



The Republic of Fiji Islands: COUNTRY REPORT

Training Course: INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES IN COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Provider/Country: JAPAN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGENCY, JAPAN

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Ministry of Education, Heritage & Arts

The Republic of Fiji Islands.

1. General Information.

1	Name of Country	Fiji (officially known as The Republic of Fiji Islands)
2	Area (sq.km)	18,338 square km (7,100 sq. miles). Fiji consists of about 332 islands scattered over a land area of 18,338 square kilometers, approximately 1/3 of which are inhabited. Two main islands namely Viti Levu (10,429 sqkm) and Vanua Levu (5556 sq.km) Suva is the capital of Fiji and is on the island of Viti Levu.
3	Life Expectancy	Life expectancy for men is 66 years and 70 years for women.
4	Infant mortality rate	Rate is around 20.99%-21% per 1,000 population 10.46 deaths/1000 live births Males-11.53 deaths/1000 live births Females-9.33 death/1000 live births
5	Maternal Mortality Rate	26 deaths/ 100,000 live births Fiji needs to reduce maternal mortality rate by 70% in order to meet UN-MDG. So far it has reduced by around 30% from 41 in 1990 to 32 per 100,000 live births in 2008. Now the figure stands at 26 deaths in 100,000 live births shows improvement on progress.
6	Literacy Rate	Fiji has 720 Primary Schools and 165 Secondary Schools. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary Education: Year 1- Year 8 • Secondary Education: Year 9- Year 12 • Higher Education: Tertiary Institutions & Vocational Training Education
7	Population	Approximately 854,000 according to UN Report (2005). Fiji is a multi – racial country consisting of ‘I Taukei’ Fijians, Indo- Fijians, & Others such as Chinese, Rotumans, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I-Taukei:-53% • Indo-Fijians: 40% • Others 7%

		Fiji is a multi-religious country and almost 58% of the population are Christians, 34% are Hindus, 7 % are Muslims and 1% Others				
8	Education System	Primary Education- 6 years				
		Compulsory Education-8 years				
		Adult Literacy Rate	Male	Female	Total	1996
		Indian	91.6%	85.8%	88.7%	1996
		Fijian	96.9%	96.1%	96.5%	1996
		Enrolment Ratio (Primary-Net Enrolment) Ratio				
		Total	99%			1992
		Male	99%			1995-99
		Female	100%			1995-99
		Primary Education(Gross Enrolment Ratio				
		Total	128%			1992
		Male	128%			1992
		Female	128%			1992
		Secondary education(net enrolment ratio)				
		Total	31.7%			1999
		Male	NA			
Female	NA					
HEC Total	12%			1991		
Male/Female	NA					
9	Health	Number of Hospitals In each district.				

	System	<table border="1"> <tr><td>Labasa-1</td><td>Tavua-1</td></tr> <tr><td>Savusavu-1</td><td>Ra-1</td></tr> <tr><td>Nabouwalu-1</td><td>Rotuma</td></tr> <tr><td>Taveuni-1</td><td>Vanuabalavu-1</td></tr> <tr><td>Education-1</td><td>Lakeba-1</td></tr> <tr><td>Navua-1</td><td>Ovalau-1</td></tr> <tr><td>Lami-1</td><td>Kadavu-1</td></tr> <tr><td>Sigatoka-1</td><td>Matuku-1</td></tr> <tr><td>Korovou-1</td><td>Specialized Hospital-2</td></tr> <tr><td>Nadi-1</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Education-1</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Ba-1</td><td></td></tr> </table>	Labasa-1	Tavua-1	Savusavu-1	Ra-1	Nabouwalu-1	Rotuma	Taveuni-1	Vanuabalavu-1	Education-1	Lakeba-1	Navua-1	Ovalau-1	Lami-1	Kadavu-1	Sigatoka-1	Matuku-1	Korovou-1	Specialized Hospital-2	Nadi-1		Education-1		Ba-1	
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10	Major Industry	Tourism, Sugar, Clothing, Copra, Gold, Silver, Lumber, Small Cottage Industries. This is in a ranking order with tourism as the largest by value of annual output. (Source: CIA World Fact book accurate as December 6, 2013). Fiji is one of the most developed of the Pacific Island economies. However, it still remains as a developing country. Tourism and Sugar are Fiji's major sources of foreign exchange. On the other hand, politic uncertainty, drought, floods and other natural disasters have contributed to considerable fluctuations in earnings from the sugar and tourism industry.																								
11	Employment Rate	"There are currently no official figures on Fiji's employment rate "(Archives May 15 2013). However the unemployment rate measures at 7.6 % in 1999. This figure contains the percent of the labor force that is without jobs.																								

