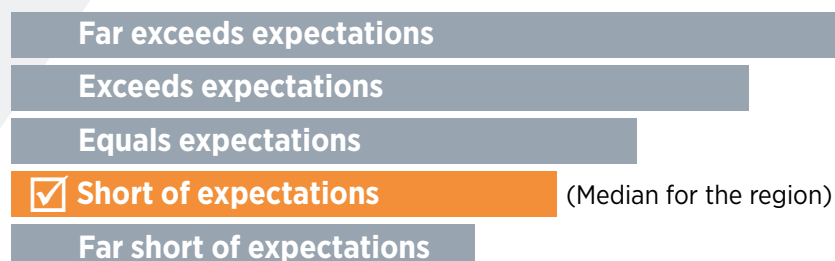


Use of Individual Education Plans? ☒

Availability of reasonable accommodations across the country:

	Not available	Small extent	Moderately available	Widely available
Student sits close to board or teacher	☐	☐	☐	☒
Lessons are modified or reduced in complexity based on individual student	☐	☐	☐	☒
Enlarged printed materials are provided	☐	☒	☐	☐
Additional time is provided during assessments	☐	☒	☐	☐
Personal assistance is provided during assessments (e.g. note-taking)	☐	☒	☐	☐
Physical education activities are modified	☒	☐	☐	☐
Personal assistance is provided (e.g. assistance with note-taking, communication, managing behaviour)	☐	☒	☐	☐
Assistive technologies are provided (e.g. magnifier, electronic devices, computers, communication boards)	☐	☒	☐	☐

Culture of inclusion: To what extent is there a culture of inclusion at all levels (national, sub-national, schools)?



What proportion of schools have...

	No schools	Small proportion of schools	About half of all schools	Most schools	All schools
classrooms that are accessible and safe for all? (people with difficulties moving and seeing can get in and around)	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
handwashing facilities that are accessible and safe for all?	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
sanitation (toilet) facilities that are accessible and safe for all?	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
menstrual hygiene management facilities that are accessible and safe for all?	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
a disaster response plan in place that is inclusive of all students?	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
measures to address bullying?	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐

Encouraging retention

- State special education programmes implement dropout prevention activities and monitor students with IEPs as part of annual Local Performance Plans (LPPs). The LPPs includes a performance indicator on "dropout."
- Vocational programmes exist in secondary schools to different extents; vocational training such as home arts/economics, agriculture, auto mechanic and construction are available to a very limited extent to all high school students including those with disabilities.

Encouraging transition

- State special education programmes implement transition support services to students with disabilities. Beginning at age 14, students with IEPs must have an Individual Transition Plan that maps out academic and vocational goals, their study course, and how they will transition from

secondary school to college, employment, self-employment or independent living.

Supporting out-of-school children

- Education is compulsory to age 14. However, there are few educational supports provided to out-of-school youths, and these rarely include youth with disabilities.

Supporting post-school pathways

- Existing programmes provide some level of support to prepare people with disabilities for post-school education, training and work. Technical, vocational education and training and life skills courses are available. However, these programmes need support from community, the private sector and civil society, to ensure effective transition.
- Cross-sectoral coordination needs to be established and consistently implemented and monitored.

Partnerships for Inclusive Education

How much are school committees or working groups encouraged to support inclusive education (e.g. student associations, school boards, parent-teacher associations)?

A great extent

A lot

☒ A moderate amount

A little

Not at all

Inclusive education coordination mechanism

- ☒ Is there a national stakeholder group made up of government and civil society representatives that meets regularly to progress inclusive education commitments?

Monitoring Inclusive Education

Does the EMIS include data on the following:

YES

- Students who have dropped out?
- Disability?
- Ethnicity?

NO

- Socioeconomic status/poverty?



Looking Forward

ENABLERS:

- Parents, school administrators and teachers (both general and special education) who are supportive and always ready to help and engage in inclusive education activities.
- Ongoing funding and availability of resources and technical assistance from United States DOE (Office of Special Education Programs) and development partners such as UNICEF, UNESCO, SPC, PIFS, USP, PDF, UNFPA, APTC and others.

CHALLENGES:

- Funding is made available under terms of political-economic relationship with another country and is not guaranteed. Limited fiscal resources from within FSM are allocated to support inclusive education.
- Insufficient personnel owing to limited funding. Insufficient personnel trained in specialized fields.
- Services from birth to age two are not structured or funded.
- Services to people with disabilities beyond age 21 are not structured or funded. Coordination of vocational and independent living skills ends at age 21, with no systemic or government supports beyond.

FUTURE PRIORITIES:

- Establishing mechanisms (accountability of policy-makers) to enforce existing policies (state and national).
- Inclusive education should be clearly understood by all stakeholders to ensure full commitment and support.
- Update FSM National Policy on Disability.
- Actions at the grassroots level (state and national) such as awareness meetings, planning, etc.
- Organize a disability coordinating council (follow up on President's National Advisory Council on Children).





Inclusive Education Country Profile

KIRIBATI



This information was provided by government and civil society during a regional mapping of inclusive education undertaken in 2020–2021. Led by the Inclusive Education Taskforce, the mapping supports implementation of the Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Framework (PRIEF) and the Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF).

Inclusive Education Policy Framework

Legislation: Kiribati Education Act 2013

Inclusive Education Policy: Kiribati Inclusive Education Policy 2015

Operationalizing Inclusive Education: Inclusive education is embedded in the Ministry's annual plan and is operationalized through an inclusive education policy implementation plan

Inclusive Education Standards: Kiribati National Teachers' Service Standards Framework 2017–2019 Kiribati National Infrastructure Standards for Primary Schools 2011

Inclusive Education in the Budget

What does the budget cover?

- \$\$\$\$ Community awareness on disability and education
- \$\$ Infrastructure funding for accessibility modifications
- \$ Teacher aide/assistant salaries
- \$ Training for school staff
- \$ Assistive devices/technologies
- \$ Outreach/itinerant support to schools by specialists
- \$ Transport assistance specifically for disadvantaged or disabled students

Legend: Extent to which inclusive education activities are covered in the Ministry of Education (MoE) budget:

- \$\$\$\$ = A great extent
- \$\$\$ = A lot
- \$\$ = A moderate amount
- \$ = A little
- = Not at all

☒ **Special/inclusive education a mandatory part of teacher training**

Frequency of teacher in-service training in inclusive education

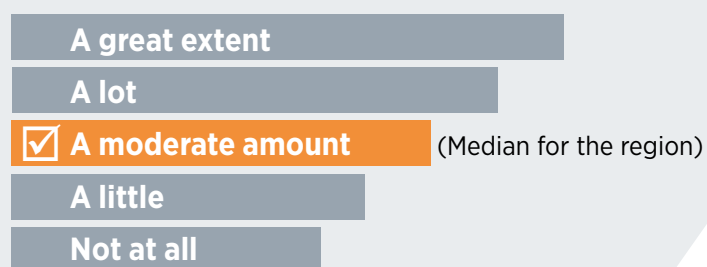
- ☐ More than once a year
- ☐ Once a year
- ☒ Less than once a year
- ☐ Not sure

20% of teachers have participated in the Kiribati Teachers College (KTC) in-service training on inclusive education

☒ **Teacher assistants and sign language interpreters are part of the workforce**



To what extent are schools encouraged to implement strategies that support students to build a school environment that is positive for all?



School options for students with disabilities:

Integrated (Special classroom in mainstream school)



Use of Individual Education Plans? ☒

Availability of reasonable accommodations across the country:

	Not available	Small extent	Moderately available	Widely available
Student sits close to board or teacher	☐	☐	☐	☒
Lessons are modified or reduced in complexity based on individual student	☐	☐	☐	☒
Enlarged printed materials are provided	☐	☐	☒	☐
Additional time is provided during assessments	☐	☒	☐	☐
Personal assistance is provided during assessments (e.g. note-taking)	☐	☒	☐	☐
Physical education activities are modified	☐	☐	☒	☐
Personal assistance is provided (e.g. assistance with note-taking, communication, managing behaviour)	☐	☒	☐	☐
Assistive technologies are provided (e.g. magnifier, electronic devices, computers, communication boards)	☐	☒	☐	☐

Culture of inclusion: To what extent is there a culture of inclusion at all levels (national, sub-national, schools)?



What proportion of schools have...

	No schools	Small proportion of schools	About half of all schools	Most schools	All schools
classrooms that are accessible and safe for all? (people with difficulties moving and seeing can get in and around)	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
handwashing facilities that are accessible and safe for all?	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
sanitation (toilet) facilities that are accessible and safe for all?	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
menstrual hygiene management facilities that are accessible and safe for all?	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
a disaster response plan in place that is inclusive of all students?	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
measures to address bullying?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒

Encouraging retention

- Various strategies include MoE inclusive education officer working with principals, teachers and teacher assistants in Individual Education Plan (IEP) development; hearing screening and testing; teacher assistant training; training of island education coordinators (IECs) and teachers on identification tool and teaching strategies, student expulsion policy, no display of students results, no prize-giving or awarding marks for students but use of checklist; and curriculum reform.

Encouraging transition

- IEPs and Individual Transition Plans (ITPs) for all students with disabilities.

Supporting out-of-school children

- Kiribati Institute of Technology (KIT) offers a bridging course that is not a direct entry course. Selection is via community consultation using ChildFund Youth Workers to determine suitable

applicants from across communities. KIT has a Certificate I in Vocational Preparation, being trialled on Abemama with some of the local recent bridging graduates.

- Teachers of Kiribati Community Studies (KCS) need inclusion training; more attainable skills should be taught, such as sewing, cookery, carpentry.

Supporting post-school pathways

- Programmes to help people with disabilities for post-school education and training, life skills, bridging courses, work preparation and literacy and numeracy.
- MoE inclusive education officer disseminates KIT application forms to schools where students with disabilities are enrolled. Years 11–13 are eligible to apply.

Partnerships for Inclusive Education

How much are school committees or working groups encouraged to support inclusive education (e.g. student associations, school boards, parent-teacher associations)?

☒ A great extent

A lot

A moderate amount

A little

Not at all

Inclusive education coordination mechanism

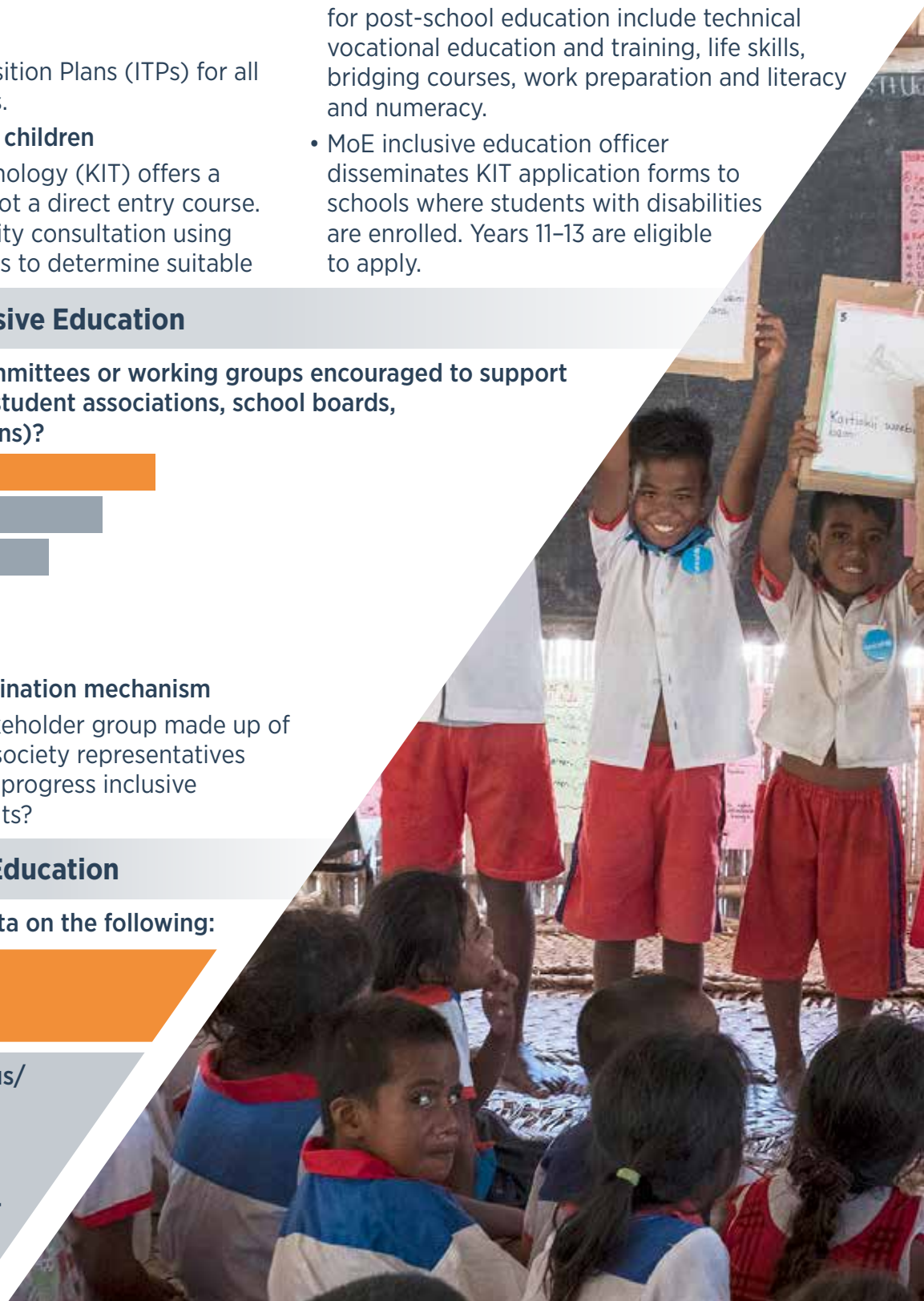
- ☒ Is there a national stakeholder group made up of government and civil society representatives that meet regularly to progress inclusive education commitments?

Monitoring Inclusive Education

Does the EMIS include data on the following:

YES • Disability?
• Rural/remote?

NO • Socioeconomic status/
poverty?
• Students who have
dropped out?
• Cultural, linguistic or
ethnic minorities?





Looking Forward

ENABLERS:

- Incorporating Sustainable Development Goals, CRPD, CRC, CEDAW, KV20 and MoE ESSP Goal 4 in the plan.
- External support.
- Improving database on disability to have valid data.

CHALLENGES:

- Geographical spread and remoteness.
- Limited financial, human and material resources; insufficient teachers with inclusive education knowledge and skills; insufficient devices for students with disabilities; and inaccessible infrastructure.
- Domestic violence including gender-based violence.
- Stigma and discrimination based on disability.
- Some families are not supportive of programmes initiated for their children with disabilities.

FUTURE PRIORITIES:

- Activation of the policies that have been developed but are yet to be realised.
- Improved communication between schools and ministry.
- MoE to improve communication with schools regarding survey forms sent to schools to ensure everyone conforms and reliable data is secured.
- Update and develop more policies to support inclusive education.
- Update and build capacity of teachers in inclusive education and other areas for example the KCS subject, which combines arts, enterprise and technology.





Inclusive Education Country Profile

NAURU



This information was provided by government and civil society during a regional mapping of inclusive education undertaken in 2020–2021. Led by the Inclusive Education Taskforce, the mapping supports implementation of the Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Framework (PRIEF) and the Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF).

Inclusive Education Policy Framework

Legislation: Education Act 2011

Inclusive Education Policy: Nauru Inclusive Education Policy and Guidelines 2017

Operationalizing Inclusive Education: Implementation guidelines are embedded within the Inclusive Education Policy. Inclusive education implementation is incorporated within the Department of Education's Annual Plan.

Inclusive Education Standards: National Quality School Standards Framework
Code of Ethics

Inclusive Education in the Budget

What does the budget cover?

