

Fiji EFA-VI National Plan 2009-2011

Education for All Children with Vision
Impairments, including those with
Additional Disabilities.

November, 2008

Acknowledgements

The *Education for All Children with Vision Impairments* (EFA-VI) National Plan for Fiji (2009-2011) was produced through a process of collaboration with Fijian and Pacific regional government and non-government organisations and support groups that provide education, health and rehabilitation services for children and youth with disabilities, including those with vision impairments. The recommendations presented in this draft of the National Plan reflect the collective contributions of members of the Fiji EFA-VI Forum, held in Suva Fiji, 6-8 October 2008.

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	1
Abbreviations	4
Chapter 1 Introduction	5
Education for All (EFA)	5
Fiji EFA Forum 2001	5
EFA Goals	6
Education for All Children with Vision Impairments (EFA-VI)	6
EFA-VI Principles	7
Fiji EFA-VI Forum 2008	7
Fiji EFA-VI Task Force	7
Fiji EFA-VI Priority Goals	8
Chapter 2 Fiji Education Context	9
Education services for students with disabilities	10
Education services for students with vision impairments	11
The number of children with vision impairments	11
Organisations providing services to children with vision impairments	12
Chapter 3 EFA-VI Action Plan 2009-2011	13
Priority 1 (EFA Goal 3)	14
Priority 2 (EFA Goal 1)	19
Priority 3 (EFA Goal 6)	22
Priority 4 (EFA Goal 2)	26
Priority 5 (EFA Goal 4)	29
Priority 6 (EFA Goal 5)	30
Chapter 4 EFA-VI Budget 2009	31
References	35

Abbreviations

AusAid	Australian Agency for International Development
CRA	Community Rehabilitation Assistant/s
CBR	Community-Based Rehabilitation
CCTV	Closed-Circuit Television
CDU	Curriculum Development Unit
DPO	Disabled People/Persons' Organisation
ECD	Early Childhood Department
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
EFA	Education for All
EFA-VI	Education for All Children with Vision Impairments
FNCDP	Fiji National Council for Disabled Persons
FSB	Fiji Society for the Blind
FSB	Fiji School for the Blind
ICEVI	The International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment
JAWS	Job-Access-With-Speech software program
LTC	Lautoka Teachers' College
MDVI	Multiple Disability and Vision Impairment
MoE	Fiji Ministry of Education
MoH	Fiji Ministry of Health
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
PDF	Pacific Disability Forum
PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
PRIDE	Pacific Regional Initiative for the Development of Education
SEO	Senior Education Officer
SPATS	South Pacific Association of Theological Schools
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WBU	World Blind Union
UBP	United Blind Persons of Fiji
USP	The University of the South Pacific
V2020	Vision 2020, The Right to Sight campaign of the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB)
VI	Vision Impairment

Chapter 1: Introduction

Education for All (EFA)

The *World Conference for Education for All* (EFA) was held in Jomtien, Thailand in March 1990. Delegates from 155 countries and representatives from over 150 organisations reaffirmed their collective commitment to education as a human right and pledged to work towards the universalisation of primary education and the reduction in adult literacy by the end of 2000 (Fiji Ministry of Education, 2001; UNESCO, 2008). A *Consultative Forum on Education for All* was created to undertake periodic reviews of each Member State's progress towards achieving the EFA goals. This culminated in the ten-year appraisal, titled *Education for All 2000 Assessment*, with summary results presented at the *World Education Forum* in Dakar, Senegal, in April 2000.

The 1100 participants at the World Education Forum reaffirmed their commitment to achieving Education for All by the year 2015, with the production of the Dakar Framework for Action in Dakar, Senegal in 2001. This Framework included six major EFA goals and 12 associated actions. Responsibility for achieving the EFA goals was placed on Member States, with encouragement to develop national EFA plans for action for the period 2000 to 2015.

Fiji participated in the *World Conference for Education for All* in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990. The Fiji Ministry of Education coordinated the implementation of the Education for All goals during the ten-year period from 1990 to 2000. The *Fiji Education for All 2000 Assessment Report* was produced by the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with non-government organisations (NGOs), United Nations Agencies, and other agencies (Fiji Ministry of Education, 2001), and presented at the world conference in Dakar in 2000. Unfortunately financial constraints prevented Fiji being represented at the 2001 world conference in Dakar.

Fiji EFA Forum 2001

In July 2001, the Fiji Ministry of Education established a National EFA Forum to oversee the development and implementation of the Fiji EFA National Plan for 2001-2010. The Forum was chaired by the Permanent Secretary for Education, and included representatives from government ministries and education stakeholders. The Fiji EFA National Plan included the prioritising of the six EFA goals for implementation in Fiji, together with timelines for implementation, progress monitoring procedures and indicators, and associated budgetary requirements (Fiji Ministry of Education, 2001).

During 2007, two EFA workshops were undertaken to review progress in achieving the EFA goals and priorities for Fiji. These were coordinated by the present EFA Coordinator, the Ministry of Education's Senior Education Officer for Policy. The outcomes of the review process formed the basis of the Mid-Decade EFA Report for Fiji (Ministry of Education, 2008).

The underlying structure of Fiji EFA National Plan (2001) has been used as the basis for the current National Plan for the education of children and youth with vision impairments, including those with additional disabilities in Fiji.

Education for All Children with Vision Impairments (EFA-VI)

The International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI), in partnership with the World Blind Union (WBU), launched the *Education for All Children with Vision Impairment* (EFA-VI) global campaign at the ICEVI 12th World Conference in Kuala Lumpur Malaysia in July 2006. The campaign's goal is "to ensure that all girls and boys with blindness and low vision enjoy the right to education" (ICEVI, 2008). The campaign is endorsed by UNESCO and UNICEF, and is closely aligned with the United Nations *Education for All* (EFA) global campaign, which addresses the rights of children to education.

One of the major responsibilities of the ICEVI Pacific Committee was the selection of one Pacific Island country for focussed support in the development of an EFA-VI National Plan. Following consideration, Fiji was selected as the focus country in the region. Fiji is well respected regionally and internationally for its provision of educational opportunities for children with vision impairments.

