

**Country Profile on
Disability**

REPUBLIC OF THE FIJI ISLANDS

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Japan International Cooperation Agency
Planning and Evaluation Department**

**Country Profile on Disability
Republic of the Fiji Islands**

Table of Contents

Abbreviation	ii
1. Basic Profile.....	1
1-1. Basic Indicators	1
1-2. Indicators on Disability	3
2. Issues on Disability.....	4
2-1. Definition of Disability in Fiji.....	4
2-2. Current Situation.....	4
2-3. Documentation and Survey on Disability.....	6
3. Administration and Policy on Disability.....	7
3-1. Administration on Disability	7
3-2. Laws and Regulations on Disability	9
3-3. Policies on Disability.....	11
3-4. Measures on Disability	11
3-5. Experts and Workers in the Field of Disability.....	22
4. Disability-related Organizations and Activities	23
4-1. Activities by Disability-related Organizations.....	23
4-2. Cooperation Projects on Disability Organized by International and Other Donors.....	23
5. References.....	25

Abbreviation

BCG	Bacille Calmette-Guerin
CBR	Community-based Rehabilitation
CRA	Community Rehabilitation Assistants
DPT	Diphtheria Pertussis Tetanus
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
FDPA	Fiji Disabled Peoples Association
FNCDP	Fiji National Council of Disabled Persons
JOCV	Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer
LTA	Land Transport Authority
NFNC	National Food and Nutrition Committee
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety
OVP	Oral Polio Vaccine
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USAID	The United States Agency for International Development

1. Basic Profile

1-1. Basic Indicators

Public Sector Expenditure¹

Health (% of GDP)	13.6%	1996
Education (% of GNP)	23.4%	1996
Social welfare (% of Total Public Expenditures)	0.3%	1996
Defense (% of GNP)	8.7%	1996

Population²

Population (total)	0.8 million	1999
% of women	49.4%	1999
% of urban population ³	48.6%	1999
Life Expectancy (total)	72.9	1999
Male	70.7	1999
Female	75.1	1999

Medical Care

Medical care personnel		
Population/Doctor ³	2,803	1990-99
Population/Nurse & midwife ⁴	465	1992-95

¹ Fiji Bureau of Statistics. Population Census 1996, 1996.

² World Bank. World Development Indicators 2001

³ UNDP. Human Development Report 2001

⁴ UNDP. Human Development Report 2000

Education

Education system ⁵				
Primary education	6 years			
Compulsory education	8 years			
Adult literacy rate ⁶	Male	Female	Total	1996
Indian	91.6%	85.8%	88.7%	1996
Fijian	96.9%	96.1%	96.5%	1996
Enrollment ratio				
Primary education ⁷ (Net enrollment ratio)				
Total	99%		1992	
Male	99%		1995-99	
Female	100%		1995-99	
Primary education ⁷ (Gross enrollment ratio)				
Total	128%		1992	
Male	128%		1992	
Female	128%		1992	
Secondary education (Net enrollment ratio)				
Total ⁸	31.7%		1999	
Male	N/A			
Female	N/A			
Higher education (Gross enrollment ratio)				
Total ⁷	12%		1991	
Male	N/A			
Female	N/A			

⁵ UNESCO. Statistical Yearbook 1999

⁶ World Bank. World Development Report 2000/2001

⁷ USAID Economic and Social Data Services (ESDS). GED2000 Retrieved February 21, 2002, from <http://quesdb.cdie.org/ged/index.html>

⁸ Ministry of Education. Annual Report for the Year, 1999.

1-2. Indicators on Disability

Reliable data on disability has not been obtained.

Disability-specific Data

Age-specific Data

Area-specific Data

Grade-specific Data

Cause-specific Data

Gender-specific Data

2. Issues on Disability

2-1. Definition of Disability in Fiji

For international discussions on disability, the Fiji National Council of Disabled Persons (FNCDP) uses the United Nations (UN) definition of disability as stated below:

“Disability summarizes a great number of different functional limitations occurring in any population in any country of the world. People may be disabled by physical, intellectual or sensory impairment, medical conditions or mental illness. Such impairments, conditions or illnesses may be permanent or transitory in nature” (FNCDP, 1994).

