

## Faculty of Education

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

## » Voices from Solomon Islands

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

Through the Pacific Education Development Framework (PEDF) approved by all Pacific Island Education Ministers in 2009, special and inclusive education are seen as a priority across the region.

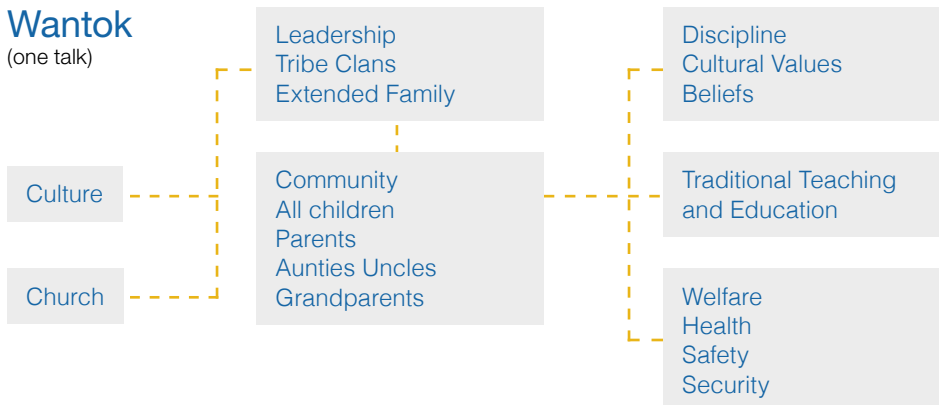
To achieve disability-inclusive education within Solomon Islands, schools, Ministries, non-government and disability people's organisations and communities need to work together to ensure equality of access for children with disabilities to education.

The Pacific-INDIE has been developed collaboratively as part of a research project commissioned by the Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The Pacific-INDIE is an important framework for supporting the development and implementation of effective Monitoring and Evaluation frameworks to measure disability-inclusive education.

Solomon Islands has been one of the four key countries involved throughout the whole development process and in trialing draft versions of the indicators.

Solomon Islands is now in an excellent position to use the indicators to help establish disability-inclusive practices across the nation.

### Wantok (one talk)



### Partnered Organisations



### Funding body



**Australian Government**  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



### Solomon Islands: country context

Solomon Islands is a nation made not born. It comprises of three distinct races: Melanesians, Polynesians, and Micronesians. Our nation gained independence in 1978.

Our peoples are grouped into tribes and clans. The extended family plays an important role in the community's everyday social, economic and political activities. They expect to be involved in the education and discipline of the younger generation. Children learn orally and by doing practical skills in the extended family.

Children with disabilities are normally given special care, nurtured, and join in the social life of the extended family. Solomon Islands peoples value their cultural obligations and more recently their church responsibilities.

These create a harmonious society in which children can grow and develop individual skills independently, while being looked after and cared for.

Our families are already inclusive and we hold hope for the future participation of all of our children in regular schooling.



Discussing and refining the Pacific-INDIE



Solomon Islands school children in an inclusive classroom

'The indicators provide us with a framework to measure disability-inclusive education. Without these we would have no idea about what we should be measuring.'

– Principal

# Walking the talk

## A voyage towards inclusive education in Solomon Islands



### The indicators will help Solomon Islands in many ways:

- The Pacific Indicators for Inclusive Education (Pacific-INDIE) have been developed through extensive consultation. The indicators support the Solomon Islands inclusive education policy. Solomon Islands peoples have been involved in developing and trialing the indicators. These will be a very helpful tool for us to monitor and evaluate the implementation of inclusive education.
- Selected indicators will be added as an Annex to the Solomon Islands National Inclusive Education policy.
- 'Numbers don't tell us lies' so we can use the indicators to become better informed about all of our students.
- Teachers now come to know their own potential to be able to be inclusive. They give students more attention and use different methods to support them.
- In the Florence Young School, for example, there has been greater involvement of parents/guardians of students with disabilities in discussions about how to help their children, options for providing additional support, and access to supplementary work.
- They will help us comply with international disability frameworks and building codes for improvements of infrastructures to allow children with disabilities to attend school.
- The indicators will identify the professional training needs of teachers. Teachers need to be recognised for the exemplary role they play in the classroom level and in including children with special learning needs.
- The recent development of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD) National Learning Support Resource Centre gives teachers a place to get information to support inclusive education (nlsrcme@gmail.com). Using this Centre for information, schools are encouraged to develop their own resources and materials to support learners with disabilities.





Solomon Islanders meet to plan for using the Pacific-INDIE



### Challenges for Solomon Islands

There is no one word for “disability” because of the large number of language dialects.

- Education is not compulsory in Solomon Islands. Enrolment of children is voluntary and children with disabilities tend to be the ones who are kept at home.
- Even though Solomon Islands have signed and ratified international conventions such as The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), unless these become “domesticated” (expressed in local law), their implementation will be limited.
- Increasing awareness of the inclusive education policy and the Pacific-INDIE across the sea of islands. The scattered geographical region with 900 islands makes dissemination, getting feedback, and delivery of materials very difficult.
- Solomon Islands have many people who may find difficulty in reading and understanding formal documents. There is also enormous diversity of languages. Translations into pidgin and the use of theatre groups to transform the information may be the way forward.
- A whole school approach is needed to support the implementation of the indicators.

‘The indicators really challenge us to look at what we are doing and what we lack. It made my school move into literacy and numeracy.’

– Principal

# Future directions for Solomon Islands

Being aware of our learners with disabilities in the classrooms came from the opportunity to collect information on the Pacific-INDIE. The indicator data has given us new approaches – something we can use ourselves. It has also provided opportunities for increased partnership for schools working together to approach inclusion. This way teachers are coming to know different approaches for working with and supporting children with disabilities.

Most importantly the government, schools and Governing School Boards need to be committed and have the will to fully implement the indicators and the policy on inclusive education.

**‘We have been driving the cart without the horse but now we will have an inclusive policy.’  
The future looks very promising for Solomon Islands.**

- We want Solomon Islands to be inclusive in order to achieve the best maximum outcomes for all students.
- As an inclusive nation we can bring unity and create better learning for all, in order to meaningfully contribute to the overall development of Solomon Islands.

- The indicators will help us be aware of gaps in supporting learners with disabilities and they will help us to refocus on better delivery of inclusive education in Solomon Islands.

**‘To be success in education is not necessarily passed down from blood ties, it’s all about hard working.’**

– Principal



Solomon Islands group working on refining the Pacific-INDIE



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## More information

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