During February 2008, consultation meetings were held in Fiji with key government and non-government stakeholders to inform them of the principles and goals of the EFA-VI global campaign, and to establish a National EFA-VI Task Force to spear-head the development of the Fiji EFA-VI Plan. The EFA-VI campaign received endorsement by the Fiji Ministry of Education, and membership of the National EFA-VI Task Force includes key government and non-government stakeholders in education and disability services for children with vision impairments.

It is anticipated that the development and implementation of the Fiji EFA-VI National Plan, in addition to strengthening capacity in education of all children with disabilities in Fiji, will serve as a model for education service provision for children with vision impairments in other Pacific Island countries.

EFA-VI Principles

The EFA-VI global campaign is guided by the following four principles:

1. There is a need to create a demand for education for children with vision impairments
2. The campaign will work within the general framework of education and special education of countries selected for implementation
3. Girls and boys with vision impairment should be included in the general education system with appropriate support
4. Alternative educational approaches are also necessary considering that some children with specialised needs such as those who are deafblind and multiple disabilities require specialised support (ICEVI, 2008).

Fiji EFA-VI Forum 2008

The national EFA-VI Forum was held in Suva, Fiji, 6-8 October, 2008.

Forum delegates included 40 representatives from the Ministries of Education and Health, key organisations providing education and disability services, organisations of people with vision impairments and disabilities, the parents' organisation, and international development partners.

The **Fiji EFA-VI Task Force** was established during meetings in Fiji in February and October 2008. The Task Force has a membership of 24 people, including a core committee of six people). The Task Force is supported by international and Pacific regional development partners, including ICEVI and WBU. Listed below are the current members of the Task Force:

Members of the Core Committee:

- Ms Tabalailai, Senior Education Officer, Special Education, Ministry of Education (Co-Chair)
- Ms Farouk, Director, Fiji Society for the Blind (Co-Chair)
- Mr Naisoro, Senior Officer, Policy, Ministry of Education
- Mr Rewatabua, Project Officer, United Blind Persons of Fiji (UBP)
- Rev Rageci, Head of Suva Parents Association
- Dr Yanuyanutawa, Executive director, Fiji National Council for Disabled Persons (FNCDP)

Committee Members:

- Mr Seru, Acting Principal Education Officer (Primary), Ministry of Education
- Mr Drova, Principal Education Officer, Curriculum Advisory Services, Ministry of Education
- Mr Jitoko, Deputy Secretary for Education (Admin/Finance), Ministry of Education; and National Coordinator, Fiji PRIDE Project
- Ms Matakibau, CRA Coordinator, Ministry of Health
- Ms Vakaidia, United Blind Persons of Fiji
- Ms Joseph, Head Teacher, Fiji School for the Blind
- Ms Devi, Interim Executive Teacher, Fiji School for the Blind
- Ms Musukasau, Teacher, Fiji School for the Blind
- Ms Coalala, Integration Teacher (Inclusive Education), Fiji School for the Blind
- Ms Vique, CBR Coordinator, Fiji Society for the Blind
- Ms Mataluvu, Coordinator, Continuing & Community Education, The University of the South Pacific (USP)
- Ms Heeraman, Coordinator, Special Education, School of Humanities, The University of the South Pacific (USP)
- Ms Tagivakatini, Education Advisor, The University of the South Pacific (USP)
- Ms Hazelman, Lecturer/Dean of Academic Studies, Corpus Christi College
- Ms Chand, Program Officer, Pacific Disability Forum (PDF)
- Ms Volatabu, Project Heaven
- Dr Shameem, Project Officer Education/ECD, UNICEF Pacific
- Ms Margaret Logavatu, AusAid Fiji

The Fiji EFA-VI Forum delegates developed a situational analysis of current education services for children and youth with vision impairments. Discussions included personal perspectives on current services, and the development of a “dream” for future education service provision for children with vision impairments. This current document presents an overview of existing services and incorporates the “dream” for future services into EFA-VI Goals and Actions for each of the six EFA priority areas for Fiji EFA National Plan (presented in chapter three).

Delegates at the Fiji EFA-VI Forum endorsed the importance of national, regional and global partnerships and collaboration in achieving the successful implementation of the EFA-VI National Plan for Fiji.

Fiji EFA-VI Priority Goals

The six Education for All (EFA) goals of the Dakar Framework for Action (2001) are prioritised in this Fiji EFA-VI National Plan as follows:

Priority 1 (EFA Goal 3): Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programmes (Implementation 2009).

Priority 2 (EFA Goal 1): Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

Priority 3 (EFA Goal 6): Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

Priority 4 (EFA Goal 2): Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.

Priority 5 (EFA Goal 4): Achieving a 50% improvement in the levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.

Priority 6 (EFA Goal 5): Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.

Chapter two presents a background of current education services in Fiji, including services for children with disabilities. Chapter three presents the Fiji EFA-VI Action Plan for 2009-2011. Chapter four presents the EFA-VI budget projections for 2009.

Chapter 2: Fiji Education Context

Geography

The 330 islands that together form the Fiji Islands cover approximately 1.3 million square kilometres of the South Pacific Ocean, between longitudes 170° and 178° West of Greenwich, and latitudes 15° and 22° South. Fiji's total land area is 18,333 square kilometres. The two major islands of Fiji are Viti Levu (10,429 square klms) and Vanua Levu (5,556 square klms). The capital of Fiji is Suva, situated on the island of Viti Levu (Fiji Ministry of Education, 2001).

Approximately one-third of the Fiji islands are inhabited. Eighty-three percent of land is owned by indigenous Fijians, nine percent is state land and eight percent is freehold land. Only sixteen percent of Fiji's land mass is suitable for agriculture, and this is found mainly along coastal plains, river deltas, and valleys (Fiji Ministry of Education, 2001; Government of Fiji, 2008).