- Teacher aide/assistant salaries
- Training for school staff
- Infrastructure funding for accessibility modifications
- Outreach/itinerant support to schools by specialists
- Transport assistance specifically for disadvantaged or disabled students
- Assistive devices/technologies
- Community awareness on disability and education

Legend: Extent to which inclusive education activities are covered in the Ministry of Education (MoE) budget:

- = A great extent
- = A lot
- = A moderate amount
- = A little
- = Not at all

☒ Special/inclusive education a mandatory part of teacher training

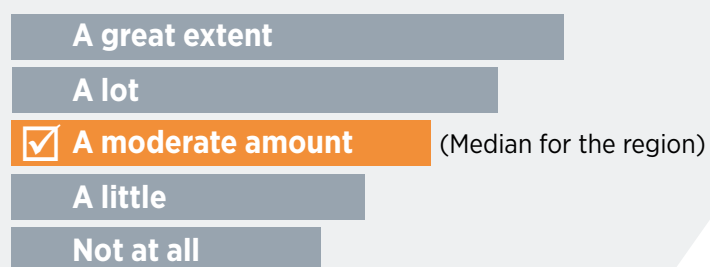
Frequency of teacher in-service training in inclusive education

- ☒ More than once a year
- ☐ Once a year
- ☐ Less than once a year
- ☐ Not sure

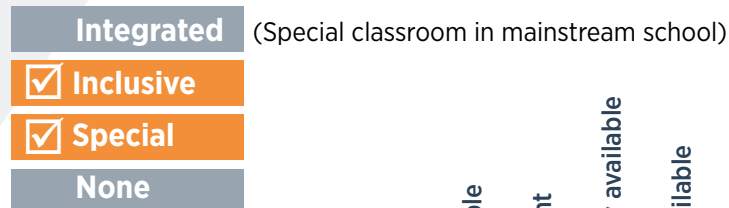
80% of teachers have participated in in-service training on inclusive education

☒ Teacher aides/assistants are part of the workforce

To what extent are schools encouraged to implement strategies that support students to build a school environment that is positive for all?



School options for students with disabilities:



Use of Individual Education Plans? ☒

Availability of reasonable accommodations across the country:

	Not available	Small extent	Moderately available	Widely available
Student sits close to board or teacher	☐	☐	☐	☒
Lessons are modified or reduced in complexity based on individual student	☐	☒	☐	☐
Enlarged printed materials are provided	☐	☐	☒	☐
Additional time is provided during assessments	☒	☐	☐	☐
Personal assistance is provided during assessments (e.g. note-taking)	☒	☐	☐	☐
Physical education activities are modified	☐	☐	☒	☐
Personal assistance is provided (e.g. assistance with note-taking, communication, managing behaviour)	☐	☒	☐	☐
Assistive technologies are provided (e.g. magnifier, electronic devices, computers, communication boards)	☒	☐	☐	☐

Culture of inclusion: To what extent is there a culture of inclusion at all levels (national, sub-national, schools)?



What proportion of schools have...

	No schools	Small proportion of schools	About half of all schools	Most schools	All schools
classrooms that are accessible and safe for all? (people with difficulties moving and seeing can get in and around)	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
handwashing facilities that are accessible and safe for all?	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
sanitation (toilet) facilities that are accessible and safe for all?	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
menstrual hygiene management facilities that are accessible and safe for all?	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
a disaster response plan in place that is inclusive of all students?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
measures to address bullying?	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐

Encouraging retention

- Enrolled students with disabilities generally do not drop out because there are more opportunities for them at school than at home.
- Community classes are not currently available for students with disabilities, their carers or parents. The community desires further learning opportunities to promote inclusion, and interaction between schools and the Nauru Disabled People's Organisation (NDPO).

Encouraging transition

- Currently, there is minimal support to enable students with disabilities to transition from home to formal schooling, between school levels and then in preparation for post-school work activities.

Supporting out-of-school children

- Measures are required to support out-of-school children with disabilities. These could include the creation of an office for persons with disabilities to

ensure that the rights of students are recognized and interventions are provided, and a life skills programme for out-of-school youths with and without disabilities.

Supporting post-school pathways

- Technology, vocational and education training operates for all school leavers in Nauru. However access to these for people with disabilities is extremely limited. Work needs to be done to enable them to become inclusive.
- A small number of adults with disabilities continue to attend the Able Disable Centre. An important enabler of this is the provision of transport for learners with physical disabilities.
- Currently, there are no post-school options and/or work experience programmes effective in Nauru.

Partnerships for Inclusive Education

How much are school committees or working groups encouraged to support inclusive education (e.g. student associations, school boards, parent-teacher associations)?

☐	A great extent
☐	A lot
☐	A moderate amount
☒	A little
☐	Not at all

Inclusive education coordination mechanism

- ☒ Is there a national stakeholder group made up of government and civil society representatives that meets regularly to progress inclusive education commitments?

Monitoring Inclusive Education

Does the EMIS include data on the following:

YES	• Students who have dropped out?
NO	• Socioeconomic status/poverty?
	• Disability?
	• Rural/remote?
	• Cultural, linguistic or ethnic minorities?



Available almost everywhere in the country	Available almost everywhere in the country • Organizations of Persons with Disabilities • Social protection/welfare services • Vision services (screening and glasses) • Hearing services (screening) • Sign language services • Counselling • Medical/pharmaceutical services
Available in most large towns	
Available in the capital all the time	
Available in the capital only sometimes	Available in the capital only sometimes • Hearing services (ear nose and throat specialists) • Rehabilitation/therapy services (general physiotherapy) • Mobility device services
Not available	Not available • Vision services (Braille services and orientation & mobility training) • Early intervention services

Looking Forward

ENABLERS:

- Establishment of the Ministry for Disability, as its mandate is to ensure the rights of people with disabilities are acknowledged and relevant interventions are provided to enhance inclusive environments and equitable inclusive education for all.
- Recognition and coordination of community stakeholders to ensure that the rights of all learners are addressed.
- Bilateral partners support the development of inclusive education.
- The public service is enabling capacity-building in this area.
- A large proportion (at least 80%) of teachers have participated in the Professional Development Program on Inclusive Education.

CHALLENGES:

- Stigma associated with disability prevents interest in, understanding of and advocating for inclusive education.
- The Nauru Sustainable Development Strategy 2009–2025 does not mention inclusive education in the social or education sectors.
- There is a lack of technical expertise and there are very few specialists in disability and inclusive education.

FUTURE PRIORITIES:

- Strengthen efforts to advocate for inclusive education in schools and society.
- Improve collaboration between stakeholders to address the wide range of students with learning needs, students with disabilities and gifted students.
- Teacher education and professional development opportunities to upskill local Nauruan teachers in inclusive education pedagogies.
- Further professional support to enable diagnostic assessments and interventions.
- Introduction of early childhood Intervention programme that caters for children from birth to school age, staffed by specialist early special education professionals.
- Introduce and strengthen transition between different levels in schools and from school.
- Implement a systems approach of transitional planning to prepare secondary students with disabilities for post-schooling pathways.



REPUBLIC OF NAURU

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION and TRAINING
"Preparing Nauru for Tomorrow"



Inclusive Education Country Profile

NIUE



This information was provided by government and civil society during a regional mapping of inclusive education undertaken in 2020–2021. Led by the Inclusive Education Taskforce, the mapping supports implementation of the Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Framework (PRIEF) and the Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF).

Inclusive Education Policy Framework

Legislation: Education Act 1989 18(d)

Inclusive Education Policy: Niue Department of Education Inclusive Education Policy 2012

Operationalizing Inclusive Education: Inclusive education is embedded in the Department of Education's annual plan

Inclusive Education Standards: Standards for the Niue Teaching Profession

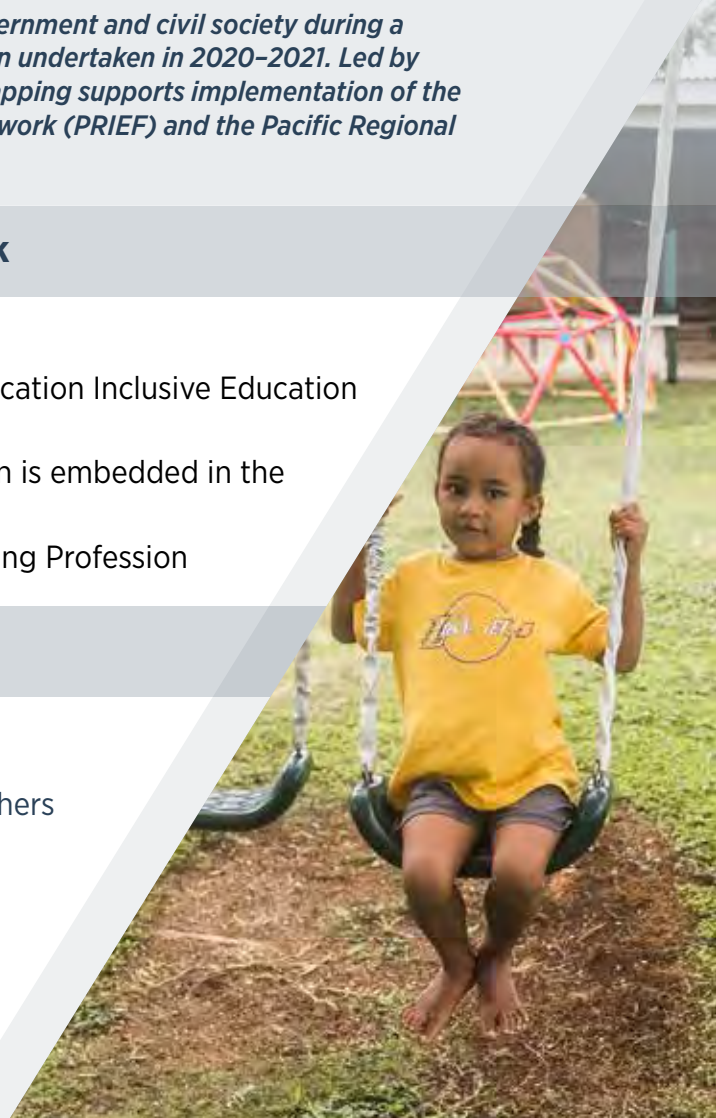
Inclusive Education in the Budget

What does the budget cover?

- Teacher aides and special needs/intervention teachers
- Transport assistance
- Training for school staff
- Assistive devices/technologies
- Outreach/itinerant support to schools by specialists
- Infrastructure funding for accessibility modifications
- Community awareness on disability and education

Legend: Extent to which inclusive education activities are covered in the Ministry of Education (MoE) budget:

- = A great extent
- = A lot
- = A moderate amount
- = A little
- = Not at all



☒ **Special/inclusive education a mandatory part of teacher training**

Frequency of teacher in-service training in inclusive education

- ☐ More than once a year
- ☒ Once a year
- ☐ Less than once a year
- ☐ Not sure

70% of teachers have participated in in-service training on inclusive education

☒ **Teacher aides/assistants are part of the workforce**

To what extent are schools encouraged to implement strategies that support students to build a school environment that is positive for all?

☒ **A great extent**

A lot

A moderate amount

(Median for the region)

A little

Not at all

School options for students with disabilities:

Integrated

(Special classroom in mainstream school)

☒ **Inclusive**

Special

None

Use of Individual Education Plans? ☒

Availability of reasonable accommodations across the country:

Student sits close to board or teacher

Lessons are modified or reduced in complexity based on individual student

Enlarged printed materials are provided

Additional time is provided during assessments

Personal assistance is provided during assessments (e.g. note-taking)

Physical education activities are modified

Personal assistance is provided (e.g. assistance with note-taking, communication, managing behaviour)

Assistive technologies are provided (e.g. magnifier, electronic devices, computers, communication boards)

Not available

Small extent

Moderately available

Widely available

☐	☐	☐	☒
☐	☐	☐	☒
☐	☐	☐	☒
☐	☐	☐	☒
☐	☐	☒	☐
☐	☐	☐	☒
☐	☐	☒	☐
☐	☐	☒	☐

Culture of inclusion: To what extent is there a culture of inclusion at all levels (national, sub-national, schools)?

Far exceeds expectations

Exceeds expectations

☒ **Equals expectations**

Short of expectations

(Median for the region)

Far short of expectations

What proportion of schools have...

classrooms that are accessible and safe for all?
(people with difficulties moving and seeing can get in and around)

handwashing facilities that are accessible and safe for all?

sanitation (toilet) facilities that are accessible and safe for all?

menstrual hygiene management facilities that are accessible and safe for all?

a disaster response plan in place that is inclusive of all students?

measures to address bullying?

No schools	Small proportion of schools	About half of all schools	Most schools	All schools
☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
☐	☐	☐	☐	☒

Encouraging retention

- Students can discuss their issues with the School Counsellor. Students dropping out of school is not an issue; as soon as students miss school without any notice the Special Needs Teacher or the Principal visits the home and talks to parents. However, going forward, it is better to offer vocational programmes for students from year 9 onwards not keen to participate in mainstream classes, such as Creative Arts, Entrepreneurship, Life Skills.

Encouraging transition

- To transition from primary to secondary school, at the end of Year 6 students undertake orientation over a few days at Niue High School.
- A transitioning programme is required for overseas Niue students enrolling at Niue schools. Over the past three years, 20 students have enrolled in secondary school and between 5 and 10 at Niue Primary School. The numbers increase every year.

Better dialogue is required with these families to ensure clear expectations.

Supporting post-school pathways

- Thought is going to adding food, nutrition, clothing and textiles (FNCT) and horticulture/agriculture to technical and vocational education and training opportunities at Niue High School.
- Currently there are no bridging courses available; there are plans to introduce work preparation courses as a transition from secondary school to workforce.
- Government implements the Youth Employment Scheme (YES), where students from Years 12–13 work with the private sector during the school holidays.
- There is a need to design a suitable course to cater for the occasional students who wish to finish school from Years 10, 11 and 12.

Partnerships for Inclusive Education

How much are school committees or working groups encouraged to support inclusive education (e.g. student associations, school boards, parent-teacher associations)?

A great extent

☒ A lot

A moderate amount

A little

Not at all

Inclusive education coordination mechanism

- ☒ Is there a national stakeholder group made up of government and civil society representatives that meets regularly to progress inclusive education commitments?

Monitoring Inclusive Education

Does the EMIS include data on the following:

YES

- Students who have dropped out?
- Cultural, linguistic or ethnic minorities?
- Rural/remote?
- Disability?

NO

- Socioeconomic status/poverty?





Looking Forward

ENABLERS:

- The current UNESCO Social Protection Pilot Joint programme is enabling collaboration between the Departments of Education and Justice, Lands, Survey and Community Services and NTAA and DRG.
- All students regardless of disability, ethnic background, religion or belief attend the same school and have access to all learning – curricular and extra-curricular.
- Appointment of intervention teachers and special needs teachers.

CHALLENGES:

- Lack of funding; no special allocation in the DoE budget.
- Lack of qualified personnel to implement the various phases of inclusive education, such as monitoring and evaluation and data collection.
- Not many public places are disability-accessible, including Niue High School.
- Lack of ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- More explanation about inclusive education is required in the Review of the Education Act 1989.

FUTURE PRIORITIES:

- Finalize the Draft Inclusive Education Policy.
- Enhance access to assistive devices for students with disabilities.
- Special budget for students with disabilities to be made available in the DoE recurrent budget
- Include the teaching and learning of Niue basic values of compassion, gratitude and respect (fakaalofa, fakaaue, fakalilifu) in how we deal with real-life situations and in the context of Niue inclusive education.
- Need to strengthen the role of the school committee (parent-teacher association) to cope with current challenges, to be a competent body that promotes and implements inclusive education in the community it represents.





Inclusive Education Country Profile

PALAU



This information was provided by government and civil society during a regional mapping of inclusive education undertaken in 2020–2021. Led by the Inclusive Education Taskforce, the mapping supports implementation of the Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Framework (PRIEF) and the Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF).

Inclusive Education Policy Framework

Legislation: Special Education Legislation – RPPL 3-9 1989

Inclusive Education Policy: Special Education Policy & Procedures 2008

Operationalizing Inclusive Education: Special and inclusive education efforts are included in Ministry of Education's annual plans

Inclusive Education Standards: School Handbook, Teacher Certification, Assessment Policy Framework

Inclusive Education in the Budget

What does the budget cover?