The Fiji Disabled Peoples Association, a self-help group of persons with disabilities, defines disability as follows:

“Disability applies to anyone who by virtue of their physical mental, sensory and emotional disposition is prevented from enjoying equal opportunities and exercising the same rights as the rest of the society due to social and physical barriers” (Fiji Disabled Peoples Association -FDPA, 1998)

The term “*disability*” means the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in community life on equal terms with others. It describes the encounter between a person with a disability and the environment. The purpose of this term is to emphasize the shortcomings in the environment or the many organized activities in society such as information, communication or education that prevent persons with disabilities from equal participation in society.

2-2. Current Situation

1. Registration

There is no national registration system to provide information on the number of persons with disabilities. Early identification of disabilities is carried out by community rehabilitation assistants (CRA) and public health nurses. Information on the identified is available from the Health Ministry but requires analysis and classification for action to be taken by schools and support organizations. The formal education system on the other hand, registers persons with

disabilities so that referrals can be made to special schools. Parents also bring them to hospitals and appropriate special schools but there is no coordination between the Health Ministry, Education Ministry, or the community.

2. General Conception and Public Awareness

Previously, disability was perceived as a punishment for previous familial misdeeds, or a result of witchcraft or bad luck. Only over the last decade has disability been viewed from a more humane perspective.

Awareness raising in the public through the wide dissemination of information on disabilities has continued to be the responsibility of individual disability organizations that each focus on their own area of specialization. A national disabled persons' association runs an aggressive advocacy program, taking advantage of the tremendous support from Fiji media such as radio, television and newspapers.

The Fiji National Council of Disabled Persons (FNCDP) has organized the participation of persons with disabilities in various national celebrations since 1995. However, wider public awareness on the needs and aspirations of persons with disabilities has been achieved through the active involvement of persons with disabilities themselves, working through their respective Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) in awareness raising, fund-raising and organizing sporting programs. Organized by district disability committees of the FNCDP, the International Day of Disabled Persons was celebrated for the first time in 1996 to great success in eight main centers.

3. Employment

A lack of preparation, and job opportunities are some of the obstacles that persons with disabilities currently face. Some help is provided through the Family Assistance Scheme managed by the Social Welfare Department and a public service commission that provides equal employment opportunities and an official in-road to employment in the public sector, however, more must be done.

4. 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. As a result, municipalities have shown initiative in providing ramps on road crossings.

However, a lack of extra funding for these access facilities is a common constraint to these municipalities.

5. Education

The government provides school fee subsidies, building grants, textbook grants and other financial assistance for public funding but has no special provisions on policies or regulations for the delivery of special education services. The Primary Education Section of the Ministry of Education manages special education units attached to normal classes.

2-3. Documentation and Survey on Disability

National Census

【Title】	National Census
【Last published】	1996
【Items regarding disability】 The 1996 Census included for the first time, questions on disability. Nearly 12,000 people were recorded in the Census as being disabled in some form.	

Other Surveys

【Title】	Fiji Poverty Report
【Last published】	1997
【Items regarding disability】 This report found that many persons with disabilities lived in poverty, most disabled adults in Fiji had only received restricted formal education, employment prospects were limited, very few services were able to meet their special needs, and they could only qualify for financial assistance if they were declared destitute.	

3. Administration and Policy on Disability

3-1. Administration on Disability

* See Annex 1 for organizational chart

Central Government

【Disability-related Governmental Organizations】

【Name】	【Description】
Fiji National Council for Disabled Persons (FNCDP)	Coordinates disability-related groups and issues at the national level Implements the targets for the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons 1993-2002 and negotiates policy development for disabilities
Ministry of Health	Provides primary health care, rehabilitation and equipment as well as services to persons with disabilities
Ministry of Education	Responsible for the education of persons with disabilities
Ministry of Woman, Social Welfare and Poverty Alleviation	Department of Social Welfare
Ministry of Regional Development	Disability-related welfare through regional networks

The FNCDP was formally established in September 1991 as the central authority and the national coordinating body for disability issues. 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. Under the FNCDP Act, advisory committees have been formed whose members are appointed by the Minister for Health and Social Welfare⁹ to advise and make recommendations for research, policy implementation or legislative amendments within the relevant individual policy categories of the Agenda for Action.

⁹ It is thought that there was a Ministry of Health and Social Welfare in 1991 as the Minister is for Health and Social Welfare, but this has not been confirmed.