Population

The population of Fiji in 2007 was 835,230. This includes 36,190 children aged 4-5 years (pre-school age), 135,724 children aged 6-13 years (primary school age), and 78,196 children aged 14-18 years (secondary school age) (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2008). The 1996 Fiji Census identified approximately 12,000 people with disabilities (Ministry of Education, 2001).

School Governance and Management

The Ministry of Education is responsible for the administration and management of education policies and the delivery of education services. This includes responsibility for ensuring that standards in education are met and maintained, and that the human, physical and financial resources allocated to education by the Government are appropriately directed and expended. The Ministry of Education provides the curriculum framework, policy guidelines and directions, and qualified teaching personnel (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2008a, 2008b).

The Ministry of Education provides the following education and training services:

- Pre-schools (children aged 5-6 years)
- Compulsory education for students in primary schools (grades 1-8), secondary schools (forms 1-4), and special schools (students aged 6-18 years)
- Secondary (non-compulsory) education for students in Forms 5-7, including students in vocational education and training programs
- Teacher training institutions and the employment of trained teaching personnel
- School management committees and controlling authorities of non-government schools and educational institutions (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2008b).

Fiji schools are administered and governed under four Education Divisions, with each Division managed by a Divisional Education Officer. Each Division consists of one or more Education Districts, with each District administered by a District Senior Education Officer (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2008).

Education Divisions	Districts within each Division
1. Central	Nausori Suva
2. Eastern	Eastern
3. Northern	Cakaudrove Macuata-Bua
4. Western	Ba-Tavua Lautoka-Yasawa Nadroga-Navosa Ra

Schools and School Enrolments

In 2007, there were 899 preschools, 720 primary schools, 17 special schools, and 169 secondary schools in Fiji. Technical and vocational education is offered as part of the secondary curriculum and also offered in a number of primary schools as “Enterprise Education”. Less than 2% of Fiji schools are managed by the Fiji Government, with the majority managed by constituted controlling authorities. Table 1 below presents an overview of preschools, schools and teacher training institutions in Fiji, their total enrolments and their management (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2008).

Education Service	Total Schools	Governance		Total Enrolments
		Govt	Non-Govt	
Preschools (children aged 5)	899	0	899	
Primary schools (Classes 1-8)	720	2	718	133,835
Secondary schools (Forms 1-7)	169	12	157	68,904
Vocational Education	66 (60 Secondary Schools; 3 ‘Stand alone’ Centres; 3 Primary/ Special Ed Schools)	6	60	2863
Special Schools (children 6-18 years)	17	0	17	1084
Teacher Training Institutions	4	2	2	
TOTAL	1875	22	1853	

Education services for students with disabilities

(a) Special schools

There are currently 17 special schools in Fiji, providing education programs for children with disabilities from age six to 18 years. All special schools are non-government schools, and are situated in urban centres in the following locations:

Suva
Sigatoka
Nadi
Lautoka

Ba
Rakiraki
Labasa
Savusavu

Naurori
Levuka

During 2007, the 17 **special schools** provided programs for a total of 1084 children with the following disabilities:

Children enrolled in 17 special schools in 2007 and the types of disabilities	
Type of disability	Number of children enrolled
Intellectual	760
Physical	134
Hearing	129
Vision	61
Total	1084

(b) Mainstream schools

Students with disabilities are also enrolled in mainstream primary and secondary schools. This includes 19 students with vision impairments enrolled in mainstream secondary schools and university in 2008. Educational support for the students with vision impairments is provided by the Fiji School for the Blind. It is noted, there are currently no data on the total number of pre-school and school-age children with disabilities, including those with vision impairments in Fiji.

Education services for students with vision impairments

(a) The number of children with vision impairments

There is currently no formal data on the number of pre-school and school age children with impairments in Fiji. Preliminary research undertaken by Dr Cama in the Central Division during 2007 identified 81 children aged 0-15 years with vision impairments. Of this group, seven were aged 5 years or less, 27 were aged 6-10 years, and 45 were aged 11-15 years. Two-thirds of the children had low vision and one-third was blind. In addition, 26% of the group had an additional disability. Based upon these results, Dr Cama estimates there are approximately 325 children with vision impairments across all four education divisions of the Fiji Islands.

Another source of data on the number of children and youth with vision impairments is the screening program undertaken by Project Heaven during 2007. During the one year period, Project Heaven screened 26,722 children in 105 schools (94 primary schools, 10 secondary schools, and one vocational school). Of the total screened, 161 were referred to optometrists, 71 were referred to ophthalmologists, and 5,249 were referred to medical officers.

(b) Organisations providing services to children with vision impairments

The major providers of education and rehabilitation programs and services for children diagnosed with vision impairments are the Fiji Society for the Blind and the Fiji School for the Blind. Both are situated in the same grounds in Vatuwaqa, Suva, with the Society responsible for the management of the school.

The Fiji Society for the Blind

The Fiji Society for the Blind was founded in 1970 through an initiative of the Suva Rotary Club, and is governed by a national Board of eight members, two trustees and a Patron. The Society manages the following programs:

- Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) program
- Fiji School for the Blind
- Integration Education Program
- Early Intervention Program
- Talking book recording studio and library
- Hostel for the Blind

The community-based rehabilitation program is staffed by eight fieldworkers and one CBR coordinator, and provides the disability-specific programs to children and adults with vision impairments and their families in Viti Levu Island and Vanua Levu Island (Fiji Society for the Blind, 2008). The Society does not provide programs in the remote islands of the Eastern District of Fiji.

Fiji School for the Blind

The Fiji School for the Blind is administered by the Fiji Society for the Blind. In 2008, the School has an enrolment of 44 students, comprising 22 boys and 22 girls, of whom 11 are day students and 23 are boarders. Boarders include children from rural areas and the outer islands of Fiji. Of the total enrolment, 32 students have low vision and 12 students are blind. The school is staffed by seven civil servant teachers (employed by the Ministry of Education and three teacher aides (employed by the Fiji Society for the Blind).