- \$\$\$\$ Community awareness on disability and education
- \$\$\$\$ Teacher aide/assistant salaries
- \$\$\$\$ Training for school staff
- \$\$\$\$ Outreach/itinerant support to schools by specialists
- \$\$\$\$ Infrastructure funding for accessibility modifications
- \$\$\$\$ Transport assistance specifically for disadvantaged or disabled students
- \$ Assistive devices/technologies

Legend: Extent to which inclusive education activities are covered in the Ministry of Education (MoE) budget:

\$\$\$\$ = A great extent

\$\$\$ = A lot

\$\$ = A moderate amount

\$ = A little

-- = Not at all

☒ Special/inclusive education a mandatory part of teacher training

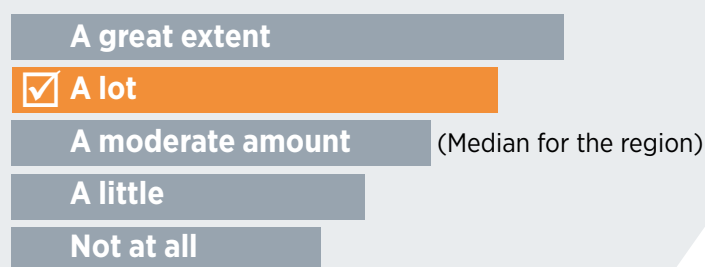
Frequency of teacher in-service training in inclusive education

- ☐ More than once a year
- ☒ Once a year
- ☐ Less than once a year
- ☐ Not sure

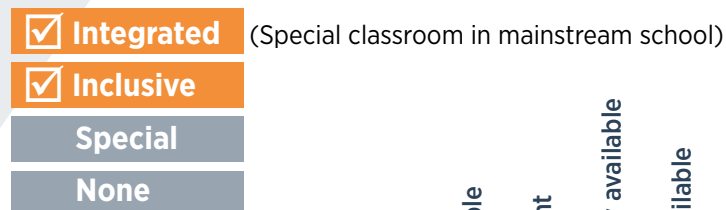
55% of teachers have participated in in-service training on inclusive education

☒ Teacher aides/assistants are part of the workforce

To what extent are schools encouraged to implement strategies that support students to build a school environment that is positive for all?



School options for students with disabilities:



Use of Individual Education Plans? ☒

Availability of reasonable accommodations across the country:

	Not available	Small extent	Moderately available	Widely available
Student sits close to board or teacher	☐	☐	☐	☒
Lessons are modified or reduced in complexity based on individual student	☐	☐	☐	☒
Enlarged printed materials are provided	☐	☐	☐	☒
Additional time is provided during assessments	☐	☐	☐	☒
Personal assistance is provided during assessments (e.g. note-taking)	☐	☐	☐	☒
Physical education activities are modified	☐	☐	☐	☒
Personal assistance is provided (e.g. assistance with note-taking, communication, managing behaviour)	☒	☐	☐	☐
Assistive technologies are provided (e.g. magnifier, electronic devices, computers, communication boards)	☐	☐	☐	☒

Culture of inclusion: To what extent is there a culture of inclusion at all levels (national, sub-national, schools)?



What proportion of schools have...

	No schools	Small proportion of schools	About half of all schools	Most schools	All schools
classrooms that are accessible and safe for all? (people with difficulties moving and seeing can get in and around)	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
handwashing facilities that are accessible and safe for all?	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
sanitation (toilet) facilities that are accessible and safe for all?	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
menstrual hygiene management facilities that are accessible and safe for all?	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
a disaster response plan in place that is inclusive of all students?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
measures to address bullying?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒

Encouraging retention

- Several strategies are in place to minimize the risk of students dropping out. These include free bus transport to help students travel to and from school every day throughout the school year, and quarterly progress reports for each student to identify and address any issues.
- To participate in sport activities, students are required to maintain a grade point average of 2.0, which can motivate students to stay in school and maintain their grades.
- Where students are at risk of dropping out, schools contact parents about prolonged unexcused absences through phone calls and home visits.

Encouraging transition

- The MoE conducts an 8th Grade Transition Workshop for two days in April each year for students and parents to participate in awareness and information activities that help ease their transition to high school.
- Students with disabilities participate in a more individualized transition process: a transition meeting is conducted between the student’s current

school and the new school. This meeting involves school administrators, teachers, special education specialists from both schools, the student, parent/s and related service providers as appropriate.

- Palau Community College offers vocational training programmes that individuals with disabilities can access after high school.
- Individuals with disabilities access support from the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Programme, such as “On the Job Training” for six months, and receive monetary support for the duration of the time.

Supporting out-of-school children

- Palau Community College’s Adult High School programme and the MoE’s HiSet programme provide opportunities for out-of-school students to receive diplomas that are equivalent to a regular high school diploma.

Supporting post-school pathways

- A “College Night” is held twice a year for 12th graders and their parents to orient them to course options.

Partnerships for Inclusive Education

How much are school committees or working groups encouraged to support inclusive education (e.g. student associations, school boards, parent-teacher associations)?

☐ A great extent

☐ A lot

☐ A moderate amount

☒ A little

☐ Not at all

Inclusive education coordination mechanism

- ☒
- Is there a national stakeholder group made up of government and civil society representatives that meets regularly to progress inclusive education commitments?

Monitoring Inclusive Education

Does the EMIS include data on the following:

YES

- Disability?
- Students who have dropped out?
- Cultural, linguistic or ethnic minorities?

NO

- Socioeconomic status/ poverty?
- Rural/remote?





Available almost everywhere in the country

- Organisations of Persons with Disabilities
- Rehabilitation/therapy services
- Social protection/welfare services
- Medical/pharmaceutical services
- Counselling

Available in the capital all the time

- Vision services (screening and glasses)
- Hearing services (screening)
- Sign language services
- Mobility device services

Available in the capital only sometimes

- Vision services (Braille services and orientation & mobility training)
- Hearing services (audiology and hearing aids)
- Early intervention services

Looking Forward

ENABLERS:

- Partnership with parent groups and advocacy groups to promote community awareness.
- United States federal grant assistance on disability.
- Palau complies with the United States' Individual with Disability Education Act (IDEA).
- Several programmes enable the retention of students at school and minimise dropping out.
- There is consistent use of Individual Education Plans to support the learning and progression of students with disabilities.
- Reasonable accommodations are available for most students with disabilities in most schools, and most schools are accessible.

CHALLENGES:

- Limited resources.
- Individual attitudes towards and acceptance of children or individuals with disabilities.
- Limited awareness of other services and support available to assist children with disabilities in the community.
- Youth with disabilities often stay home after completing high school, with minimal access to tertiary education or work.

FUTURE PRIORITIES:

- Address challenges and involve Organizations of Persons with Disabilities in helping improve inclusive education.





Inclusive Education Country Profile

PAPUA NEW GUINEA



This information was provided by government and civil society during a regional mapping of inclusive education undertaken in 2020–2021. Led by the Inclusive Education Taskforce, the mapping supports implementation of the Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Framework (PRIEF) and the Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF).

Inclusive Education Policy Framework

Legislation: Constitution of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea - National Goals and Directive Principles

Inclusive Education Policy: Inclusive and Special Education Policy and Minimum Standards 2020

Operationalizing Inclusive Education: Special and inclusive education is embedded in the Department of Education's annual plan and is operationalized through an inclusive education policy implementation plan

Inclusive Education Standards: Inclusive and Special Education Policy and Minimum Standards 2020

Inclusive Education in the Budget

What does the budget cover?

- \$\$\$ Community awareness on disability and education
- \$\$ Training for school staff
- \$\$ Outreach/itinerant support to schools by specialists
- \$\$ Assistive devices/technologies
- \$ Infrastructure funding for accessibility modifications
- Transport assistance specifically for disadvantaged or disabled students
- Teacher aide/assistant salaries

Legend: Extent to which inclusive education activities are covered in the Ministry of Education (MoE) budget:

- \$\$\$\$ = A great extent
- \$\$\$ = A lot
- \$\$ = A moderate amount
- \$ = A little
- = Not at all



- ☒ Special/inclusive education a mandatory part of teacher training

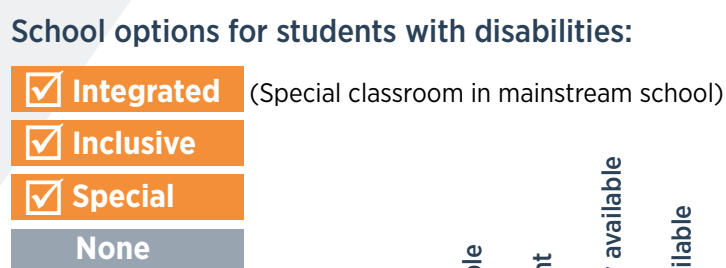
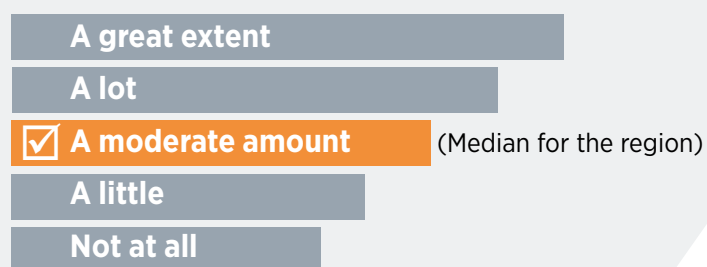
Frequency of teacher in-service training in inclusive education

- ☐ More than once a year
- ☒ Once a year (One year course)
- ☐ Less than once a year
- ☐ Not sure

3% of teachers have participated in in-service training on inclusive education

- ☒ Teacher aides/assistants are part of the workforce but do not receive government salaries

To what extent are schools encouraged to implement strategies that support students to build a school environment that is positive for all?



Use of Individual Education Plans? ☒ (currently only used by teachers in IERCs)

Availability of reasonable accommodations across the country:

	Not available	Small extent	Moderately available	Widely available
Student sits close to board or teacher	☐	☐	☐	☒
Lessons are modified or reduced in complexity based on individual student	☐	☐	☐	☒
Enlarged printed materials are provided	☐	☐	☐	☒
Additional time is provided during assessments	☐	☐	☐	☒
Personal assistance is provided during assessments (e.g. note-taking)	☐	☐	☒	☐
Physical education activities are modified	☐	☐	☒	☐
Personal assistance is provided (e.g. assistance with note-taking, communication, managing behaviour)	☐	☐	☒	☐
Assistive technologies are provided (e.g. magnifier, electronic devices, computers, communication boards)	☐	☐	☒	☐

Culture of inclusion: To what extent is there a culture of inclusion at all levels (national, sub-national, schools)?



What proportion of schools have...

	No schools	Small proportion of schools	About half of all schools	Most schools	All schools
classrooms that are accessible and safe for all? (people with difficulties moving and seeing can get in and around)	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
handwashing facilities that are accessible and safe for all?	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
sanitation (toilet) facilities that are accessible and safe for all?	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
menstrual hygiene management facilities that are accessible and safe for all?	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
a disaster response plan in place that is inclusive of all students?	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
measures to address bullying?	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐

Encouraging retention

- The No Child Left Behind Policy requires all students to complete Grade 12. The Child Friendly School Policy and School Improvement Plans support this aim.
- TV telecasting of different subjects and grades to remote schools supports retention.

Encouraging transition

- High schools are in all districts, reducing the need to relocate to continue schooling.
- Boarding accommodation in secondary and tertiary institutions such as Technical and Vocational Training and Education (TVET) and Flexible Open Distance Education (FODE) is provided.

Supporting out-of-school children

- Under the National Literacy Policy, students who leave school for various reasons can re-enrol the following year.
- Bridging courses in College of Distance Education (CODE) centres are open to students with disabilities.
- Life skills are mainly provided by the Inclusive Education Resource Centres (IERCs) and community-based rehabilitation officers.

- Department for Community Development & Religion (DfCD&R) and NDoE literacy and numeracy training programmes for youth and mothers are open to students with disabilities. However, programme reach is limited in rural and remote areas.

Supporting post-school pathways

- TVET colleges and CODE centres are in every province; TVET institutions accept students with disabilities; however teachers have insufficient training and experience in teaching students with disabilities.
- Each province will establish two or three IERCs to support students with disabilities in higher education.
- DfCD&R provides grants for persons with disabilities for income-generating projects. However, access to the funds has been minimal and services rarely reach rural and remote communities.

Partnerships for Inclusive Education

How much are school committees or working groups encouraged to support inclusive education (e.g. student associations, school boards, parent-teacher associations)?

A great extent

☒ A lot

A moderate amount

A little

Not at all

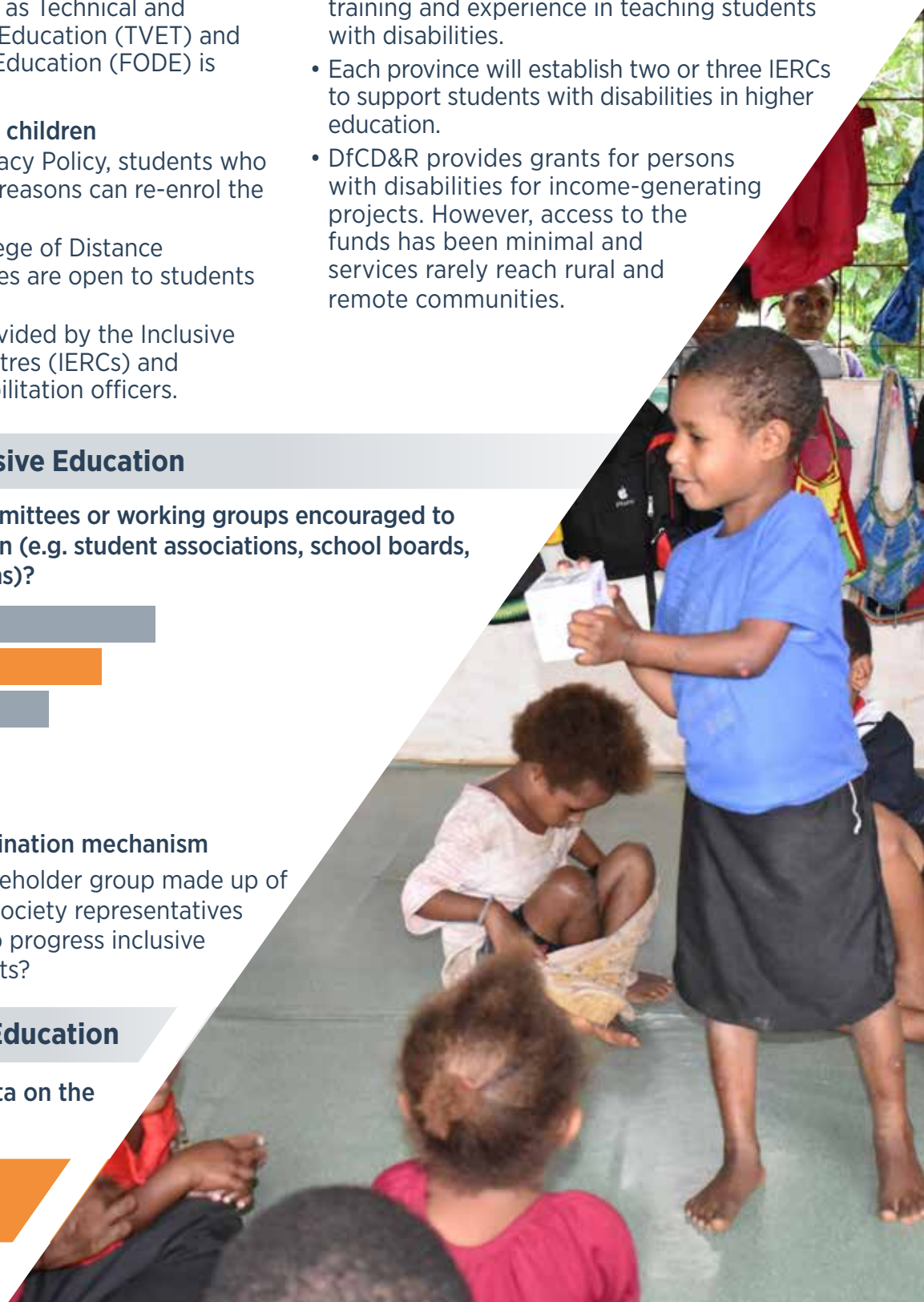
Inclusive education coordination mechanism

- ☒ Is there a national stakeholder group made up of government and civil society representatives that meets regularly to progress inclusive education commitments?

Monitoring Inclusive Education

Does the EMIS include data on the following:

YES • Disability?
• Rural/remote?