Source: [Fiji Statistics Department](#)

2. Intellectual Disabilities

1. Laws concerned with person with Intellectual Disabilities

Constitution of the Republic of Fiji Islands: 2013

- Section 31- THE RIGHT TO Education (EVERY person has the right to education. This includes a person having a disability)
 - Section 42: (1) THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES. A person with ANY disability has the right to:
 - A. To reasonable access to all places.
 - B. To use appropriate means of communication (sign language or braille)
 - C. To access materials and devices relating to their disability
 - (2) Right to reasonable adaptations to buildings, infrastructures vehicles etc.
- [Constitution of the Republic of Fiji, 2013]

Ministry of Health: Development Strategy, 1997, stated the following:-

“The aim of the government is to ensure all individual can acquire and maintain the physical, social and mental capabilities required to lead fully creative, productive and meaningful lives. There is a need to provide a strong disability prevention program as well as rehabilitation support to all spinal cord paralysis, amputees, head injury and multiple fracture cases. For mental health illness, much greater community awareness and support and care is needed”

Ministry of Education: Policy on Effective Implementation of Special & Inclusive Education in Fiji-MoE

“The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework that will ensure and strengthen access to quality education for all students with special needs in all Special Education Schools, Early Childhood Education, Primary, Secondary, Vocational and Tertiary institutions throughout Fiji. Quality education shall reflect the spirit of equity, inclusion, access, progress and achievement of educational outcomes that will guide and direct the journey of one’s lifelong learning and the opportunity to enjoy one’s quality of life. Moreover all children should be given the opportunity to learn together wherever possible regardless of difficulties, disabilities or differences. This policy will reflect on the current conventions and rights of people with disabilities in the view of the rights-based approach on the development of disability.”

- Fiji National Disability Policy 2008-2018
- FNCDP Act 1994

There are no specific provisions related to Intellectual Disability in the National Development. However some attempts are being made to the Policy on Effective Implementation of Inclusive Education Policy to accommodate all learners with disabilities in mainstream schools

2. Financial Assistance for Persons with Disabilities

The Fiji National Council for the Disabled (FNCDP) under the Ministry of Social Welfare is the legal arm of the government that co-ordinates disability related groups and issues at the national level. The FNCDP is comprised of members from government ministries and departments that have direct input into disability development and NGOs that are providing disability related services. Budget is allocated under each government ministry according to the type of services they provide.

(Table 1.0: Government Line Ministries supporting People with Disabilities)

Name	Description	Budget Priorities
FNCDP	Coordinates disability related issues at the national level.	Under the Social Welfare Allocation. FNCDP also receives funding allocation from European union to carry out major projects like disability census and the likes.
Ministry of Health	Provides primary health care, rehabilitation and equipment as well as services to persons with disabilities	Services of CBR (Community Based Rehabilitation Assistant)
Ministry of Education	Responsible for the education of persons with disabilities	\$550,000 per annum plus other services such free Tuition, Textbooks, Bus fares and food vouchers for those in rural areas.
Ministry of Women, Social Welfare and Poverty Alleviation	Responsible for the general welfare of persons with disabilities	Transport subsidy for the elderly and free bus pass for children with disabilities.
Ministry of Regional Development	Disability related welfare through regional network	“Working towards One Nation , One Standard”-the district administrators

		co-ordinate projects like roads, registration of births, deaths and marriages
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MOE Budget 2015: \$550,000 (See Table 2.0 for specifications of grant allocation)