The Fiji School for the Blind offers an early intervention program, academic classes for students aged six to 18 years, and classes for students with vision impairments and multiple disabilities (MDVI). In addition to the academic curriculum, the school provides training and support in braille, orientation and mobility, computing, and sports (Fiji Society for the Blind, 2008).

The Fiji School for the Blind provides an Integration Education Program for students enrolled in mainstream schools and university. During 2008, 18 students in mainstream secondary schools and one student enrolled at the University of the South Pacific received education support. Seven of these students were totally blind and 12 have low vision.

The next chapter presents the EFA-VI Action Plan for 2009-2011.

Chapter 3: EFA-VI Action Plan (2009-2011)

Introduction

This chapter presents the EFA-VI Action Plan for 2009-2011. The Plan includes the six priority areas for the next three years, together planned implementation details for each priority area. The Action Plan was developed by members of the Fiji National EFA-Vi Task Force, in partnership with government and non-government stakeholders from Fiji and the Pacific region who attended the Fiji EFA-VI Forum, held in Suva Fiji, 6-8 October 2008.

The structure of the Fiji EFA-VI National Plan for 2009-2011 has been closely aligned to the Fiji EFA National Plan (2001). In particular, the Fiji EFA-VI Plan presents the recommended implementation actions listed under each of the six United Nations' *Education for All* goals. Each of the six priority areas is also linked to the ten objectives of the Fiji Ministry of Education Blueprint of Affirmative Action for Special Education (2009-2013). This approach has been adopted by the Fiji EFA-VI Task Force in recognition of the importance of including educational priorities for children with vision impairments within existing government education policies and action plans for all children. The Fiji EFA-VI Task Force also acknowledges the importance of the Ministry of Education's Vision, Mission and Values for the education of all children in Fiji, including children with disabilities, as reflected in the Fiji EFA National Plan (2001).

The monitoring and progress indicators selected integrate the following four assessment parameters established by the ICEVI Global EFA-VI Task Force:

1. Have education enrolment rates of children with vision impairments increased?
2. Have drop-out rates among children with vision impairments decreased?
3. Do children with vision impairments have access to the support services and learning materials they need (in the appropriate format) to allow them to complete on an equal basis with their sighted peers?
4. Is the performance of children with vision impairments on par with those of non-visually impaired children? (ICEVI 2008).

Chapter four presents the budget projections for 2009. The priority area for the 2009 budget is the first Priority Goal, "*Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programs*" (United Nations EFA Goal 3). The actions and activities associated with this first priority goal have been included in the table, and their associated cost estimates are presented in chapter four. Priority areas 2-5 will be the focus of budgetary provision during 2010 and 2011.

EFA-VI Action Plan 2009-2011

Priority 1 (EFA Goal 3)

Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programs

Related Links: Fiji Ministry of Education Special Education (2008) Objectives 2, 5 & 8

Description of EFA-VI goal:

The curriculum offered both at the primary and secondary levels is academic in nature. Students with vision impairments have limited access to the curriculum because it is unavailable in alternate formats such as large print, braille, and through digital media. In addition, life skill programs such as orientation and mobility, daily living skills, organisational skills, and social skills are not included in the school curriculum. Parents, educators and health professionals have limited awareness of the importance of these life skills to current and future success of children vision impairments in school, work, and community settings. Another priority area of need for children and youth with vision impairments is quality skills-based health education. Quality skills-based health education assists young people to acquire the beliefs, attitudes, values, life skills and services needed for emotional and psychosocial well-being and physical health.

Human Rights Issue: School aged children with vision impairments shall be given the opportunity to enter the school system and provisions to be made within the schools and the community to enable successful re-entry and outcomes.

- Problem a** Lack of current and accurate data on the number of children and youth with vision impairments, number of trained personnel to undertake vision screening programs, and screening equipment availability.
- Problem b** Lack of assessment prior to entry into preschool and school settings
- Problem c** Lack of accessible curricula material (braille, large print, e-text, audio) for students with vision impairments
- Problem d** Lack of specialised school supports (expanded core curriculum) for children with vision impairments
- Problem e** Negative community views about the ability of children with vision impairments to learn and become independent
- Problem f** Lack of support for families and carers of children with vision impairments

Priority 1 (EFA Goal 3) cont.

Actions & Activities for 2009	Timeframe	Person Responsible	Monitoring	Progress Indicator
<p>Action 1: To increase assessments of the visual needs of children with vision impairments.</p> <p><u>Activity 1.1:</u> Undertake an audit of the current number of children and youth with vision impairments in the Fiji Islands.</p> <p><u>Activity 1.2:</u> Undertake an audit of the number of pre-school, school and CBR staff who have the qualifications and skills to undertake vision assessments.</p> <p><u>Activity 1.3:</u> Undertake an audit of the number of teaching and technical resources for vision screening and assessment.</p>	2009	FSB (Society), FSB (School), & UBP (in collaboration with MoE and MoH)	FSB, UBP, MoE, MoH	<p>Increase in the number of vision assessments undertaken in mainstream and special schools; Increase in the number of professionals who are qualified to perform vision assessments.</p> <p>Increase in school enrolment, retention and achievement rates of children with vision impairments.</p> <p>Accurate data on (a) the number of children with vision impairments (pre-school to tertiary levels), (b) educators and CBR staff qualified to carry out vision screening and assessment, and (c) vision screening teaching and technical resources.</p>
<p>Action 2: To ensure curriculum content is accessible to students who are blind or who have low vision, for example the provision of tactile diagrams, charts, and maths problems.</p> <p><u>Activity 2.1:</u> Establish a braille facility at the MoE Education Resource Centre for the production of all curriculum materials, assessment and examination papers in braille and tactile formats (for production of materials in UEB braille code).</p>	2009	MoE CDU, MoE Education Resource Centre	EFA-VI Task Force, LRA	<p>Establishment of braille production facilities in the MoE Education Resource Centre and the commencement of production and distribution of curriculum materials and assessment and examination papers in braille to student across all levels of the education system.</p> <p>Provision of training program in (a) installation, use and care of Braille hardware, (b) braille code, and (c) computer-generated production of Braille books, tactile graphics, etc.</p>

Priority 1 (EFA Goal 3) cont.