Inclusive Education Country Profile

MARSHALL ISLANDS



This information was provided by government and civil society during a regional mapping of inclusive education undertaken in 2020–2021. Led by the Inclusive Education Taskforce, the mapping supports implementation of the Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Framework (PRIEF) and the Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF).

Inclusive Education Policy Framework

Legislation: Marshall Islands Public Law 2013–23
Marshall Islands Public School System Act 2013

Inclusive Education Policy: Special Education Policies and Procedures 2014

Operationalizing Inclusive Education: Special and inclusive education is operationalised through the Ministry's annual plan

Inclusive Education Standards: Special Education Policies and Procedures 2014

Inclusive Education in the Budget

What does the budget cover?

- \$\$\$ Outreach/itinerant support to schools by specialists
- \$\$\$ Transport assistance specifically for disadvantaged or disabled students
- \$\$ Infrastructure funding for accessibility modifications
- \$\$ Community awareness on disability and education
- \$\$ Training for school staff
- \$\$ Assistive devices/technologies
- Teacher aide/assistant salaries

Legend: Extent to which inclusive education activities are covered in the Ministry of Education (MoE) budget:

\$\$\$\$ = A great extent

\$\$\$ = A lot

\$\$ = A moderate amount

\$ = A little

-- = Not at all

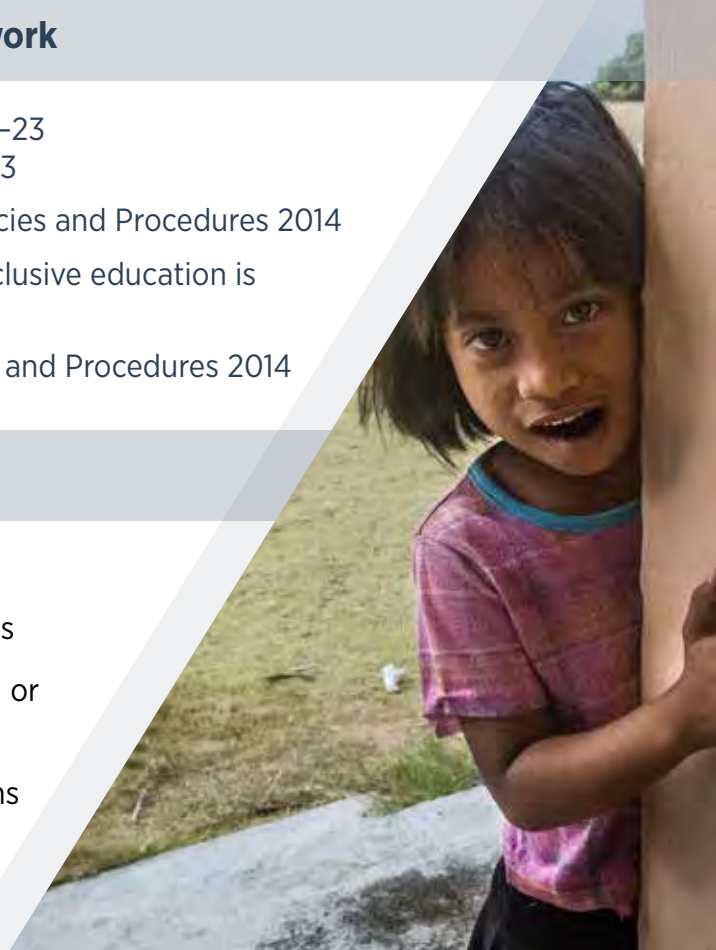
☒ Special/inclusive education a mandatory part of teacher training

Frequency of teacher in-service training in inclusive education

- ☐ More than once a year
- ☒ Once a year
- ☐ Less than once a year
- ☐ Not sure

75% of teachers have participated in in-service training on inclusive education

☒ Teacher aides/assistants are part of the workforce



To what extent are schools encouraged to implement strategies that support students to build a school environment that is positive for all?

☒ **A great extent**

A lot

A moderate amount

(Median for the region)

A little

Not at all

School options for students with disabilities:

☒ **Integrated**

(Special classroom in mainstream school)

☒ **Inclusive**

☒ **Special**

None

Use of Individual Education Plans? ☒

Availability of reasonable accommodations across the country:

Student sits close to board or teacher

Not available

Small extent

Moderately available

Widely available

Lessons are modified or reduced in complexity based on individual student

Enlarged printed materials are provided

Additional time is provided during assessments

Personal assistance is provided during assessments (e.g. note-taking)

Physical education activities are modified

Personal assistance is provided (e.g. assistance with note-taking, communication, managing behaviour)

Assistive technologies are provided (e.g. magnifier, electronic devices, computers, communication boards)

Culture of inclusion: To what extent is there a culture of inclusion at all levels (national, sub-national, schools)?

Far exceeds expectations

Exceeds expectations

☒ **Equals expectations**

Short of expectations

(Median for the region)

Far short of expectations

What proportion of schools have...

classrooms that are accessible and safe for all?
(people with difficulties moving and seeing can get in and around)

handwashing facilities that are accessible and safe for all?

sanitation (toilet) facilities that are accessible and safe for all?

menstrual hygiene management facilities that are accessible and safe for all?

a disaster response plan in place that is inclusive of all students?

measures to address bullying?

No schools

Small proportion of schools

About half of all schools

Most schools

All schools

Encouraging retention

- Dropping out is prevented by training for parents to enable their involvement in promoting school attendance, weekly home visits when a child does not come to school and public awareness-raising at multiple points during the year.

Encouraging transition

- Transition support begins at age 14 and continues on to age 16. Transition plans enable students to continue attending school, and to transition to work and/or life skills.

Supporting out-of-school children

- Out-of-school children are located and supported to re-enter schools.
- A truancy office has been established.

- Partner agencies conduct outreach to find out-of-school children/youth, and report to the MoE's Special Education Office. Special education teachers at their local sites also follow up on out-of-school children.

Supporting post-school pathways

- Locally available technical and vocational training and education programmes do not yet implement inclusive education. There is a need for training on the policy and what is required to enable the implementation of inclusive education by all partner agencies and programmes.

Partnerships for Inclusive Education

How much are school committees or working groups encouraged to support inclusive education (e.g. student associations, school boards, parent-teacher associations)?

A great extent

☒ A lot

A moderate amount

A little

Not at all

Inclusive education coordination mechanism

- ☒ Is there a national stakeholder group made up of government and civil society representatives that meets regularly to progress inclusive education commitments?

Monitoring Inclusive Education

Does the EMIS include data on the following:

YES • Disability?



**Available almost everywhere in the country**

- Vision services (creening and glasses)
- Mobility device services
- Medical/pharmaceutical services

Available in most large towns

- Hearing services (screening)
- Hearing services (audiology and hearing aids)
- Sign language services
- Rehabilitation/therapy services
- Early intervention services
- Social protection/welfare services

Available in the capital all the time

- Vision services (Braille services & orientation and mobility training)

Don't know

- Organizations of Persons with Disabilities

Looking Forward**ENABLERS:**

- High-level commitment is strong: in 2018, RMI was the first US-affiliated island that met new performance requirements outlined in US special education legislation.
- The existing policies are good but need real enforcement.
- The rehabilitation service provides free mobility aids which enables inclusive education.
- Half of RMI's special education teachers employed by the public school system have Associate Degree qualifications or higher.
- The RMI special education programme develops an Individual Education Plan for each student, which is followed by the special education teacher for that student.
- Braille and mobility instruction and basic augmentative communication can be provided to students as needed and specified in their Individual Education Plan.

CHALLENGES:

- Limited resources and accessibility of schools.
- Limited capacity-building for parents of children with disabilities.
- There is only one, not officially qualified, sign language interpreter supporting deaf high school students. Further support for deaf students, particularly high school students, is required.

FUTURE PRIORITIES:

- Funding for accessibility, resources and capacity-building for parents and personnel.
- Increase support service availability for children with disabilities.





Inclusive Education Country Profile

SAMOA



This information was provided by government and civil society during a regional mapping of inclusive education undertaken in 2020–2021. Led by the Inclusive Education Taskforce, the mapping supports implementation of the Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Framework (PRIEF) and the Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF).

Inclusive Education Policy Framework

Legislation: Constitution 1962, Education Act 2009, Samoa National Child Care Protection Bill 2016

Inclusive Education Policy: Samoa Inclusive Education Policy for Students Living with a Disability 2014

Operationalizing Inclusive Education: The Inclusive Education Policy is operationalized within the Education Sector Plan and annual implementation plans

Inclusive Education Standards: Ministry of Education Sports and Culture (MESC) Minimum Service Standards

Inclusive Education in the Budget

What does the budget cover?

- \$\$ Community awareness on disability and education
- \$\$ Training for school staff
- \$\$ Assistive devices/technologies
- \$\$ Infrastructure funding for accessibility modifications
- \$ Outreach/itinerant support to schools by specialists
- Transport assistance specifically for disadvantaged or disabled students
- Teacher aide/assistant salaries

Legend: Extent to which inclusive education activities are covered in the MESC budget:

- \$\$\$\$ = A great extent
- \$\$\$ = A lot
- \$\$ = A moderate amount
- \$ = A little
- = Not at all



- ☒ Special/inclusive education a mandatory part of teacher training

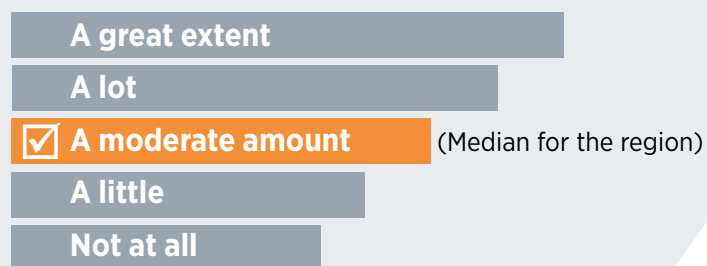
Frequency of teacher in-service training in inclusive education

- ☐ More than once a year
- ☐ Once a year
- ☒ Less than once a year
- ☐ Not sure

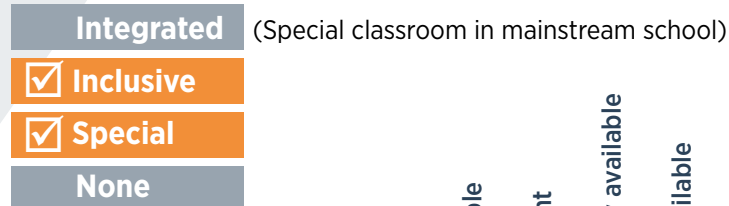
10% of teachers have participated in in-service training on inclusive education

- ☒ Teacher aides/assistants are part of the workforce

To what extent are schools encouraged to implement strategies that support students to build a school environment that is positive for all?



School options for students with disabilities:



Use of Individual Education Plans? ☒

Availability of reasonable accommodations across the country:

	Not available	Small extent	Moderately available	Widely available
Student sits close to board or teacher	☐	☒	☐	☐
Lessons are modified or reduced in complexity based on individual student	☐	☒	☐	☐
Enlarged printed materials are provided	☐	☒	☐	☐
Additional time is provided during assessments	☒	☐	☐	☐
Personal assistance is provided during assessments (e.g. note-taking)	☐	☒	☐	☐
Physical education activities are modified	☐	☒	☐	☐
Personal assistance is provided (e.g. assistance with note-taking, communication, managing behaviour)	☐	☒	☐	☐
Assistive technologies are provided (e.g. magnifier, electronic devices, computers, communication boards)	☐	☒	☐	☐

Culture of inclusion: To what extent is there a culture of inclusion at all levels (national, sub-national, schools)?



What proportion of schools have...

	No schools	Small proportion of schools	About half of all schools	Most schools	All schools
classrooms that are accessible and safe for all? (people with difficulties moving and seeing can get in and around)	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
handwashing facilities that are accessible and safe for all?	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
sanitation (toilet) facilities that are accessible and safe for all?	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
menstrual hygiene management facilities that are accessible and safe for all?	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
a disaster response plan in place that is inclusive of all students?	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
measures to address bullying?	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐

Encouraging transition

- Loto Taumafai, a special school, supports transition of students with disabilities between year levels.
- A partnership programme between MESC and schools enables discussions about community engagement, transition and areas for improved education with parent-teacher associations and school committees.

Supporting out-of-school children

- The Samoa Children Initiative, led by the Ministry of Women, supports child vendors who are not in school, or who vend after school hours.
- The Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa pastoral care programme supports children who are out of school to prevent them from getting involved in bullying, gang violence and domestic violence.
- Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and Oloamanu programmes cater for children who have dropped out of school, introducing basic literacy and numeracy skills.

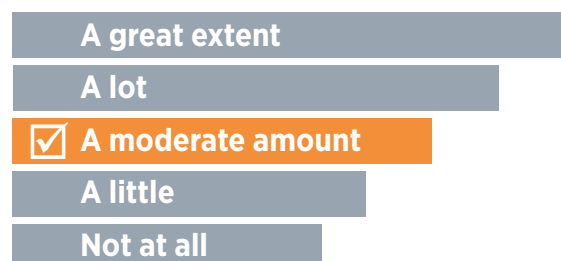
- Out-of-school children are supported by home visits, which incorporate a thorough assessment and the development of strategies to improve access to education.
- An internship programme led by the Ministry of Women in partnership with the Small Business Hub and Samoa Chamber of Commerce targets school dropouts to address the high number of unemployed youth.

Supporting post-school pathways

- Bridging courses are offered at the National University of Samoa.
- Literacy and Numeracy courses are offered at Australia Pacific Training Coalition (APTC).
- APTC has a partnership with Samoa's Persons with Disability Organisation NOLA, developing accessible post-school pathways and strengthening numeracy and literacy among people with disabilities.

Partnerships for Inclusive Education

How much are school committees or working groups encouraged to support inclusive education (e.g. student associations, school boards, parent-teacher associations)?

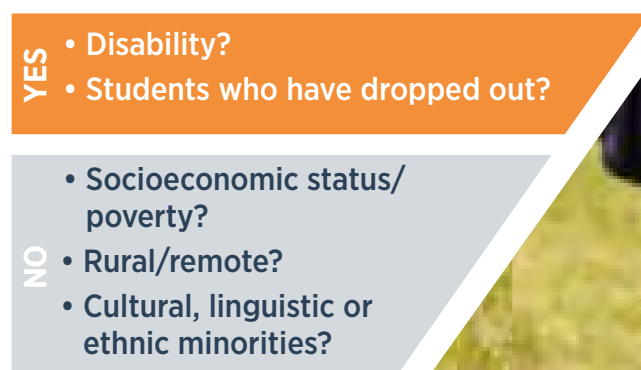


Inclusive education coordination mechanism

- ☒ Is there a national stakeholder group made up of government and civil society representatives that meets regularly to progress inclusive education commitments?

Monitoring Inclusive Education

Does the EMIS include data on the following:





Looking Forward

ENABLERS:

- A strong and supportive legislation and policy framework.
- A strategic planning framework and process with strong emphasis on inclusive education.
- Expanding dedicated human resources for inclusive education.
- Absorption of the costs of inclusive education into the local budget to reflect government commitment.
- Strong relationships with and support from development partners to progress inclusive education.
- Memoranda of understanding and agreements between stakeholders across the inclusive education sector, including government ministries, universities and training providers, service providers and other sector partners.
- MESC supports Inclusive Education Champion Schools by supporting select schools to adopt an inclusive approach, including the use of Inclusive Education Plans to measure students' progress for transition.

CHALLENGES:

- Policy enforcement.
- Political will and leadership commitment.
- Resources – human and finance.
- Engagement of community-level stakeholders.
- Awareness of and commitment to inclusive education.
- Limited support for TVET and life skills programmes.

FUTURE PRIORITIES:

- Develop the information system so that it collects and reports on students with disabilities.
- Enforcement of legislation and policies.
- Strengthened partnership and collaboration at all levels.
- Capacity development/training for service providers.
- Increase local budget to support inclusive education.
- Conduct annual review process of policy progress.
- Develop a monitoring and evaluation framework for the inclusive education policy.





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Inclusive Education Country Profile

SOLOMON ISLANDS



This information was provided by government and civil society during a regional mapping of inclusive education undertaken in 2020–2021. Led by the Inclusive Education Taskforce, the mapping supports implementation of the Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Framework (PRIEF) and the Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF).