3. Services including CBR available for persons with disabilities

- Prevention of Disabilities-Ministry of Health's strategy and mission is to provide as much assistance as possible to prevent disabilities. The major causes of disabilities are congenital, illness and genetics. Efforts by the Red Cross and Land Transport Authority (LTA) to prevent disabilities caused by automobile accidents by enacting legislations stipulating compulsory use of seat belts. Malnutrition has been reduced through the work of the National Food and Nutrition Committee (NFNC). Occupational health and safety (OHS) is now in place to prevent accidental disabilities at the workplace such as in enforcing regulations on deep sea diving equipment.
- Early Identification & Intervention- This is carried out by the Community Rehabilitation Assistants (CRA's) and public health nurses. Information on the identified is available from the Ministry of Health but requires analysis and classification for action to be taken by schools and support organizations.
- Awareness-raising public awareness through the wide dissemination of information on disabilities has been the responsibility of individual disability organizations that each focus on their own area of specialization.
- Employment- The new initiative called IDEA(Include Disability-Employ this Ability) under the DPO's (Disabled People's Education) funded by AUSAID works to provide school leavers with a disabilities job opportunities according to the skill and qualification level received.
- Accessibility – The Town and Country Planning Act (Caption 139) makes provision for accessibility of persons with disabilities to public facilities, newly built houses and new facilities a priority. Municipalities have shown initiatives in providing ramps on road crossings.
- Education- the Ministry of Education offers special education services to 17 special schools and inclusive education services to 15 mainstream schools. This targets a total number of 1563 students with disabilities that are educated in schools. The schools offer educational services to those with intellectual impairment, while others are specialized for specific disabilities such as Fiji School for the Blind, Hilton Special School and The Hilton Early

Intervention Centre. The Education Special School caters for only intellectual impairment and has the highest number of students compared to the Nadi Special and Sunshine Special.

4. Number of Services and those beneficiaries in each district

- FNCDP-National Co-ordination

The National Co-ordination Committee plans and implements activities which includes

- The formation of six advisory committees and registration of all disability related organizations to the FNCDP.
- inclusion of FNCDP requirements in the Fiji Population Census and 2014 election
- Strengthening of rights and treatment of persons with disabilities under Fiji's Constitution.
- Is the Head Quarters and holds other disability related DPO's and NGO's.

- Education- Ministry of Education continues to offer services in the 9 education district by

- Mainstreaming disability in regular schools
- Provision of qualified special education teachers
- provision of remedial teachers and the entry of children with disabilities into secondary schools
- Provision of Education facilities for visually impaired students
- Supports the operations of the Special & Inclusive Education Unit in the Ministry
- Provision of scholarships for teachers and students with disabilities for training and higher education.

- Other

- Continuation of Disability Courses at the University of the South Pacific and APTC (Australia- Pacific Institute Technical College)

Medical Service and Rehabilitation

There is only one St. Giles Hospital in Fiji that provides medical care for persons with intellectual disability. At public hospitals, a patient who needs to be admitted must deposit or guarantee a sum sufficient to cover the cost of treatment for one week. This financial fee is waived however for the poor and those suffering severe accidents or death threatening diseases. There is no waiver based on the disability status of a person.

Committees currently meet and negotiate with relevant ministries to draft laws and regulations for possible enactment. Disability-related Education in Local Government- Local Committees of FNCDP is located in Sigatoka, Nadi, Education, Ba, Tavua, Rakiraki, Macuata, Bua and Cakaudrove

3. Outline of Education

1. Background, Vision, Strategy

Background: In 1967 the first special school was established by the Fiji Crippled Children’s society to provide education for students with physical and hearing impairments. Most of the Catholic schools in Fiji enrolled students with special needs back then. However, students with obvious or severe disabilities were often left out.

This was led by Mr. Frank Hilton, a volunteer teacher from Australia and thus the school was named the Hilton Special School. Later, more special schools were established around the country and to date there are 15 special schools and 2 vocational Training Centers. These special schools are located only in the main town areas. Access to education for children who live in the outer islands and rural areas are therefore very limited.

Vision: Quality Education for Change, Peace and Progress.

Strategy (Mission): To provide a holistic, inclusive, responsive and empowering education system that enables all children to realize their full potential, appreciate fully their inheritance, take pride in their national and cultural identity and contribute fully to sustainable national development.