Actions & Activities for 2009	Timeframe	Person Responsible	Monitoring	Progress Indicator
<p><u>Action 2 (cont.)</u></p> <p><u>Activity 2.2:</u> Provide a one-month training program for the staff of the MoE Education Resource Centre with in braille production methods (2 trainers from Australia, re braille code compatibility).</p> <p><u>Activity 2.3:</u> Install the hardware, software and consumables required to produce braille and tactile curriculum materials, examinations and assessments in the MoE Education Resource Centre.</p> <p><u>Activity 2.4:</u> Provide low vision aids and assistive technology to students with vision impairments (pre-school to tertiary/vocational levels) to enable them to access curriculum and learning materials.</p>				<p>Increase in levels of curriculum access and academic performance of students with vision impairments.</p> <p>Increase in education achievement levels of students with vision impairments enrolled in education.</p>
<p><u>Action 3:</u> To promote independent living and travel through the provision of orientation and mobility training.</p> <p><u>Activity 3.1:</u> Education and CBR graduates of the 2008 Pacific regional O&M Diploma provide school-based and community-based training in orientation and mobility.</p>	2009	Fiji Society for the Blind, & Fiji School for the Blind	FSB & FSB	<p>Increase in number of children receiving training in orientation and mobility.</p> <p>Increase in the number enrolments and regular attendance of children with vision impairments in mainstream and special schools.</p>

Priority 1 (EFA Goal 3) cont.

Actions & Activities for 2009	Timeframe	Person Responsible	Monitoring	Progress Indicator
<p>Action 4: To increase the number of pre-school and school teachers and CBR staff who have qualifications and skills in teaching children and youth with vision impairments.</p> <p><u>Activity 4.1:</u> Provide three-day training in methods of teaching children with vision impairments to Curriculum Development Resource Officers, support teachers, and primary, secondary and tertiary teachers.</p>	2009	FSB (Society), FSB (School), & UBP (in collaboration with MoE and MoH)	FSB, UBP, MoE, MoH	<p>Establishment of annual training program in vision impairment for teachers and CBR staff.</p> <p>Increased school enrolment, retention and achievement levels of students with vision impairments, including students with additional disabilities.</p>
<p>Action 5: To promote public awareness of the value of education in enabling young people with vision impairments to fulfill their potential to learn and work independently network and offer help from as early as possible.</p> <p>(Activity: See Action 6 below)</p>	2009	MoE, MoH, ICEVI Pacific, FSB,	EFA-VI Task Force, CRA	<p>Provision of school guidance programs for students with vision impairments and their parents.</p> <p>Creation of public media awareness campaigns, including TV, radio, and newspapers.</p> <p>Increased school enrolments and retention rates of children and youth with vision impairments.</p>

Priority 1 (EFA Goal 3) cont.

Actions & Activities for 2009	Timeframe	Person Responsible	Monitoring	Progress Indicator
<p>Action 6: To establish support group/s consisting of adults with vision impairments (as role models, advocates and mentors), families, carers, students, friends, and school and CBR staff. Support groups will provide encouragement and will share strategies to assist children with vision impairments and families.</p> <p>Activity 5.1: Extend of role of Fiji Society for the Blind “Friday Group Program” for parents/carers, by establishing support groups in local areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The focus of these sessions will be sharing, affirming, encouraging and empowering members of the support group/s. This will strengthen the ability of parents and carers to raise community awareness of the value of education, advocate effectively for the rights of their children, help with reading and homework, and promote their children’s social and communication skills, etc. • Support group/s provide fortnightly get-together during school terms, to learn braille, orientation and mobility, living skills, etc. • Support group/s provide monthly get-together for parents and carers during school terms. 	2009	Fiji Society for the Blind, UBP (in collaboration with FNCDP)	EFA-VI Task Force, FSB, CRA	<p>Establishment of strong local support groups consisting of families, students, friends, and staff of school and CBR programs.</p> <p>Increased school enrolment, retention and achievement levels of students with vision impairments, including students with additional disabilities.</p>

Priority 2 (EFA Goal 1)

Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children

Related Links: Fiji Ministry of Education (2008) Special Education Objectives 3 & 8

Description of EFA-VI goal:

Currently early childhood care and education (ECCE) services to children with disabilities aged 0-6 years, including children with vision impairments are not adequate. Although international research shows that the earlier the intervention in a child's life, the better the developmental outcomes for the child, services for Fijian children with disabilities aged 0-6 years are not prioritized by government and non-government organisations.

Human Rights Issue: All children of age 0-6 years will have the opportunity to Early Childhood Education wherever they live.

Problem a	Inadequate screening and identification of children with vision impairments aged 0-6 years
Problem b	Lack of ECCE staff trained in intervention methods for children with vision impairments
Problem c	Lack of monitoring procedures for identification of young children with vision impairments
Problem d	Lack of ECCE programs for children with vision impairments
Problem e	No overall Special Education Policy; nor priority for early intervention within policy
Problem f	Organisations and agencies currently providing screening and programs are not prioritising early intervention for children with vision impairments aged 0-6 years
Problem g	Negative attitudes and beliefs of parents and society regarding people with disabilities, resulting in parents not seeking appropriate ECCE services and support.
Problem h	Inconsistent capacity building in ECCE, particularly in rural communities.

Priority 2 (EFA Goal 1) cont.