Inclusive Education Policy Framework

Legislation: A revised Education Act is ready to go to parliament

Inclusive Education Policy: Inclusivity is one of the guiding principles of the Education Act; there is no stand alone policy as it is embedded throughout the education legislative framework

Operationalizing Inclusive Education: Inclusive education is an integral part of the Ministry's five-year strategic plan

Inclusive Education Standards: Standards for School Leaders and Teachers
Standards for Schools

Inclusive Education in the Budget

What does the budget cover?

- \$\$\$ Community awareness on disability and education
- \$ Training for school staff
- \$ Infrastructure funding for accessibility modifications
- Assistive devices/technologies
- Outreach/itinerant support to schools by specialists
- Transport assistance specifically for disadvantaged or disabled students
- Teacher aide/assistant salaries

Legend: Extent to which inclusive education activities are covered in the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD) budget:

- \$\$\$\$ = A great extent
- \$\$\$ = A lot
- \$\$ = A moderate amount
- \$ = A little
- = Not at all



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- ☒ **Special/inclusive education a mandatory part of teacher training**

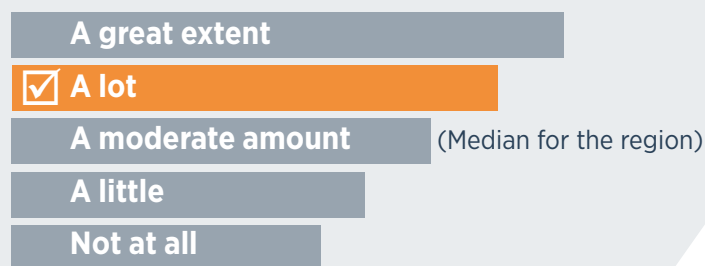
Frequency of teacher in-service training in inclusive education

- ☐ More than once a year
- ☐ Once a year
- ☒ Less than once a year
- ☐ Not sure

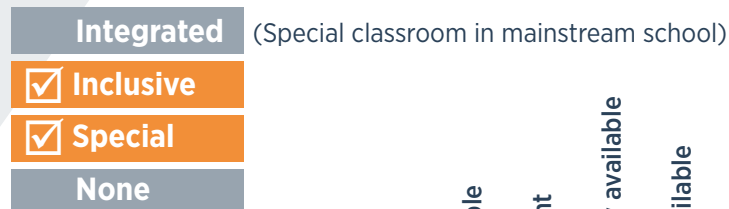
5% of teachers have participated in in-service training on inclusive education

- ☒ Teachers aides/assistants are part of the workforce but do not receive government salaries

To what extent are schools encouraged to implement strategies that support students to build a school environment that is positive for all?



School options for students with disabilities:



Use of Individual Education Plans? ☒ (in special schools but will expand to mainstream)

Availability of reasonable accommodations across the country:

	Not available	Small extent	Moderately available	Widely available
Student sits close to board or teacher	☐	☒	☐	☐
Lessons are modified or reduced in complexity based on individual student	☐	☒	☐	☐
Enlarged printed materials are provided	☐	☒	☐	☐
Additional time is provided during assessments	☐	☒	☐	☐
Personal assistance is provided during assessments (e.g. note-taking)	☒	☐	☐	☐
Physical education activities are modified	☒	☐	☐	☐
Personal assistance is provided (e.g. assistance with note-taking, communication, managing behaviour)	☒	☐	☐	☐
Assistive technologies are provided (e.g. magnifier, electronic devices, computers, communication boards)	☒	☐	☐	☐

Culture of inclusion: To what extent is there a culture of inclusion at all levels (national, sub-national, schools)?



What proportion of schools have...

	No schools	Small proportion of schools	About half of all schools	Most schools	All schools
classrooms that are accessible and safe for all? (people with difficulties moving and seeing can get in and around)	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
handwashing facilities that are accessible and safe for all?	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
sanitation (toilet) facilities that are accessible and safe for all?	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
menstrual hygiene management facilities that are accessible and safe for all?	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
a disaster response plan in place that is inclusive of all students?	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
measures to address bullying?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒

Encouraging retention

- A revised Education Act is ready to go to parliament. The objective of the Act is to promote the fundamental right of children to receive early childhood, primary and secondary education.
- There is a provision in the Act to make education compulsory from 5 to 16 years of age.

Encouraging transition

- MEHRD has removed the secondary entrance exam to allow full transition between Year 6 and Year 7.

Supporting out-of-school children

- Support programmes are available for early school leavers, including literacy programmes, life skill programmes and pathways to further skills for tertiary education.
- The Just Play programme provides sports skills.

Supporting post-school pathways

- Accessibility to post-school education, training and work programmes has been very limited owing to lack of expertise in rural training centres. The Solomon Islands Tertiary Education and Skills Authority Act 2017 outlines the provision of equitable and equal access to tertiary and skills training. Provisions for reading for the blind and improvements for office physical space are being planned. The Act also obliges equity and equality in scholarships, e.g. inclusive education in Rural Training Centres.

Partnerships for Inclusive Education

How much are school committees or working groups encouraged to support inclusive education (e.g. student associations, school boards, parent-teacher associations)?

A great extent

A lot

A moderate amount

☒ A little

Not at all

Inclusive education coordination mechanism

- ☒ Is there a national stakeholder group made up of government and civil society representatives that meets regularly to progress inclusive education commitments?

Monitoring Inclusive Education

Does the Education Management Information System (EMIS) include data on the following:

YES

- Disability?
- Students who have dropped out?
- Rural/remote?

NO

- Cultural, linguistic or ethnic minorities?
- Socioeconomic status/poverty?

Available almost everywhere in the country	Available almost everywhere in the country • Medical/pharmaceutical services • Counselling
Available in most large towns	Available in most large towns • Vision services (screening and glasses) • Organizations of Persons with Disabilities • Social protection/welfare services
Available in the capital all the time	Available in the capital all the time • Hearing services (screening) • Rehabilitation/therapy services • Early intervention services
Available in the capital only sometimes	Available in the capital only sometimes • Vision services (Braille services and orientation and mobility training) • Hearing services (audiology and hearing aids) • Sign language services • Mobility device services
Not available	

Looking Forward

ENABLERS:

- All aspects of inclusivity are integral to the education legislative framework and have been endorsed by the National Education Board.
- Completion of the Solomon Islands National Disability-Inclusive Education (SINDIE) Manual, including screening tools and support and alignment with the legislative framework.

CHALLENGES:

- Slow passage of the draft Education Bill through parliamentary processes.
- Limited national level human resources to capacitate and support provincial officers to support inclusive education in schools.
- In schools, limited understanding about application of inclusive education.
- Access to in-service and pre-service training on inclusive education is not available apart from the USP (SI) online programme.
- Current curriculum has very little inclusivity.
- Unclear curriculum pathways for out-of-school children and youth with disabilities.
- Limited resources, e.g. Braille, sign language interpreters, behaviour management knowledge and skills.

FUTURE PRIORITIES:

- Key Priority Area 1 in the SINDIE Manual: develop inclusive education mindset and an awareness of inclusivity across the education sector.
- Formalization of relationships and information-sharing between MEHRD divisions so inclusive principles underpin all activities.
- Technical support to efforts to build awareness and skills for inclusive education.
- Teacher professional development including inclusive education practices, approaches to identifying students with disabilities and educational support needs.
- Improved disability data and improve disability identification within schools and disability data in SIEMIS.
- Employing teachers with special needs training in schools.
- Dialogue between MEHRD, Solomon Islands National University, USP and other training institutions to increase inclusive education training for teachers.
- MEHRD to collaborate with Organizations of Persons with Disabilities and Ministry of Health and Medical Services.



**Ministry of Education
& Human Resources Development**



Inclusive Education Country Profile

TOKELAU



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This information was provided by government and civil society during a regional mapping of inclusive education undertaken in 2020–2021. Led by the Inclusive Education Taskforce, the mapping supports implementation of the Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Framework (PRIEF) and the Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF).

Inclusive Education Policy Framework

Legislation:

Inclusive Education Policy: Tokelau Inclusive Education Policy 2018

Operationalizing Inclusive Education: Inclusive education is embedded in the Ministry's annual plan and is operationalized through an inclusive education policy implementation plan

Inclusive Education Standards: Standards for Education on Tokelau 2014

Inclusive Education in the Budget

What does the budget cover?

- \$\$\$ Teacher aide/assistant salaries
- \$\$\$ Training for school staff
- \$ Assistive devices/technologies
- \$ Community awareness on disability and education
- \$ Infrastructure funding for accessibility modifications
- Outreach/itinerant support to schools by specialists
- Transport assistance specifically for disadvantaged or disabled students

Legend: Extent to which inclusive education activities are covered in the Ministry of Education budget:

- \$\$\$\$ = A great extent
- \$\$\$ = A lot
- \$\$ = A moderate amount
- \$ = A little
- = Not at all



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- ☒ Special/inclusive education a mandatory part of teacher training

Frequency of teacher in-service training in inclusive education

- ☒ More than once a year
- ☐ Once a year
- ☐ Less than once a year
- ☐ Not sure

90% of teachers have participated in in-service training on inclusive education

- ☒ Teacher aides/assistants are part of the workforce

To what extent are schools encouraged to implement strategies that support students to build a school environment that is positive for all?

☒ **A great extent**

A lot

A moderate amount

(Median for the region)

A little

Not at all

School options for students with disabilities:

Integrated

(Special classroom in mainstream school)

☒ **Inclusive**

Special

None

Use of Individual Education Plans? ☒

Availability of reasonable accommodations across the country:

Student sits close to board or teacher

Lessons are modified or reduced in complexity based on individual student

Enlarged printed materials are provided

Additional time is provided during assessments

Personal assistance is provided during assessments (e.g. note-taking)

Physical education activities are modified

Personal assistance is provided (e.g. assistance with note-taking, communication, managing behaviour)

Assistive technologies are provided (e.g. magnifier, electronic devices, computers, communication boards)

Not available

Small extent

Moderately available

Widely available

☐	☐	☐	☒
☐	☐	☐	☒
☐	☐	☒	☐
☐	☐	☐	☒
☐	☐	☐	☒
☐	☐	☐	☒
☐	☐	☒	☐
☐	☐	☒	☐

Culture of inclusion: To what extent is there a culture of inclusion at all levels (national, sub-national, schools)?

Far exceeds expectations

Exceeds expectations

Equals expectations

☒ **Short of expectations**

(Median for the region)

Far short of expectations

No schools
Small proportion of schools
About half of all schools
Most schools
All schools

What proportion of schools have...

classrooms that are accessible and safe for all?
(people with difficulties moving and seeing can get in and around)

handwashing facilities that are accessible and safe for all?

sanitation (toilet) facilities that are accessible and safe for all?

menstrual hygiene management facilities that are accessible and safe for all?

a disaster response plan in place that is inclusive of all students?

measures to address bullying?

☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
☐	☐	☐	☐	☒

Encouraging retention

- To encourage school retention, village laws for compulsory attendance during school age are enforced; students are not allowed to go to the village work sector until after compulsory school age.

Encouraging transition

- Specific programmes exist for transitioning from early childhood education to primary level but from secondary to tertiary there is nothing specific except a brief orientation session.
- Scholarship Scheme provides support to those going for tertiary outside of Tokelau; all 3 villages have USP centres that support online learning for those learning from Tokelau.

Supporting out-of-school children

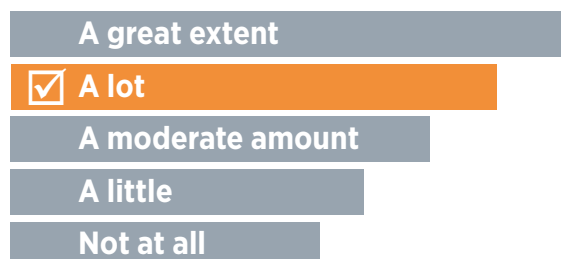
- There are no out-of-school children.

Supporting post-school pathways

- A pathways programme is available for students not making the academic track.
- Some measures exist to support people with disabilities post-school with literacy and numeracy, but deliberate structures and funding resources are not in place for post-school education and training. This relates to lack of assessment processes to identify disabilities and support needs.

Partnerships for Inclusive Education

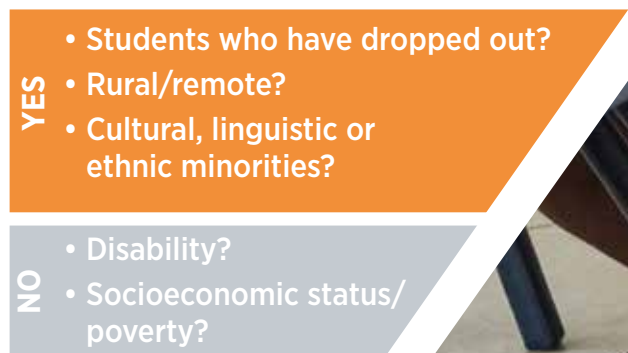
How much are school committees or working groups encouraged to support inclusive education (e.g. student associations, school boards, parent-teacher associations)?

**Inclusive education coordination mechanism**

- ☒ Is there a national stakeholder group made up of government and civil society representatives that meets regularly to progress inclusive education commitments?

Monitoring Inclusive Education

Does the EMIS include data on the following:



Available almost everywhere in the country	Available almost everywhere in the country • Organizations of Persons with Disabilities • Social protection/welfare services • Medical/pharmaceutical services
Available in most large towns	
Available in the capital all the time	Available in the capital only sometimes • Vision services (screening and glasses) • Vision services (Braille services and orientation & mobility training) • Hearing services (screening) • Hearing services (audiology and hearing aids) • Rehabilitation/therapy services • Mobility device services • Counselling
Available in the capital only sometimes	
Not available	Not available • Sign language services • Early intervention services

Looking Forward

ENABLERS:

- Having data that identifies students' learning needs.

CHALLENGES:

- Lack of technical expertise to assess and diagnose specific disabilities and degrees of difficulty, and to provide specific strategies for help.

FUTURE PRIORITIES:

- Technical assessment and identification of specific needs.
- Strategies to help and evaluating their impact.
- Confirming policies and funding implementation.
- Pilot project with UNESCO to collect data on the context of disability to inform development of policy and programmes to strengthen social protection mechanisms for people with disabilities.
- Establishing a Disability Reference Group.
- Creating a digital data system to host an electronic register of people with disabilities.
- Identification and needs assessment of people with disabilities including assessment of children with disabilities utilising the Washington Group Questions.
- Development of a National Disability Policy.
- Delivery of training for teachers and key personnel in inclusive education strategies.



MATAEKE O AKOAKOGA A TOKELAU
Tokelau Department of Education



Inclusive Education Country Profile

TONGA



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This information was provided by government and civil society during a regional mapping of inclusive education undertaken in 2020–2021. Led by the Inclusive Education Taskforce, the mapping supports implementation of the Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Framework (PRIEF) and the Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF).

Inclusive Education Policy Framework

Legislation: Education Act 2013

Inclusive Education Policy: Tonga Inclusive Education Policy 2007

Operationalizing Inclusive Education: Inclusive education priorities are included in the Ministry's annual plan

Inclusive Education Standards: Minimum Service Standards for Teachers

Inclusive Education in the Budget

What does the budget cover?

- \$ Assistive devices/technologies
- \$ Community awareness on disability and education
- \$ Infrastructure funding for accessibility modifications
- \$\$ Training for school staff
- \$\$ Outreach/itinerant support to schools by specialists
- Transport assistance specifically for disadvantaged or disabled students
- Teacher aide/assistant salaries

Legend: Extent to which inclusive education activities are covered in the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) budget:

- \$\$\$\$ = A great extent
- \$\$\$ = A lot
- \$\$ = A moderate amount
- \$ = A little
- = Not at all



☒ Special/inclusive education a mandatory part of teacher training

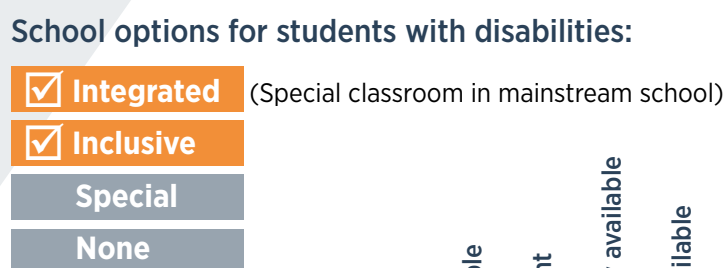
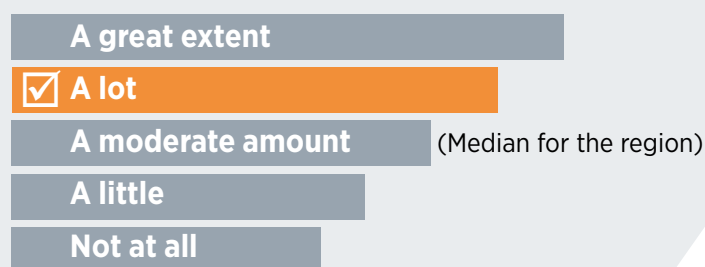
Frequency of teacher in-service training in inclusive education

- ☐ More than once a year
- ☒ Once a year
- ☐ Less than once a year
- ☐ Not sure

70% of primary school teachers have participated in in-service training on inclusive education

☒ Teacher aides/assistants are part of the workforce

To what extent are schools encouraged to implement strategies that support students to build a school environment that is positive for all?