【Availability of national coordination committee】 Available
【Committee name】 National Co-ordination Committee
<p>【Plan and activities implemented】</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. National Coordination <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enactment of the Fiji National Council for Disabled Persons (FNCDP) Act of December 1994 - Formation of six advisory committees. Registration of all disability-related organizations to the FNCDP - Inclusion of FNCDP requirements in the 1996 Fiji Population Census - Strengthening of rights and treatment of persons with disabilities under Fiji's Constitution enacted in July 1997 through submission to the Constitution Review Commission in 1996 - Plans to construct FNCDP headquarters, which will also house other disability-related NGOs 2. Education <p>The FNCDP and its advisory committee on education continues to lobby the Ministry of Education for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mainstreaming disability into education policy - Provision of qualified special education teachers - Provision of remedial teachers and the entry of children with disabilities into secondary schools - Provision of a proper curriculum for vocational training - Provision of Braille facilities for vision-impaired children - Establishment of a Special Education Unit with resources for special education - Provision of scholarships for teachers and students with disabilities for training and higher education 3. Other <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction of Caregivers Certificates at the University of the South Pacific (Regional) - Participation of the FNCDP at Career Expositions held in Suva in 1996 and 1997

Other advisory committees are currently meeting and negotiating with relevant ministries to draft laws and regulations for possible enactment. These areas include:

- vocational training
- housing/transport/environment/accessibility
- sports and recreation
- self-help organizations
- regional cooperation

Local Government**【Disability-related Organizations in Local Government】**

【Name】	【Description】
District Disabled Committees	Local Committees of FNCDP. Located in Sigatoka, Nadi, Lautoka, Ba, Tavua, Rakiraki, Macuata, Bua and Cakaudrove

3-2. Laws and Regulations on Disability

* See Annex 3 for other laws

【Title】	Mental Treatment Act Chapter 113, Ed. 1978.
【Year legislated】	1990 (Reviewed)
【Description】 The Act covers the following:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Admission of patients b. Special powers and duties of visitors c. General powers and duties of superintendents d. Discharge, escape or death of patients e. Provisions regulating enquiry into unsoundness of mind f. Miscellaneous 	

【Title】	Fiji National Council of Disabled Persons (FNCDP) Act No.21.
【Year legislated】	1994
【Description】	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Coordinates organizations involved in the care and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities b. Formulates a national policy that ensures the provision of services to all persons with disabilities in Fiji c. Draws up and implements a National Plan of Action for rehabilitation services d. Seeks financial assistance from the government, donors and registered organizations to provide disability-related services e. Maintains a register of all organizations providing disability-related services and ensures the independence of such organizations f. Organizes national seminars and workshops relating to the problems and needs of persons with disabilities as well as assists in training workers involved in the care, training, education, and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities g. Creates public awareness of problems and aspirations of persons with disabilities through educational media h. Regularly informs the appropriate government ministries on problems and needs of persons with disabilities and seeks solutions to such needs i. Works toward the elimination of causes of disability 	

- | |
|---|
| <p>j. Establishes a national rehabilitation fund and attracts national and international contributions of funds, expertise, materials and equipment for implementation of the national rehabilitation plan</p> <p>k. Periodically reviews the national policy and national plan of action for the purpose of determining their continuing relevance to local, regional, and international realities</p> |
|---|

【Title】	Constitution of Fiji Chapter 4: Bill of Rights Section 38
【Year legislated】	1997
【Description】	
<p><u>Equality and Discrimination against Disability</u> Subsection 2: (Under Equal Employment Opportunity – EEO – Policy)</p> <p>A person must not be unfairly discriminated against directly or indirectly on the grounds of his or her actual or supposed personal characteristics or circumstances including race, ethnic origin, color, place of origin, gender, sexual orientation, birth, primary language, economic status, age or disability.</p> <p><u>Accessibility</u> (Subsection 4)</p> <p>Every person has the right to discrimination-free access without discrimination to shops, hotels, lodging houses, public restaurants, places of public entertainment, public transports, and public places.</p> <p><u>Access of Persons with Disabilities</u> (Subsection 5)</p> <p>The proprietor of a place of service referred to under Subsection 4 must facilitate reasonable access of persons with disabilities to the extent described by law.</p>	