Actions	Timeframe	Person Responsible	Monitoring	Progress Indicator
1. To strengthen vision impairment screening and identification programs provided in hospitals, health centers, preschools and kindergartens. (Linked to Priority 1, Action 1)	2009-2010	Ministry of Education, FSB CBR Workers, Project Heaven, Ministry of Health [Maternity Units, MCH/District/Zone Nurses, CRAs, V2020]	Monitoring & Evaluation Data	Increase number of children screened; Research data needed on current provision in order to set future targets.
2. To develop awareness and advocacy programs that assist families in identification and prevention of vision impairments.	2010-2011	NGOs – FSB CBR Fieldworkers MoH – CRA, Nurses, National Centre for Health Promotion	MOH - NCHP	Increased ECCE materials, resources and services provided
3. To ensure continued training in full assessment and referral procedures for people who are the first “point of contact” for young children with vision impairments and their families.	2010-2011	MoH – Eye Dept, Vision2020, CRA Coordinator, in collaboration with NGOs (FSB, Pacific Eye Institute)	MOH – v2020 Coordinator, CRA Coordinator, FSB Coordinator	Increased number of trained Village Health Workers, CBR workers, CRAs, Nurses, etc.
4. To increase the number of people qualified to deliver family-centered ECCE programs.	2010-2011	MoH – CRAs FSB	EFA-VI Task Force	Increased number qualified to deliver ECCE programs, eg CRAs, CBR and Red Cross.
5. To ensure appropriate monitoring and evaluation systems are in place for the identification of young children with vision impairments and the delivery of ECCE programs.	2010-2011	MoH FSB	EFA-VI Task Force	Ongoing evaluation mechanisms in place

Priority 2 (EFA Goal 1) cont.

Action	Timeframe	Person Responsible	Monitoring	Progress Indicator
6. To include a section on ECCE of children aged 0-6 years in the Special Education/Inclusive Education Policy.	2010-2011	MoE	MOE/ EFA-VI Task Force	Special Education/Inclusive Education Policy in place
7. To promote ECCE for children with disabilities, including children with vision impairments by organizations providing services to children and families e.g. Red Cross, Vision2020, CRA.	2010-2011	EFA-VI Task Force Partner Organisations	Partner Organisations	ECCE services for children with disabilities prioritised by organisations providing education and disability services.

Priority 3 (EFA Goal 6)

Improving aspects of quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential skills

Related Links: Fiji Ministry of Education (2008) Special Education Objectives 1, 4, 6, 7 & 8

Description of goal:

In terms of improving the quality of education offered by schools in Fiji, there are two important issues to be considered.

1. Improving the **efficiency** of the education system through balancing inputs into the educational system with the outputs of high quality learning outcomes for students, including students with disabilities.
2. Increasing the **effectiveness** of the education system to maximise its contribution to the personal, economic and social development of individual learners and the country as a whole. This includes an emphasis on providing an education that equips all students, including those with disabilities for life and for earning a living in their local economy.

Poor health and malnutrition result in the loss of millions of school days each year. To consolidate their efforts to increase access and improve the quality of education, schools must serve as a link between students with disabilities and essential health and nutrition services.

Human rights issues:

All children will have access to good quality education in whatever school they enrol in and the Ministry of Education will provide the necessary assistance to ensure that all schools provide quality education.

Problem a Shortage of mainstream and special school teachers who are trained and qualified to teach students with vision impairments

Problem b Lack of support for school improvement and functioning, particularly in rural areas

Problem c Curriculum relevance and access for students with vision impairments:

- (i) Relevance: Inclusion of the “expanded core curriculum” for learners with vision impairments, including independent living skills, orientation & mobility, recreation skills, and social skills
- (ii) Curriculum access through the provision of low vision aids, assistive technology, and accessible formats (large print, braille, electronic, audio), and adjustments and accommodations to curriculum content, assessments and teaching strategies.

Priority 3 (EFA Goal 6) cont.

Problem a: Shortage of mainstream and special school teachers who are trained and qualified to teach students with vision impairments

Action	Timeframe	Person Responsible	Monitoring	Progress Indicators
1. To provide pre-service teacher training in inclusive education philosophy and disability-specific skills.	Commence 2010	Ministry of Education EFA VI Task Force USP Corpus Christi Lautoka Teachers College	Ministry of Education EFA-VI Task Force	Training in inclusive education and teaching of students with vision impairments provided in all pre-service courses from 2010
2. To provide in-service training in inclusive education philosophy and disability-specific skills.	Commence 2010	Ministry of Education EFA VI Task Force	Ministry of Education EFA-VI Task Force	Training provided to 20% of teachers in all regions each year
3. To increase the number of CBR staff.	Commence 2010	Ministry of Education EFA-VI Task Force Fiji Society for the Blind	EFA-VI Task Force	2010: Employment and training of new CBR staff 2011: New staff delivering services to underserved regions 2014: Sufficient levels of CBR staff employed across all education divisions
4. To provide CBR staff with relevant in-service and pre-service training that supports their role of providing community based support to children with vision impairments, families and schools.	Commence 2010	Ministry of Education EFA -VI Task Force Fiji Society for the Blind	EFA-VI Task Force	In-service provided to all existing CBR staff; Pre- service training provided from 2010 onwards
5. To strengthen the professional capacity of teachers in the Fiji School for the Blind.	Commence 2010	Ministry of Education EFA-VI Task Force Fiji Society for the Blind	Ministry of Education EFA-VI Task Force	Annual in-service training provided to FSB staff

Priority 3 (EFA Goal 6) cont.

Problem b: Lack of support for school improvement and functioning, particularly in rural areas

Action	Timeframe	Person Responsible	Monitoring	Progress Indicators
<p>1. To raise awareness and advocate for the needs of blind and low vision learners and their families, with priority given to the outer islands and rural areas. [Linked to Priority 1, Actions 5 & 6]</p>	<p>2009-2011</p>	<p>Ministry of Education EFA-VI Task Force (ensure inclusion of parent group and local church workers) in partnership with DPO's and SPATS (South Pacific Association of Theological Schools)</p>	<p>EFA-VI Task Force</p>	<p>Increased number of learners identified and attending school.</p>
<p>2. To strengthen partnerships and commitment to schools, in terms of supporting improvement plans that ensure accessible school buildings, furniture, and equipment for students with vision impairments. This includes ensuring classrooms and playgrounds are accessible (eg lighting, physical access, etc). [Linked to Priority 1, Actions 5 & 6]</p>	<p>2009-2011</p>	<p>Ministry of Education</p>	<p>EFA-VI Task Force</p>	<p>Priority schools identified Modifications completed</p>

Priority 3 (EFA Goal 6) cont.