Use of Individual Education Plans? ☒

Availability of reasonable accommodations across the country:

	Not available	Small extent	Moderately available	Widely available
Student sits close to board or teacher	☐	☐	☐	☒
Lessons are modified or reduced in complexity based on individual student	☐	☐	☒	☐
Enlarged printed materials are provided	☐	☒	☐	☐
Additional time is provided during assessments	☒	☐	☐	☐
Personal assistance is provided during assessments (e.g. note-taking)	☒	☐	☐	☐
Physical education activities are modified	☐	☒	☐	☐
Personal assistance is provided (e.g. assistance with note-taking, communication, managing behaviour)	☐	☒	☐	☐
Assistive technologies are provided (e.g. magnifier, electronic devices, computers, communication boards)	☒	☐	☐	☐

Culture of inclusion: To what extent is there a culture of inclusion at all levels (national, sub-national, schools)?



What proportion of schools have...

	No schools	Small proportion of schools	About half of all schools	Most schools	All schools
classrooms that are accessible and safe for all? (people with difficulties moving and seeing can get in and around)	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
handwashing facilities that are accessible and safe for all?	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
sanitation (toilet) facilities that are accessible and safe for all?	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
menstrual hygiene management facilities that are accessible and safe for all?	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
a disaster response plan in place that is inclusive of all students?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
measures to address bullying?	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐

Encouraging retention

- The Truancy, Reconciliation and Enforcement Unit of the MOET tracks children who miss school without informing the school. They meet with children who are at risk of dropping out and their parents or guardians to discuss issues and offer support to enable students to return to and stay at school.

Supporting out-of-school children

- MOET has established the Ako Tu'ulua Programme for out-of-school students. The programme is open to students who left school before completing secondary school.

Supporting post-school pathways

- Secondary schools may offer a technical and vocational training and education (TVET) programme from Form 4 or 5, called the Certificate in Technical and Vocational Skills Level 2. This is a pathway from high school to the Tonga Institute of Science and Technology.
- Secondary students must successfully complete Form 5 level before leaving high school to enrol at a TVET institution. TVET programmes are inclusive, although this is constrained by limited resources, accessible facilities and trained teachers.
- Students who wish to pursue further studies at the tertiary level must complete and pass Form 7.

Partnerships for Inclusive Education

How much are school committees or working groups encouraged to support inclusive education (e.g. student associations, school boards, parent-teacher associations)?

A great extent

A lot

A moderate amount

☒ A little

Not at all

Inclusive education coordination mechanism

- ☒ Is there a national stakeholder group made up of government and civil society representatives that meets regularly to progress inclusive education commitments?

Monitoring Inclusive Education

Does the EMIS include data on the following:

YES

- Disability?
- Rural/remote?

NO

- Students who have dropped out?
- Socioeconomic status/poverty?
- Cultural, linguistic or ethnic minorities?



Available almost everywhere in the country	Available almost everywhere in the country • Social protection/welfare services • Medical/pharmaceutical services • Counselling
Available in most large towns	Available in the capital all the time • Vision services (screening and glasses)
Available in the capital all the time	Available in the capital only sometimes • Vision services (Braille services and orientation & mobility training) • Hearing services (screening) • Hearing services (audiology and hearing aids) • Sign language services • Organizations of Persons with Disabilities • Rehabilitation/therapy services • Early intervention services • Mobility device services
Available in the capital only sometimes	
Not available	

Looking Forward

ENABLERS:

- The political will of the Minister of Education enables progress in inclusive education.
- Available resources including funding are critical for inclusive education implementation.
- The MOET's Inclusive Education Unit is a member of the Disability Task Force. Coordinated by the Disability and Protection Unit of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Task Force members comprise government and civil society representatives, who work collaboratively to progress disability inclusion.
- The Ministry of Health supports diagnosis of children with disabilities prior to school enrolment.
- Organizations of Persons with Disabilities strongly advocate for inclusive education.

CHALLENGES:

- School buildings are not accessible for children with disabilities.
- Teachers still find inclusive education new and challenging, especially educating all children in the same classroom.

FUTURE PRIORITIES:

- The Inclusive Education Policy requires review. Any new policy should be accompanied by an implementation plan.
- Ongoing professional development is required for early childhood education, primary and secondary teachers in inclusive education approaches.
- Improved access to specialists is required, for example speech pathologists and sign language and Braille teachers.
- Teacher aides are required in schools to support teachers to enable the learning of students with disabilities.
- Strengthen transitioning of children with disabilities from primary schools to secondary schools.
- Develop learning pathways for children with disabilities who have limited ways of communicating.
- Improve approaches to learning and assessment for students with disabilities.





Inclusive Education Country Profile

TUVALU



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This information was provided by government and civil society during a regional mapping of inclusive education undertaken in 2020–2021. Led by the Inclusive Education Taskforce, the mapping supports implementation of the Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Framework (PRIEF) and the Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF).

Inclusive Education Policy Framework

Legislation: Tuvalu Education Act 1978

Inclusive Education Policy: Tuvalu Disability-Inclusive Education Policy 2021

Operationalizing Inclusive Education: Tuvalu's inclusive education policy framework is emerging and not yet operationalized

Inclusive Education Standards: None available

Inclusive Education in the Budget

What does the budget cover?

- \$ Community awareness on disability and education
- \$ Assistive devices/technologies
- \$ Teacher aide/assistant salaries
- training for school staff
- Outreach/itinerant support to schools by specialists
- Infrastructure funding for accessibility modifications
- Transport assistance specifically for disadvantaged or disabled students

Legend: Extent to which inclusive education activities are covered in the Ministry of Education budget:

\$\$\$\$ = A great extent

\$\$\$ = A lot

\$\$ = A moderate amount

\$ = A little

-- = Not at all

☒ Special/inclusive education a mandatory part of teacher training

Frequency of teacher in-service training in inclusive education

- ☐ More than once a year
- ☐ Once a year
- ☐ Less than once a year
- ☒ Not sure

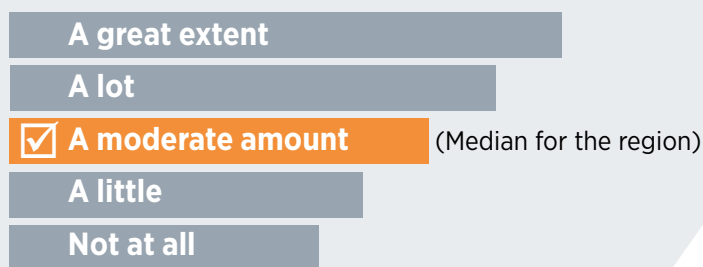
5% of teachers have participated in in-service training on inclusive education

☒ Teacher aides/assistants are part of the workforce



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To what extent are schools encouraged to implement strategies that support students to build a school environment that is positive for all?



School options for students with disabilities:

☒ Integrated	(Special classroom in mainstream school)
☒ Inclusive	
☒ Special	
None	

Use of Individual Education Plans? ☒

Availability of reasonable accommodations across the country:

	Not available	Small extent	Moderately available	Widely available
Student sits close to board or teacher	☐	☐	☐	☒
Lessons are modified or reduced in complexity based on individual student	☐	☐	☐	☒
Enlarged printed materials are provided	☐	☐	☒	☐
Additional time is provided during assessments	☐	☐	☐	☒
Personal assistance is provided during assessments (e.g. note-taking)	☐	☐	☒	☐
Physical education activities are modified	☐	☒	☐	☐
Personal assistance is provided (e.g. assistance with note-taking, communication, managing behaviour)	☐	☐	☒	☐
Assistive technologies are provided (e.g. magnifier, electronic devices, computers, communication boards)	☐	☒	☐	☐

Culture of inclusion: To what extent is there a culture of inclusion at all levels (national, sub-national, schools)?



What proportion of schools have...

	No schools	Small proportion of schools	About half of all schools	Most schools	All schools
classrooms that are accessible and safe for all? (people with difficulties moving and seeing can get in and around)	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
handwashing facilities that are accessible and safe for all?	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
sanitation (toilet) facilities that are accessible and safe for all?	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
menstrual hygiene management facilities that are accessible and safe for all?	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
a disaster response plan in place that is inclusive of all students?	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
measures to address bullying?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒

Encouraging retention

- Tuvalu has an automatic promotion policy for students from early childhood care and education (ECCE) to Year 8. There is ECCE-level clinical screening for learning disabilities upon enrolment.

Supporting out-of-school children

- A Technical and Vocational Skills Development (TVSD) pathway is available as an alternative to the general academic pathway. Students are allowed to repeat Years 8 and 10. The Matua programme is a TVSD program targeted at out-of-school students beyond primary school age.

Supporting post-school pathways

- Technical and vocational training and education and life skills programmes are open to everyone, but not a lot of people register. There are currently no bridging or work preparation courses available. Literacy and numeracy programmes are available but these are not fully utilized.

Partnerships for Inclusive Education

How much are school committees or working groups encouraged to support inclusive education (e.g. student associations, school boards, parent-teacher associations)?

A great extent

A lot

A moderate amount

☒ A little

Not at all

Inclusive education coordination mechanism

- ☒ Is there a national stakeholder group made up of government and civil society representatives that meets regularly to progress inclusive education commitments?

Monitoring Inclusive Education

Does the EMIS include data on the following:

- YES
- Disability?
 - Socioeconomic status/poverty?
 - Students who have dropped out?



Looking Forward

ENABLERS:

- Embedding of inclusive education in the National Strategy for Sustainable Development and Tuvalu Education Strategic Plan.
- Recruitment of an inclusive education officer by the Australian Support for Education in Tuvalu (ASET) Programme.
- Ratification of Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- The Ministry of Health, Social Welfare and Gender Affairs offers clinical screening to identify disability. The Social Welfare Department (under the Ministry of Health) offers a financial benefit scheme for people with disabilities.

CHALLENGES:

- Lack of awareness.
- Lack of human resources and facilities for inclusive education.
- Lack of support from government, parents and communities.
- Remoteness of outer islands

FUTURE PRIORITIES:

- Include inclusive education in the Education Act or develop an inclusive education act.
- Develop an inclusive education master plan that addresses challenges.
- Invite the private sector (local or international) to develop and implement an inclusive education master plan.





Inclusive Education Country Profile

VANUATU



This information was provided by government and civil society during a regional mapping of inclusive education undertaken in 2020–2021. Led by the Inclusive Education Taskforce, the mapping supports implementation of the Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Framework (PRIEF) and the Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF).

Inclusive Education Policy Framework

Legislation: Education Act No.9 2014, Teaching Service Act No.38 2013, Convention on the Rights of the Child Act No.26 1992, Vanuatu Institute of Teacher Education Act No.25 2001

Inclusive Education Policy: Inclusive Education Policy 2010 - 2020

Operationalizing Inclusive Education: Inclusive education priorities are included in the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) annual plan

Inclusive Education Standards: Vanuatu Minimum Quality Standards
Vanuatu Teacher Standards
MoET Infrastructure and Asset Management Standards
Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Standards
Examination and Assessment Procedures
National Curriculum Statement

Inclusive Education in the Budget

National School Programmes Budget covers inclusive education, education in emergencies, open distance, child safeguarding and gender equity.



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☒ Special/inclusive education a mandatory part of teacher training

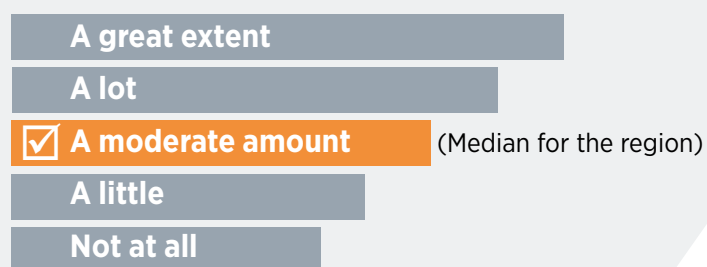
Frequency of teacher in-service training in inclusive education

- ☐ More than once a year
- ☐ Once a year
- ☒ Less than once a year
- ☐ Not sure

.05% of teachers have participated in in-service training on inclusive education

☒ Teacher aides/assistants are part of the workforce

To what extent are schools encouraged to implement strategies that support students to build a school environment that is positive for all?



School options for students with disabilities:

Integrated (Special classroom in mainstream school)



Use of Individual Education Plans? ☒

Availability of reasonable accommodations across the country:

	Not available	Small extent	Moderately available	Widely available
Student sits close to board or teacher	☐	☒	☐	☐
Lessons are modified or reduced in complexity based on individual student	☐	☒	☐	☐
Enlarged printed materials are provided	☐	☒	☐	☐
Additional time is provided during assessments	☐	☒	☐	☐
Personal assistance is provided during assessments (e.g. note-taking)	☐	☒	☐	☐
Physical education activities are modified	☐	☒	☐	☐
Personal assistance is provided (e.g. assistance with note-taking, communication, managing behaviour)	☐	☒	☐	☐
Assistive technologies are provided (e.g. magnifier, electronic devices, computers, communication boards)	☐	☒	☐	☐

Culture of inclusion: To what extent is there a culture of inclusion at all levels (national, sub-national, schools)?



What proportion of schools have...

	No schools	Small proportion of schools	About half of all schools	Most schools	All schools
classrooms that are accessible and safe for all? (people with difficulties moving and seeing can get in and around)	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
handwashing facilities that are accessible and safe for all?	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
sanitation (toilet) facilities that are accessible and safe for all?	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
menstrual hygiene management facilities that are accessible and safe for all?	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
a disaster response plan in place that is inclusive of all students?	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
measures to address bullying?	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐

Encouraging retention

- A school grant disbursement per number of enrolled children was initiated in 2015. The school grant is allocated to all schools in Vanuatu (ECCE, primary and secondary). This encourages enrolment and retention.

Encouraging transition

- There is no policy in place to support transition from one level of education to another. There are a couple of second chance schools in the capital to enable pregnant girls to go back to school.
- Automatic promotion has been reviewed and has been extended to Year 10.

Supporting out-of-school children

- Out-of-school children are supported by open distance learning which is guided by a draft policy.

This will provide an opportunity to out-of-school children to learn by distance.

- The Ministry of Youth and Sports engages youth in psychosocial activities and the 'Just Play' programme.
- The Australian Football League (AFL) also has programmes with out-of-school children in Port Vila.

Supporting post-school pathways

- Several registered post-school education and training institutions offer certificate-level qualifications for youth who have dropped out of secondary school.
- Civil society organizations offer life skills training to youth who have dropped out of school.

Partnerships for Inclusive Education

How much are school committees or working groups encouraged to support inclusive education (e.g. student associations, school boards, parent-teacher associations)?

A great extent

A lot

A moderate amount

☒ A little

Not at all

Inclusive education coordination mechanism

- ☒ Is there a national stakeholder group made up of government and civil society representatives that meets regularly to progress inclusive education commitments?

Monitoring Inclusive Education

Does the EMIS include data on the following:

YES • Disability?

- NO
- Students who have dropped out?
 - Rural/remote?
 - Cultural, linguistic or ethnic minorities?
 - Socioeconomic status/poverty?