2. Major Programs, covered areas, covered population, number of beneficiaries

(Table 2.0: Special Schools, Programs & Grants 2015)

Districts	Schools	Staff	Location	Roll	Controlling Authority	Programs Offered	Grant 2015
Suva Education District	The Hilton Early Intervention Centre	7	Epeli Street Education	44	Fiji Crippled Children’s Society- Education Branch	1,4	\$24,227.04

	Fiji School for the Blind	11	Nanuku Street Vatuwaqa	46	Fiji Society for the Blind	1,2,4	\$28,074.54
	Hilton Special	14	Waimanu Road ,Education	75	Fiji Crippled Children's Society-Education	2,3,4	\$35,948.73
	Education Special	15	Salato Rd, Namadi Heights.	134	Education Society for the Handicapped	2,3,4	\$29,070.53
	Gospel School for the Deaf	10	50 Dhanji St. Samabula	55	Gospel Board of Education	1,2,3	\$24,440.25
	Fiji Vocational Training Center	8	Brown st, Education	89	Fiji National Council for the Disabled	3,4	\$27,923.66
Nausori District	Nausori Special	5	Natua,Vunimono	39	Fiji Crippled Children's Society	1,2,4	\$23,403.00
Eastern District	Levuka Special	5	Beach Street, Levuka	31	Levuka Society for the Handicapped	1,2,4	\$20,452.13
Nad/Nav	Sigatoka Special	6	Vudi Rd,Sigatoka	46	Fiji Crippled Children's Society-Sigatoka	1,2,4	\$25,761.16
Education/Nadi Yasawa	Nadi Special	15	Hospital road, Nadi	155	Nadi Society for the Handicapped	1,2,3,4	\$29,662.84

	Education Special	17	Hospital Road, Ltka	68	Fiji Crippled Children's Society-Education	1,2,3,4	\$29,128.26
	Sunshine Special	12	Evan St. Education	88	Intellectually Handicapped Society	1,2,3,4	\$30,677.91
Ba/Tavua District	Ba Special	6	Kula St, Varadoli, Ba	59	Fiji Crippled Children's Society-Ba	1,2,4	\$23,560.87
	Veilomani Rehab	6	Racecourse Namosau, Ba	50	Methodist Church of Fiji	3	\$18,796.49
Ra District	Rakiraki Special	6	Yaratale Rd, Rakiraki	37	Ra Society for Handicapped	1,2,4	\$25,225.48
Macuata/Bua	Labasa Special School	9	Siberia Rd Labasa	106	Fiji Crippled Children's Society-Labasa	1,2,4	\$23,331.28
C/drove	Nasavusavu Special	5	Yaroi Village, Sav	46	Intellectually handicapped Society	1,2,4	\$24,106.56

Key:

1 – Early Intervention Program
2 – Primary Education Program

3. Vocational & Technical Training Program
4. Rehabilitation Program

3. My Position and Duty

Position: **Senior Education Officer, Special & Inclusive Education.**

Special & Inclusive Education Unit of the Ministry of Education, Heritage & Arts is headed by the Senior Education Officer. This position oversees the special and inclusive educational institutions in Fiji and advises the Ministry on matters of the same. The position is also responsible for the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of special and inclusive education plans, policies and curriculum.

Duties:

- Full Administration Duties. Direct supervision of 9 education districts and the operations of the 17 special schools and 5 inclusive schools in those respective districts.
- Professional Leadership to special & inclusive education teachers and all other staff of the special & inclusive schools.
- Co-ordination and formulation of the Ministry's Development Plans specifically relevant to the education of children with special needs.
- Oversee managements of special & inclusive schools and their operations, monitor and ensure that the school programs offer a positive teaching and learning environment.
- Network with Government and Non – Government Organization on educational issues relating to children with special needs.
- Deputize the Permanent Secretary for Education on all Ministry of Education related matters in relation to the education and training of infants at risk and children with disabilities

4. Community Development Program which include Intellectual Disability Issues as one of the activities. (if you know)

People with intellectual disabilities often participate in organized sports, celebrations, religious observance, community festivals and religious gatherings. The Ministry of Education has a calendar of Activities entailing religious observance and celebrations that schools should take part in. This year, the following celebrations took place already, where children with intellectual disabilities were actively involved in:

- Down Syndrome Day- March 21st 2015.
- Autism Day- April 02nd 2015.