Problem c: Curriculum relevance and access for students with vision impairments

Action	Timeframe	Person Responsible	Monitoring	Progress Indicators
1. To support the development of the Fiji Society for the Blind and the School for the Blind as a “centre of excellence” in education of children with vision impairments. This includes the expanded role of supporting inclusive education.	2010-2011	Ministry of Education Fiji Society for the Blind Fiji School for the blind	EFA-VI Task Force	Provision of support to schools and families that enhances delivery of services
2. To ensure content of curriculum is accessible through the provision of low vision aids, and texts in accessible formats (Braille and large print). [Linked to Priority 1, Action 2]	2009-2011	Ministry of Education Fiji School for the Blind	EFA-VI Task Force	Establishment of donor partnerships in provision of accessible formats and assistive technology.
3. To increase current capacity to produce textbooks and teaching resources in accessible formats e.g. braille, large print. [Linked to Priority 1, Action 2]	2009-2011	Ministry of Education Fiji School for the Blind	FSB	Personnel trained to maintain and repair braille technology, including embossers and perkins brailers. Material produced and provided for learners.
4. To ensure students have access to the Expanded Core Curriculum (i.e. Orientation and Mobility, Life Skills, etc).	2010-2011	Ministry of Education Fiji School for the Blind	FSB UBP	Increased independent living skills of students with vision impairments in home and school environments.

Priority 4 (EFA Goal 2)

Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls and children with disabilities, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free, compulsory and primary education of good quality.

Related Links: Fiji Ministry of Education (2008) Special Education Objectives 1-10

Description of goal: There is currently equitable access to education of both girls and boys in Fiji. However, preliminary investigations into attendance rates of girls and boys with vision impairments, including those with additional disabilities, highlights existing inequalities in education access for these children, as compared with their sighted non-disabled peers. Potential links between education access, linguistic background, socio-economic status and disability have not been researched.

Human Rights Issues: That all children are entitled to an education.

Problem a A large number of children with vision impairments currently do not attend schools.

Problem b For children with vision impairments attending school, there is not always appropriate support provided to enable them to participate in learning activities on an equal basis with their sighted peers.

Problem c There is a need to increase access of children with vision impairments to suitably trained teachers, accessible materials, and transportation. This is a particular problem in rural and remote areas in Fiji.

Action	Timeframe	Person Responsible	Monitoring	Progress Indicator
1. To screen for vision impairments at the point of school entry. [Linked to Priority 1, Action 1]	5 years (2013)	Health Ministry Head Teachers	MoE	Increase in the number of children with vision impairments identified
2. To provide referrals to services for children and families identified through screening programs.	5 years (2013)	Health Ministry (Diagnosis & Assessment) Ministry of Education (Education Services) Fiji Society for the Blind Fiji School for the Blind Ministry of Education - Special Education Project Heaven	MoE	Increase in the number of Referrals

Priority 4 (EFA Goal 2) cont.

Action	Timeframe	Person Responsible	Monitoring	Progress Indicator
3. To ensure the “Special Education Policy” addresses the needs and issues of learners with vision impairments.	2010	Senior Education Officer (Special Education), Ministry of Education	EFA-VI Task Force	Ministry of Education
4. To develop and implement Special Procedures and Guidelines for external Examination Protocols for students with vision impairments.	2010	Ministry of Education	Fiji School for the Blind (FSB)	Endorsement of Procedures and Guidelines by MoE; Increase in the number of students with vision impairments sitting the external examinations; The use of Special Procedures and Guidelines for relevant stakeholders.
5. To implement a National Awareness Campaign addressing the right to education of children with vision impairments. [Linked to Priority 1, Actions 5 &6]	Annual campaign until 2015	MoE and Stakeholders (FSB, UBP, etc) All forms of media	EFA-VI Task Force	Increase in school enrolments of children with vision impairments; Annual Awareness Campaigns each year.
6. To address the demand for education by increasing the number of trained teachers, appropriate resources, and improved school transportation.	2010	Ministry of Education LTC USP and Teachers Training Colleges	EFA-VI Task Force	Increase in the number of trained teachers; Relevant resources available to students; Improved school transportation.

Priority 4 (EFA Goal 2) cont.

Action	Timeframe	Person Responsible	Monitoring	Progress Indicator
7. To create an awareness of the availability of Advocacy services and how to access these services. [Linked to Priority 1, Actions 5 &6]	2009-2010	Fiji National Council for Disabled Persons (FNCDP); United Blind Persons (UBP)	EFA-VI Task Force	Number of students with vision impairments and their families using existing advocacy services; Increased number of advocates.
8. To establish Distance Education programs and Curriculum for learners with vision impairments.	2010	Ministry of Education – specifically CDU, TVET, Special Education	EFA-VI Task Force	Number of learners with vision impairments in remote rural areas having access to education programs.

Priority 5 (EFA Goal 4)**Achieve 50% improvement in the level of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults***Related Links: Fiji Ministry of Education (2008) Special Education Objectives 5 & 8*

Description of goal: The provision of adult literacy programs is currently not the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. This “Education for All” goal of the United Nations is included in this EFA-VI Plan as a means of raising awareness of the needs of adults with vision impairment to obtain services and resources that promote basic literacy and numeracy skill development.

Human Rights Issues: Access to basic education for all.

Problem a Lack of appropriate services and resources to provide basic literacy skills for adults with vision impairments.
Problem b Lack of data to identify people with vision impairments who need literacy services.

Action	Timeframe	Person Responsible	Monitoring	Progress Indicators
1. To create a literacy program for adults with vision impairments.	2010	EFA-VI Task Force	FSB UBP	Literacy program created.
2. To promote access to the literacy program through a media awareness campaign.	Start Campaign 2011 and provide annually	EFA-VI Task Force	FSB UBP	Increase in number of adults with vision impairments who are literate.
3. To provide access to basic and continuing education to adults by enabling adults with vision impairments to enrol in Matua Programs e.g. Nabua Secondary, Ratunavula Secondary and other further education institutions.	2010	EFA-VI Task Force Ministry of Education	FSB UBP SEO Special Education, MoE	Number of adults with vision impairments enrolled in MoE Matua Programs (for students who have left the education system without acquiring formal education).