Available almost everywhere in the country	Available almost everywhere in the country • Medical/pharmaceutical services
Available in most large towns	Available in most large towns • Vision services (screening and glasses) • Organization of Persons with Disabilities • Rehabilitation/therapy services • Mobility device services
Available in the capital all the time	Available in the capital all the time • Hearing services (audiology and hearing aids) • Hearing services (screening)
Available in the capital only sometimes	Not available • Vision services (Braille services and orientation & mobility training) • Sign language services • Early intervention services • Social protection/welfare services • Counselling
Not available	

Looking Forward

ENABLERS:

- Communication between the MoET and other ministries and NGOs is positive.
- There is a national steering committee in place to support all activities and plans related to inclusive education.
- MoET, with support from disability service providers including NGO Vanuatu Society for People with Disabilities, supports the Vanuatu Education Teacher network.
- The University of the South Pacific is providing a diploma in inclusive education, currently attended by its first cohort of 28 students.

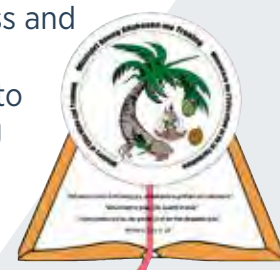
CHALLENGES:

- No government budget allocation to support the strengthening of inclusive education.
- Few disability support services available to assist students with disabilities outside of Port Vila.
- Limited application of reasonable accommodations to enable the inclusion of children with disabilities in classes.
- The vast majority of teachers do not have inclusive teaching skills and knowledge.
- Advocacy, awareness and training in inclusive education reach only to the provincial level and not to schools due to limits in financial support for rolling out the training to schools.

- School policies and improvement plans do not support inclusive education adequately.
- Lack of resources and relevant assistive devices and equipment to support teaching and learning.
- Absence of sign language.
- Only five inclusive Model schools, out of 438 primary schools in Vanuatu, have Individual Education Plans developed.
- Only five inclusive Model Schools do reasonable accommodations.
- The Inclusive Education Steering Committee is in place but not activated.

FUTURE PRIORITIES:

- MoET is working with other stakeholders to develop Vanuatu's National Sign Language.
- MoET intends to work with Vanuatu Institute of Teacher Education to develop an inclusive education module into a Bachelor degree programme for pre-service teachers.
- Scale up advocacy, awareness and training at the school level.
- Provide adequate resources to enable teaching and learning of students with disabilities.



Regional partners

Asian Development Bank

ADB has begun supporting inclusive education efforts with a large investment in Mongolia. Together with CBM Australia, ADB organized an internal training on inclusive education for 30 social and education sector staff in December 2020. ADB collaborates with CBM, UNICEF, UNESCO, the Global Disability Innovation Hub and the World Bank on inclusive education.

Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

DFAT has supported special and inclusive education in various countries across the Pacific through bilateral and regional programs, scholarships, civil society organisations, research awards and volunteer programs. Activities have included pilot schools, policy development, resource development including toolkits for schools, assistive technologies, professional development, accessible infrastructure, inclusive TVET, education management information systems strengthening, and family and community engagement.

Australia supported development of the Pacific Indicators for Disability-Inclusive Education (Pacific-INDIE) in 2013–2016. In this, a participatory process was used to establish indicators for inclusive education for the Pacific region. Australia has funded volunteer specialists in special and inclusive classrooms and ministries around the region.

Australia is represented in key regional meetings that seek to influence and progress the inclusive education agenda – PacREF, PHES, the Forum Education Ministers Meeting (FedMM) and the Human Resources Development Working Group. DFAT has a disability focal point, and inclusive education is part of the work of the Education Team members.

Australia Pacific Training Coalition

APTC supports enabling environments for people with disabilities to access training and employment on an equal basis with others. APTC seeks to increase national capacity in training and support services for people with disabilities and to demonstrate collective action and effective partnering to build coalitions for enhanced outcome and reform.

APTC country offices seek to profile and bring greater visibility to students with disabilities as an approach to increase awareness and shift perceptions. APTC has various partnerships with rural training centres and equivalent across the Pacific to improve access to training for rural and remote communities. It has an affirmative bursary assistance programme for students. This prioritizes students based on their experiences of marginalization, including disability. At the country level, APTC Samoa has a formal partnership with NOLA OPD and has previously delivered a Certificate IV in Disability at the Samoa campus.

APTC is a member of the Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Taskforce and has representation on the PacREF Implementing Agency (IA) Fono. Implementation of APTC's Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Strategic Framework is overseen by the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Facilitator.

Educational Quality and Assessment Program

EQAP, located at the Pacific Community, holds space on its online portal www.pacificdata.org for inclusive education policies and undertakes other types of indirect support and promotion of inclusive education. EQAP is a member of the Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Taskforce and the PacREF Implementing Agency (IA) Fono. EQAP has worked over the past few years to integrate accommodations into assessment programs such as PILNA and the South Pacific Form Seven Certificate to allow for the inclusion of students with disabilities to participate. Contextual and demographic information is collected in PILNA about students with disabilities, including teacher perceptions about their work with students. Countries are supported to use a variety of languages to be inclusive of students whose literacies straddle more than one language, including the introduction of dual-language and vernacular versions of PILNA instruments. EQAP gathers information about language used formally and informally in classrooms to better understand the ways in which linguistic inclusion/exclusion is experienced by children. Specific focus is given to gender differences in student achievement in assessment programs such as PILNA and SPFSC and also in the collection and analysis of education data to produce statistical indicators. EQAP's education data team is able to support countries in collecting and reporting data and indicators associated with inclusive education.

New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

MFAT is in the early stages (not yet in delivery) of a programme of work that will include capacity-building for teachers, school leaders and teacher aides for inclusive education; delivery of specialist education services for children with disabilities; support for parents with children with disabilities and their communities (through support to OPDs/CSOs); and research into inclusive education. In time, this programme may also include support for assistive technologies and Deaf learners.

MFAT provides programmatic support to PDF, and funds CBM New Zealand to deliver inclusive education support in PNG. New Zealand has funded volunteer specialists in special and inclusive classrooms and ministries around the region.

Pacific Disability Forum

PDF does not implement activities but provides technical advice and support to national OPDs, governments, donors and non-government organisations regarding the pre-conditions for inclusion for people with disabilities and stakeholders. PDF's key partners are CBM Australia, USP's Disability Resource Centre and PIFS. PDF seeks to influence inclusive education by advocating to policy makers to include the priorities and requirements of people with disabilities when discussing issues relating to education. PDF has a Programme Officer dedicated to Inclusive Education, who monitors and updates a database on inclusive education progress in the region. PDF is a core member of the Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Taskforce.

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

PIFS convenes Pacific leaders to guide implementation of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, which is a regional collective approach to securing the future of people across the Pacific.

PIFS coordinates regional frameworks, including the Pacific Framework on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration. These provide overarching guidance on gender equality and disability inclusion across the Pacific region.

PIFS provides policy advice and support regarding inclusive education across the region, in collaboration with partners. It seeks to influence inclusive education in the region through high level meetings and the provision of ministerial support. PIFS is a PacREF regional partner and has been instrumental in the development of PacREF as a policy document.

Save the Children Australia

Save the Children Australia is currently focused on increasing the capacity of teachers to be aware of and respond to the diverse needs of different students within the classroom, and collaborates closely with the Ministry of Education in both Solomon Islands and PNG.

In Solomon Islands, Save the Children Australia has implemented the DFAT-funded Play to Be School Ready Early Intervention programme targeted at children aged 3-5 years through community owned early childhood care and development centres.

Save the Children Australia works with Callan Services in PNG to support mobile outreach, including the identification of children with a functional difficulty, referral for assistive devices or medical/therapeutic interventions and assistance with the development of IEPs. This is under the Rapidly Improving Standards for Inclusive Education programme, which has recently been extended into Phase 2 and is funded by DFAT.

Save the Children Australia has not yet been directly engaged in efforts to address system inequalities in these countries but is considering approaches to do this. Save the Children Australia is part of a global Inclusive Education Community of Practice and has a handful of Inclusive Education Advisors.

World Bank

To accelerate global action for disability-inclusive development, the World Bank, among many other stakeholders made 10 commitments on disability inclusion at the Global Disability Summit in July 2018. One of the commitments is to ensure that globally all World Bank-financed education projects and programmes will be disability-inclusive by December 2025.

The World Bank Tuvalu Learning Project conducts public awareness-raising and community outreach for ECE. It supports child protection and positive behaviour management strategies as well as messaging for inclusive education and disability screening. In addition, the project also supports implementation

of recommendations outlined in the disability and inclusive education plan developed with support from the Australian Support to Education in Tuvalu (ASET) programme.

The World Bank Pacific Resilience Project in Tonga and the Vanuatu Infrastructure Reconstruction and Improvement Project continue to support the reconstruction of inclusive and accessible infrastructure. Classrooms; water, sanitation and hygiene facilities; and pathways being constructed under each project have been designed and constructed to be accessible to all.

Globally, the World Bank has an Inclusive Education Thematic Group, which aims to consolidate and advance the knowledge base available to staff, clients and development partners on issues related to ensuring equity and inclusion in education; promote cross-sectoral knowledge-sharing and find ways to scale up sustainable inclusive education interventions through diagnostics, analytical work and operational support; and promote collaboration and synergies across relevant groups and practices within the World Bank and with a range of external partners at global, regional and country levels. The Inclusive Education Resource Guide and other key documents are available on the Inclusive Education Thematic Group page.

UNESCO

UNESCO implements activities that create an enabling environment for inclusive education. These include the establishment of a Disability Reference Group in Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa and Tokelau to engage in the design and costing process being run by the joint UN programme; preparatory work to establish a social protection package pilot for people with disabilities, including capacity-building; capacity development to support people with disabilities in understanding digital data systems; and awareness-raising about the employment of persons with disabilities in the private sector. UNESCO works with implementing partners to provide technical support to countries.

UNESCO's activities are centred around the following outcomes:

- ▶ Universal, inclusive and equitable social protection systems that “leave no one behind”;
- ▶ Social protection floors that are efficiently and effectively administered;
- ▶ Financial inclusion in Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa and Tokelau that enables low transaction cost transfers of Social Protection benefits; and
- ▶ Increased resilience as disability, gender, youth and climate-related contingencies are being mainstreamed.

UNESCO provides advocacy, capacity-building and technical assistance to national committees and disability reference groups, and support to OPDs. It is a member of the Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Taskforce and has representation on the PacREF Implementing Agency (IA) Fono.

UNICEF

UNICEF is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child and mobilizes political will and material resources to help countries form appropriate policies and deliver services for children and their families, with a particular focus on the most vulnerable. UNICEF is committed to fulfilling the rights of the most disadvantaged children, including those with disabilities.

The UNICEF Pacific Education Programme 2018-2022 focuses on three main areas: ECE, equitable and inclusive learning; and disaster risk reduction (DRR) and education in emergencies (EiE), with a cross-cutting focus on education system strengthening and education sector planning. Other programme sections of UNICEF Pacific, such as Social Policy, Child Protection and WASH also support programmatic interventions contributing to inclusive education. UNICEF Pacific supports country-specific efforts in 14 Pacific Island Countries and Territories³⁶ and also engages in regional and multi-country partnerships. UNICEF is a core partner to multiple regional initiatives and bodies, including PacREF, the Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Taskforce, the Pacific Education Cluster and the Pacific Regional Council for Early Childhood Development (PRC4ECD).

Based on country-specific priorities, UNICEF Pacific has supported: data and analyses related to children with disability and education, Inclusive Education Policies and dedicated attention to inclusive education in education sector plans, capacity building of IE focal points in national partners, targeted support and resources for parents of children with disabilities in parenting programmes, and context-specific guidelines and communication materials on safe schools and COVID-19 prevention with specific guidance for children with disabilities, in addition to commissioning the Regional Review of Inclusive Education, on behalf of the regional Taskforce (the present document).

UNICEF Pacific has two focal points to support work on the inclusion of children with disabilities across all sectors, and several teams (including education and child protection) have specialists with specific responsibilities for supporting equity and inclusion.

The University of the South Pacific

USP is a regional university owned by 12 countries. It is a member of the Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific with lead responsibility for human resource development, which it undertakes through education and research to build local and regional capability. Under this responsibility, it houses the PacREF Facilitating Unit.

Through the Discipline of Education and the Institute of Education, USP works in partnership with Ministries of Education, schools, teachers and other stakeholders supporting education policy development, systems building and professional education of teachers. In the field of inclusive education, it has developed and implemented a range of courses to prepare teachers to lead inclusive classrooms and support students with disabilities:

36. Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Republic of Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu

- ▶ ED262 – inclusive education and diverse learning needs (SDG 4), rights-based approach and social model
- ▶ ED363 – inclusive school communities in the Pacific region
- ▶ ED362 – inclusive quality education – understanding child development as it relates to diverse needs; communicating inclusively, sign language, etc
- ▶ ED209 – educating individuals with Vision Impairment
- ▶ ED210 – educating individuals with behaviour disorders
- ▶ ED323 – educating individuals with physical, multiple, health impairments.

USP has overhauled the inclusive education element of the practicum (ED300). Now students reflect on their practice, complete IEPs, undertake task analysis activities, and contextualise schools in the community. All students in Degree courses in Education are required to study and be examined in at least one inclusive education course. When borders are open, USP leads flexi/summer school courses in other countries.

USP is a member of the Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Taskforce and has representation on the PacREF Implementing Agency (IA) Fono.

USP has undertaken a significant initiative to increase access to tertiary education and opportunities and outcomes for students with disabilities through the Disability Resource Centre (DRC), which has held disability awareness workshops for staff across USP who engage with students with disabilities.

USP has a Disability Inclusiveness Policy that was developed in 2013 and reviewed in 2016. This was developed through the work of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, Campus Life, DRC and the former Deputy Vice Chancellor (Education).

The Institute of Education is self-funded and undertakes research and consultancies in education across the Pacific, using its network of expertise to provide countries with quality, relevant and cost-effective education services, research and publications.

Multi-agency partnerships

Global Partnership for Education

GPE is a multi-stakeholder partnership and global fund that supports lower-income countries to improve equity and inclusion in education so that no child is left behind. It has a particular focus on inclusive education.

Over the past five years, GPE has provided funding through the Education Sector Plan Development Grant to FSM, Kiribati, RMI, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu all of which have strategies to improve inclusive practices and delivery of services. These five countries, along with Samoa, Tonga and Tuvalu, all received catalytic funding to support initial responses to COVID-19 in the education sector and have all since successfully applied for Accelerated Funding to implement further strategies with a focus on continuity of learning and system safety and resilience. All Accelerated Funding applications addressed inclusion. Fiji has recently also become eligible for GPE funding.

In 2018, six of the then eight GPE-eligible countries in the region (Kiribati, RMI, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu) agreed to pool their GPE Education Sector Plan Implementation Grants in support of a Pacific regional application, which with additional funding from MFAT and other development partners, including UNICEF, and countries, will go towards the implementation of PacREF. GPE is also currently supporting US\$2.5 million for Micronesia for compulsory ECE, and \$3 million for teacher development and inclusive education in Vanuatu.



Summary and recommendations

This section provides a summary of findings and recommendations emerging from this review.

► RECOMMENDATION 1:

Inclusive education policies and programmes, including COVID-19 recovery plans, must address the inclusion of students disadvantaged by various factors; however, increased and sustained efforts to meet the requirements of learners with disabilities must be assured.

► RECOMMENDATION 2:

Access to education must be promoted for all marginalized learners, in particular students with disabilities, through policies and strategies that enable this.

► RECOMMENDATION 3:

Inclusive education policies require costed implementation plans, and these need significantly greater resourcing, activation and monitoring.

► RECOMMENDATION 4:

Inclusive education implementation plan priorities and strategies should be incorporated, resourced and monitored within education sector plans.

Access to education

Challenges in accessing quality education in the Pacific are related to factors such as gender, disability, remoteness, poverty, ethnicity, language, migration, sexual orientation and gender identity. These factors intertwine to form multi-faceted dimensions of exclusion experienced by some students.

While data was not collected on this during this mapping, emerging literature indicates that COVID-19 is likely to have exacerbated disadvantages, having caused school closures and interrupted learning for many students and had an economic impact on many families across the region.

National efforts to promote the rights of marginalized people are emerging but incomplete: of 15 responding countries, 11 reported that they had initiated processes to establish legislation relating to gender. Ten reported the same for disability and eight for ethnicity.