Both programs were opportunities for creating awareness. The President of Fiji in his keynote address emphasized the need to collate data on Autism and called for more support for people with intellectual disabilities.

5. Situation of Persons with Disabilities

1. Diagnosis (Professional Responsible for Diagnosis)

Despite efforts by Community Rehabilitation Assistants (CRA's) who are under the Ministry of Health, the identification of children with disabilities for the provision of early intervention is yet to be fully achieved. CRA's are based in sub divisional health centers and they work with public health nurses and members of the public health team to treat disabilities. Some children are privilege to having their disability identified, diagnosed and receive therapy strategies at an early age. These children are usually referred to the Early Intervention Centers for learning and offered further intervention strategies. Others, in the majority are often referred to special schools at a much later stage, when they are being identified as not coping well in schools.

2. Education (Special Education and/or Integrated Education

The Special and Inclusive Education Unit of the Ministry of education is responsible for the development and management of special education for children with disabilities. The key functions of the Unit involve:

- screening of children with disabilities
- establishment of new inclusive schools
- Provision of specialist training for non - trained teachers in special schools
- grant assistance on special school management.

Although special schools are supervised under the Special and Inclusive unit of MoE, these schools are owned by the school managements, who are charitable organizations. Special schools follow the primary education curriculum as well as the Special Education Curriculum that was written in 1995.

. A grant of \$550,000 was distributed to all the institutions to assist with managing funds and operational costs. The 17 schools are situated in urban schools, which meant that most rural children are still not attended to.

Secondary and higher education opportunities now exist for children who are currently attending the 17 primary level special education institutions. The Ministry of education also provides Braille support staff and sign language interpreters to those in secondary and tertiary institutions.

3. Vocational Training and Job Opportunity

Access to secondary schools, university education, vocational training, employment and community participation are available on a case by case basis. The establishment of vocational training facilities for students who have been unable to proceed academically and prepare them with some work skills to enter the workforce or be self-employed has been a priority which started back in the 70's. The Fiji rehabilitation Council, established in 1979 as the organization responsible for vocational programs.

4. Support Organizations

a) Governmental agencies- Social Welfare

The Department of Social welfare does not provide any special allowance to persons with disabilities but does manage the Family Assistance and Poverty Alleviation scheme. No allowance, duty free concessions or any other forms of assistance is given to persons with disabilities for imported wheelchair and other disability aides.

Transport

Accessibility is seen in the wider context, encompassing accessibility to education, health social welfare, legislation, communication, employment, etc.

The provision of 'red cards' has been introduced to ease the travelling costs and subsidize bus fares for people with disabilities.

Sports

Athletes with disabilities in Fiji have always been a pride to sports loving Fijians- a highlight was the winning jump of lone medalist in the Paralympic games-Iliiesa Delana. The administration of disability sports has involved both non-disabled persons and persons with disabilities. Sports and recreation are items highly on every Disabled

Organization's agenda; The Minister for Youth and Sports in Fiji has given his support to all disabled sporting activities.

b) Number of NGOs concerned with Persons with Intellectual Disabilities

- Special schools- provide education and training
- Fiji National Council for the Disabled
- Fiji Disabled Person's Federation
- Advocacy Groups like:
 - Fiji association for the Deaf
 - United Blind Persons of Fiji
 - Spinal injury Association
 - Counterstroke Fiji
 - Fiji Paralympics committee
 - Fiji Crippled Children's society
 - Psychiatric Survivors association (PSA)
 - Carabaz Alliance
 - FENC (Foundation for the Education of Needy children)
 - Project Heaven (Hearing & Vision Enhancement Project)

6. Based on the information above, what are the issues to solve/ conduct effective supports for persons with Intellectual Disabilities?

- There is a need for policy guidelines for diagnosis, education, general welfare, vocational training and employment for people with disabilities at a national level.
- There is a need for a data base to establish network and co-ordination amongst the various service providers for people with disabilities.
- There is need for specifications in the law for different disability groups such as intellectual impairment and other impairments.
- There is a need for an umbrella organization to coordinate services for people with intellectual disabilities.

- There is a need for proper disability diagnosis, interventions, referrals and a bigger need to have the appropriate support systems in place for people with intellectual disabilities.

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