Priority 6 (EFA Goal 5)**Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieving general equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls full and equal access and achievement in basic education of good quality***Related Links: Fiji Ministry of Education Special Education Objective 9*

Description of goal: There is currently equitable access to education of both girls and boys in Fiji. However, preliminary investigations into attendance rates of girls and boys with vision impairments, including those with additional disabilities, highlights existing inequalities in education access for these children, as compared with their sighted non-disabled peers. Potential links between education access, gender and disability have not been researched.

Human Rights Issue: Equal rights and opportunities for girls and women with disabilities, including those with vision impairments.

Problem: Negative attitude of the public to girls with disabilities, including girls with vision impairments.

Action	Timeframe	Person Responsible	Monitoring	Progress Indicator
<p>1. To establish community awareness and mentoring programs on the equal rights to education of girls and women.</p> <p>The programs should target all levels of society, including government, community, law enforcement, etc.</p> <p>[Linked to Priority 1, Actions 5 & 6]</p>	2010 and Ongoing	Government, community, families, local authorities, education, DPO	MoE & EFA-VI Task Force	Representation of girls and women in all kinds of community and work activities.

Chapter 4 2009 Budget

This chapter presents the 2009 budget projections for the Fiji EFA-VI Plan. The itemised budget refers to EFA-VI Priority One, “Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programs” (see pages 14-18). EFA-VI Priority One consists of six actions and associated activities over the twelve month period of 2009.

The six actions for Priority One are as follows:

1. To increase assessments of the visual needs of children with vision impairments.
2. To ensure curriculum content is accessible to students who are blind or who have low vision, for example the provision of tactile diagrams, charts, and maths problems.
3. To promote independent living and travel through the provision of orientation and mobility training.
4. To increase the number of pre-school and school teachers and CBR staff who have qualifications and skills in teaching children and youth with vision impairments.
5. To promote public awareness of the value of education in enabling young people with vision impairments to fulfill their potential to learn and work independently network and offer help from as early as possible.
6. To establish support group/s consisting of adults with vision impairments (as role models, advocates and mentors), families, carers, students, friends, and school and CBR staff. Support groups will provide encouragement and will share strategies to assist children with vision impairments and families.

Targeted activities for 2009 include the establishment of a braille production facility within the Education Resource Centre of the Ministry of Education, provision of low vision aids and assistive technology to children with vision impairments (pre-school to tertiary levels), data collection, teacher training, orientation and mobility training for children, and the promotion of public awareness through advocacy and empowerment programs for parents and community support groups.

The total estimated budget for implementation of EFA-VI Priority One in 2009 is **US\$41,139.00**. It is anticipated that funding will be sought from international and regional development partners and sponsors, as the Fiji Ministry of Education budgetary process for 2009 has already been approved by the government.

BUDGET 2009 - Priority 1 (EFA Goal 3)

Actions & Activities for 2009 (Refer pages 14-18)	Budget	A\$	F\$	US\$
Action 1: To increase assessments of the visual needs of children with vision impairments.				
<p><u>Activity 1.1:</u> Audit of the current number of children and youth with vision impairments in the Fiji Islands.</p> <p><u>Activity 1.2:</u> Audit of the number of pre-school, school and CBR staff who have the qualifications and skills to undertake vision assessments.</p> <p><u>Activity 1.3:</u> Audit of the number of teaching and technical resources for vision screening and assessment.</p>	<p>Activities 1.1–1.3: F\$600 for 3 months</p> <p>[Data collection by Fiji School for Blind, Fiji Society for Blind, and United Blind Persons of Fiji]</p>		600.00	338.00
Action 2: To ensure curriculum content is accessible to students who are blind or who have low vision, for example the provision of tactile diagrams, charts, and maths problems.				
<p><u>Activity 2.1:</u> Establish a braille facility at the MoE Education Resource Centre for the production of all curriculum materials, assessment and examination papers in braille and tactile formats (for production of materials in UEB braille code).</p> <p><u>Activity 2.2:</u> Provide a one-month training program for the staff of the MoE Education Resource Centre with in braille production methods (trainers from Australia, re braille code compatibility).</p>	<p>Activities 2.1 & 2.2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two return airfares (Sydney-Suva) - Accommodation plus breakfast for (a) 1 person for 7 days & (b) 1 person for 30 days @ A\$120/day pp - Meals: 37 days total @F80.00 per day - Transport @F\$15/day/person - Per diem allowance @A10 per day/person 	<p>2600.00</p> <p>4440.00</p> <p>370.00</p>	<p>2960.00</p> <p>555.00</p>	<p>1742.00</p> <p>2975.00</p> <p>1667.00</p> <p>312.00</p> <p>248.00</p>

Actions & Activities for 2009	Budget	A\$	F\$	US\$
Action 4: To increase the number of pre-school and school teachers and CBR staff who have qualifications and skills in teaching children and youth with vision impairments.				
Activity 4.1: Provide three-day training in methods of teaching children with vision impairments to Curriculum Development Resource Officers, support teachers, and primary, secondary and tertiary teachers.	Venue, meals and materials for 50 teachers		3000.00	1689.00
Action 5: To promote public awareness of the value of education in enabling young people with vision impairments to fulfill their potential to learn and work independently network and offer help from as early as possible.				
Action 6: To establish support group/s consisting of adults with vision impairments, families, carers, students, friends, and school and CBR staff.				
Activity 5.1: Extend of role of Fiji Society for the Blind "Friday Group Program" for parents/carers, by establishing support groups in local areas.	Bus fares: 30 attendees for each of the 2 fortnightly sessions @\$5.00		300.00	169.00
TOTAL COST US\$			US\$41139.00	

Note: Conversion Rates Used:

A\$1 = US\$0.67

A\$1 = F\$1.19

US\$1 = F\$1.78

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