Marginalization experienced by learners with disabilities appears to be the most complex and compounding, with disproportionately lower numbers of students with disabilities enrolling and completing school in many countries across the Pacific region. National censuses and regional analysis indicate that individuals with disabilities are less likely to ever attend school, are more likely to be out of school and tend to have fewer years of education than people without disabilities. Additionally, people with disabilities are less likely to complete primary or secondary education and less likely to have basic literacy skills.

Given the well-established link between disability and poverty, it is vital that learners with disabilities are not further excluded from the lifelong and generational benefits that education brings.

Inclusive education policy implementation

All countries have legislation that supports inclusive education and have or are developing policy frameworks that support disability-inclusive education. All have committed to inclusive education as it is broadly defined through international framework commitments and adoption of the SDGs.

However, realities for students with disabilities in schools, which frequently lack an inclusive culture, suggest that wide gaps exist between policy aspirations and implementation. The majority of countries (10) reported that the culture of inclusion within schools fell short or far short of expectations. Only five countries reported that the culture of inclusion equalled expectations.

Policy implementation plans can be a central enabler of inclusive education by providing a clear outline of priorities for incorporation in wider education sector plans. Out of 15 country respondents, 14 reported that operational, strategic or business plans incorporated inclusive education in some way. These, however, require resourcing and monitoring. While funding for inclusive education is made available in the education budgets of 13 countries, this is insufficient, and 12 countries rely on development partners for financial support.

► RECOMMENDATION 5:

Championing inclusive education and facilitating effective collaboration across the education sector should be undertaken by the highest levels of leadership within governments.

Inclusive education leadership

Across the region, responsibility for inclusive education is often held by a single officer within the education agency (ministry or department), with limited capacity and authority to work effectively with other divisions, ministries and stakeholders. In 12 countries, a single officer within the ministry of education manages inclusive education. In at least four of these countries, that officer has multiple other responsibilities.

A whole-of-sector approach, including planning and monitoring, is essential to enable inclusive education, including through the work of divisions such as human resources, curriculum and assessment, finance, infrastructure, information management systems and student support services. Coordination is most effective when underpinned by strong leadership.

Workforce capacity to support inclusive education

Teacher aides or assistants can provide critical support to teachers in implementing inclusive education within classrooms. However, across the region, there are limitations on both their availability and their skills to fulfil their roles.

Teacher aides are part of the education workforce in 11 countries. None of these countries reported that teacher aides had sufficient skills in all required areas. Distribution of teacher aides across urban, rural and remote areas is mixed. Availability of teacher aides varies widely within and between countries. To ensure appropriate and priority allocation of teacher aides, there is a need for effective use of student data systems, particularly in relation to disability data, and school staffing formulae.

Teacher capacity with regard to differentiating national curricula and assessments to meet the needs of diverse students varies within and between countries. Inclusive education professional development for teachers, school leaders and teacher aides represents a challenge across the region. In-service training in inclusive education is available in all Pacific countries; however, delivery is limited, and it is compulsory in only half of the countries. Coverage varies widely, with as little as 0.05% (Vanuatu) to as much as 90% (Tokelau) of the teaching workforce having ever participated in in-service training in inclusive education.

Within pre-service and in-service teacher training in universities and colleges, provision of mandatory inclusive education courses also varies. It is mandatory in 10 countries for teachers to complete a pre-service module in special or inclusive education.

Information regarding professional development related to wellbeing and psychosocial support for children was not reported. And yet this is essential to promote positive school experiences for all children, including those with disabilities. In addition, training in identifying and reporting violence, abuse and neglect of children is critical, noting the particular vulnerability of those with disabilities.

► RECOMMENDATION 6:

Governments must make trained teacher aides/assistants available to support teachers in classrooms where children with disabilities require them.

► RECOMMENDATION 7:

Pre-service and in-service training must enable teachers, teacher aides and school leaders to implement inclusive education competently and confidently, in a way that maximizes their positive wellbeing and safety from violence.

Strengthening access, learning outcomes, retention and transition

► RECOMMENDATION 8:

Strengthen national integrated ECD systems for children from birth to school age, which involve parents and caregivers, to maximize the health and development of all children, in particular those with disabilities, enable their access to ECE and optimize opportunities for their transition into inclusive primary schooling.

► RECOMMENDATION 9:

Develop, validate and implement early detection mechanisms and interventions to ensure learning and development for children with disabilities are supported from the foundation years.

► RECOMMENDATION 10:

Improve access to ECE for all students by establishing policies, training teachers, strengthening ECE coordination and improving classroom practices to optimize learning for all children, including those with disabilities.

► RECOMMENDATION 11:

Curricula must be accompanied by guidance to support teachers, teacher aides and school leaders to adapt lessons and differentiate teaching approaches so that everyone in a classroom can learn.

► RECOMMENDATION 12:

Policies and processes must be in place to guide adaptation of exams and assessments and provision of reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities who need them, and ministries and schools must be trained in their implementation.

► RECOMMENDATION 13:

The use of IEPs with students with disabilities who need them should be guided by policies and supported by training for teachers and teacher aides.

ECD is an important enabler of the healthy development of children from birth to six years of age. Effective ECD requires the involvement of stakeholders across multiple sectors, including health, nutrition, protection and education. Parents and caregivers are important providers of support to children, particularly in the early years. ECD systems across the Pacific region are still emerging, with five countries reporting that they are in the process of establishing or developing these.

ECD incorporates early detection and intervention. Early detection mechanisms can support early identification of disability among young children, and early intervention services can support their development. ECD can help children develop the skills they need to take part in everyday activities, including ECE and school. Early intervention services are available in 10 of the respondent Pacific countries, although the often-limited services are in many cases available only in large towns, perhaps reflecting their high cost. Services are more developed in countries that have historical links to, and receive funding from, New Zealand or the USA.

ECE is a critical ECD strategy and is an important enabler of transition into primary school for all children; it is particularly important for children with disabilities. Inclusive ECE systems are still being established across the Pacific region. Of the respondent countries, 12 (80%) reported that they were developing or establishing inclusive ECE services and 11 (73%) that they supported children with disabilities to transition from ECE to primary school.

Countries that support inclusive ECE use strategies that could inform practices across the region, including establishment of an inclusive ECE policy (Kiribati), training of ECE teachers in inclusive approaches (PNG), strengthening of the ECE coordination unit (Tonga) and the use of IEPs to guide and monitor progress of ECE students with disabilities (Palau).

Inclusive delivery of curricula and assessments is essential to enable retention and learning outcomes for all children. All learners have the right to the same curriculum, and the curriculum and assessment must be responsive and accessible to a diverse range of learners.

Thirteen countries reported that they were in the process of developing and establishing inclusive curricula. Twelve reported the same for assessment processes. Several countries reported that, generally, teachers lacked the knowledge, understanding and ability to adapt lessons to suit the learning needs of children with different type of disabilities. National assessments cater for children with disabilities if exams authorities are notified but this process is not always well utilized.

IEPs record student strengths as well as their learning goals, strategies and assessment plans. In 14 countries, IEPs are used to support the learning of students with disabilities, although in some countries this practice is largely in special schools and use in mainstream schools is nascent. IEPs are critical in supporting learning outcomes for some students with disabilities.

► RECOMMENDATION 14:

National governments and civil society organizations, as well as regional and bilateral development partners, must increase the emphasis and resourcing to support retention, re-engage out-of-school students and build pathways between education and TVET for marginalized students.

► RECOMMENDATION 15:

Reasonable accommodations and assistive technologies should be mandated in policy and funding made available for their application in schools to enable equitable curriculum delivery and assessment.

► RECOMMENDATION 16:

Policies, programmes and budgets should prioritize learners with disabilities who are particularly marginalized, including Deaf children. In countries where an agreed sign language is not present, government should work with Deaf people and their representative groups (OPDs) to develop sign language and train teachers and teacher aides in this.

► RECOMMENDATION 17: Education and health authorities should establish agreements and costed plans that enable children with disabilities to access on- and off-campus specialist support services.

Children with disabilities experience a disproportionate risk of dropping out of school at the end of primary school, and are less likely than others to complete secondary school and move on to post-school education and training. Thirteen countries (87%) reported that further measures were required to improve school retention and address the problem of out-of-school children.

For disadvantaged learners, success in transitioning through education pathways and on to higher education, skills and employment varies widely within and between countries. The most common post-school training options accessible to students with disabilities across the Pacific are TVET and literacy and numeracy and/or life skills training. However, where access to these was rated positively, it was more likely to be ranked “somewhat good” rather than “extremely good,” suggesting there is still work to be done to improve access. Bridging courses are the least available post-school training options.

Educating a diverse range of learners

In some Pacific countries, learners with certain disability types may experience greater barriers to education. Reasonable accommodations are mandated by policy to enable school participation in all countries, although their availability varies. Lower-cost accommodations, such as adaptations to classroom seating, lesson plans or activities, are more widely available than more costly assistive technologies and personal assistance.

Assistive technologies are a pre-condition for inclusive education for many children with disabilities. However, availability of these is limited, with approximately half of the countries reporting that assistive devices and adapted learning materials are not generally available in schools, and a further quarter that these are available in special schools but not in mainstream schools.

Services to support learners with diverse disability types range in their availability. For example, Deaf children are less likely to have access to school compared with others. Where an agreed sign language is not available, for example in Tonga and Vanuatu, many Deaf and hard-of-hearing children are unable to participate in or benefit from school at all.

Learning outcomes for students with diverse disabilities are maximized by availability of and access to specialists.³⁷ Many Pacific nations are small and do not have access to a range of specialists in-country. Where these are available, they are generally available through the ministries of education and health, although in some countries (e.g. Cook Islands and Niue) some highly specialized personnel are made available through visits by international specialists supported by New Zealand.

Of the 15 countries, 14 (93%) reported that the referral system was challenging. Enabling access to and participation in education for students with diverse disabilities requires ministries of education and health to work together to plan, allocate funding, build a workforce of personnel with qualifications in priority specializations and/or identify external – sometimes international – sources of specialist support.

37. Examples include sign language interpreters, Braille teachers, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, educational psychology, speech therapy, teacher aides, etc.

► **RECOMMENDATION 18:** Incorporate strategies for reaching people in rural and remote areas in education policies and plans, and resource and monitor these by disaggregating data by geographical location.

In many countries, educating students in remote areas and outer islands is an enormous challenge. Resources for the effective decentralization of education and its administration are frequently scant, meaning people in rural and remote locations must relocate or miss out on school. Policies, plans, human and financial resource allocations and monitoring systems frequently miss geographically marginalized people.

While all respondent countries reported the presence of strategies to support the engagement of rural and remote learners, two (Solomon Islands and Vanuatu) highlighted the extent of this challenge. This may be because of the particularly wide spread of the populations of these two countries across large archipelagos, combined with limited access to resources to address the challenges.

Multi-sector coordination to promote inclusive education

► **RECOMMENDATION 19:** Cross-sectoral inclusive education coordination mechanisms are critical for inclusive education, including ECD, and must have multi-sectoral representation and a commitment from respective jurisdictions and agencies to collaboratively develop and implement required actions.

Governments, communities, civil society and faith-based organizations play an important role in education. Inclusive education and ECD require multi-sectoral efforts involving health, social welfare, internal affairs, transport, infrastructure, women's and children's affairs, law and education. Both inclusive education and ECD are more effective in countries where services in these sectors are resourced and have clear strategies, and where they are integrated through collaborative multi-sector networks.

Eleven countries (73%) reported that they had established cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms to support inclusive education, or were in the process of doing so. These include working groups, taskforces or steering committees that enable a system for coordination among government departments, set out clear responsibilities and, as a result, enable children to access multi-disciplinary services. In some countries, these groups exist but need reactivating. Almost all countries (93%) reported that coordination measures were in place between national and sub-national authorities.

► **RECOMMENDATION 20:** Inclusive education working groups should enable meaningful cooperation between governments, communities, parents, civil society, faith-based organizations and OPDs to raise awareness, implement activities and strengthen referral systems to support inclusive education by building coalitions that harness the strengths of all stakeholders.

Partnerships between education ministries and civil society organizations such as OPDs can raise community awareness of the rights of everyone to education, generate demand for inclusive education and link students to support networks and services.

Safe and accessible inclusive education

Violence against children in school settings can include exposure to verbal, emotional, sexual and physical abuse from a teacher, school personnel or peer; corporal punishment; adult–child relationships; sexual harassment; and online or in-person bullying. Both girls and boys can be affected.

Two countries reported that they had child protection or safeguarding policies, and seven are in the process of developing these. Seven countries reported that they were in the process of developing procedures to prevent and address

► RECOMMENDATION 21:

Develop child protection policies and procedures to eliminate and respond to violence against children, bullying and gender-based violence, and support schools to implement these.

► RECOMMENDATION 22:

Develop and implement standards to ensure schools are accessible, safe and gender-sensitive, with a focus on water, sanitation and hygiene facilities.

► RECOMMENDATION 23:

Develop sector- and school-based inclusive disaster preparedness plans.

► RECOMMENDATION 24:

Governments should strengthen efforts to collect and utilize disaggregated data for inclusion more effectively within data systems to inform education sector planning, resource allocation, service delivery and monitoring.

► RECOMMENDATION 25:

Disaggregation variables should include factors such as disability, gender, rural/remote, ethnicity, socio-economic status, health and other variables specific to contextual factors of exclusion. This disaggregation should be utilized to monitor standard education indicators, such as enrolment, attendance and learning outcomes.

► RECOMMENDATION 26:

Data systems should collect information on available support in school, accessibility of the school environment and transportation, and provision of reasonable accommodations for exams and assessment.

violence against children in schools, and seven countries reported that they had moved a step beyond this, towards the establishment of child protection procedures.

Bullying is governed by national legislation, policies or handbooks in six countries, while schools in three countries are required to develop their own bullying policies. In four countries, there are no policy provisions and few school-based processes to eliminate or address bullying.

Gender-based violence was found to be moderately well covered by policies, with nine countries reporting that policies were in place to prevent gender-based violence. This study did not collect information on processes and procedures for ensuring safety and reporting gender-based violence.

Twelve countries (80%) reported that they were at the beginning stages of initiating accessible schools and developing the standards to guide these. Three have national guidelines already in place. Schools in countries across the region are somewhat likely to have accessible handwashing and sanitation facilities but less likely to have accessible menstrual hygiene management facilities. Accessible water, sanitation and hygiene facilities are a pre-condition for inclusive education, and very important in reducing the transmission of diseases such as COVID-19.

Cook Islands, Palau, RMI and Tokelau all reported that all or most of their schools were accessible and safe facilities. Interestingly, these four countries have specific funding arrangements with the governments of New Zealand and the USA, which may account for this.

Reflecting the high risk of disasters across the region, the data indicates that inclusive school disaster response plans are in place in most or all schools in eight countries. These are critical, given the highly disaster-prone nature of the region.

Evidence-based planning and monitoring to support inclusive education

Data collection and monitoring for inclusion are critical to enable equitable resource allocation, including grant disbursement to schools for education support and adjustments. In 12 countries (80%), disability is captured in the EMIS, and many countries in the region are developing increasingly sophisticated EMIS that are capable of multi-variable analysis. However, disaggregated data is rarely connected to finance and resource allocation systems and frequently does not inform the monitoring of inclusive education policy implementation.

Regional mechanisms to support inclusive education

This report recognizes many promising practices occurring across the region, and forums that enable countries to share and learn from each other are highly valuable. Regional mechanisms can facilitate access to useful technical information and resources. However, change happens at the national level. For example, the work of the Pacific Regional Inclusive Education Taskforce has resulted in this mapping report but support will be needed to assist countries to consider and implement recommendations at the national level.

► RECOMMENDATION 27:

Countries must be supported in considering and implementing recommendations arising from regional efforts, as well as sharing and learning from each others' wealth of experiences and practices.

Pacific leaders have called for the transitioning of the Pacific Regional Council on Early Childhood Care and Education (PRCECCE) to a more multi-sectoral Pacific Regional Council for ECD, with ECD focal points in each country. PIFS has been working with ECD stakeholders across the Pacific to encourage the establishment of these roles. A regional focus on ECD has promoted its importance and perhaps contributed to support for ECD in at least five countries (Cook Islands, FSM, Palau, PNG, Solomon Islands); however, generally, ECD systems across the Pacific region are still emerging.



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Please find additional country-level literature on the Pacific Data Hub:

www.pacificdata.org

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