【Title】	Constitution of Fiji Chapter 5: Social Justice, Section 44
【Year legislated】	1997
【Description】	
<p><u>Social Justice and Affirmative Action</u> (Subsection 1)</p> <p>The parliament must make provisions for programs designed to ensure all groups and categories of persons who are disadvantaged gain equal access to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Education and training b. Land and housing c. Participation in commerce d. All levels and branches of services of the state 	

Fiji enacted its much-awaited Constitution in 1997. The Constitution contains amended clauses and provisions for the benefit of Fijian persons with disabilities. These clauses and provisions are expected to greatly enhance disability development especially in the areas where discriminatory provisions previously existed. The most important legal work now is a review of Fiji's National Building Code. The FNCDP advisory committee is preparing its submission for the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing based on the need to provide

accessibility to persons with disabilities.

3-3. Policies on Disability

National Development Plan

There are no specific provisions related to disability in the National Development Plan. However, some attempts are being made to include special education issues into the mainstream education sector of the Development Plan. Several ministries, through their own initiatives or participation in regional and international meetings, have developed their own policy responses to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities and other disadvantaged groups within their own portfolio. However, there is no coordination between these initiatives.

1. Ministry of Health

In the Development Strategy 1997, the Ministry stated the following:

“The aim of the government is to ensure all individuals 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, amputee, head injury and multiple fracture cases. For mental health diseases, much greater community awareness support and care is needed”.

2. Ministry of Education

Special education curriculum and policy and mainstreaming have been debated on and were highlighted in the 2000 Education Commission Report. The Special Education Unit within the Primary School Section of the Ministry of Education has taken the initiative to draft a special policy that would cover all other aspects of disability-related services.

3-4. Measures on Disability

Prevention, Identification and Early Intervention

【Current situation】

Prevention of Disabilities

The major causes of disabilities are congenital, accidental, illness or genetics and it is the

Ministry of Health's strategy and mission to provide as much assistance as possible to prevent disabilities. Efforts are being made by the Red Cross Society and Land Transport Authority (LTA) to prevent disabilities caused by automobile accidents by enacting legislation 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.

【Policy/program title】	Constitution of Fiji
【Year implemented】	1977
【Description】	Chapter 4: Bill of Rights Section 38, Subsections 2, 4, 5. Chapter 5: Social Justice Section 44, Subsection 1.

【Policy/program title】	Health Act (Ministry of Health)
【Year implemented】	1970
【Description】	Primary Health Care Designed to disperse public health nurses to outer rural areas

【Policy/program title】	Maternal Health Act. (Ministry of Health)
【Year implemented】	1970
【Description】	Early identification of problems in proper child development

【Policy/program title】	Compulsory Vaccination Policy (Ministry of Health)
【Year implemented】	Since 1970
【Description】	Vaccination of BCG, DPT 3, OVP 3, Measles, Tetanus 11, Hepatitis B111 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lower the mortality rate. - Prevent disease and deformities - Promote proper growth and development

【Policy/program title】	Safety Promotion Act, Ministry of Health Mission Statement
【Year implemented】	1997
【Description】	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote, protect and maintain good health/well-being and improve the quality of life of Fijians - Provide the financial resources necessary to supply primary health care, rehabilitation and equipment services to persons with disabilities - Established the National Center for health promotion within the Ministry of Health to assist in preventing disabilities.

【Policy/program title】	Free Medical Provision Strategy (Ministry of Health)
【Year implemented】	1990
【Description】	<p>Primary Health Care</p> <p>Patients are admitted to a hospital for medical checkups with fees waived according to their financial and disability status.</p>

【Policy/program title】	Mental Health Act (Ministry of Health)
【Year implemented】	1999
【Description】	<p>National Medical Rehabilitation Hospital</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provision of primary preventive methods such as physiotherapy to patients with spinal injuries, kidney problems, strokes etc. There are no counseling services for patients or any provision of occupational therapy. - Accommodates amputees and people with other disabilities

【Policy/program title】	Occupational Health and Safety Act (Ministry of Labor)
【Year implemented】	1970
【Description】	Stipulates regulations on safety for laborers, employees and inhabitants of buildings and facilities

【Policy/program title】	The Safety Belt Act by the Land Transport Authority (LTA)
【Year implemented】	1999
【Description】	Made the use of seat belts compulsory to prevent injury from automobile accidents

Identification and Early Intervention

Despite efforts by community rehabilitation assistants (CRAs) in the interior, the identification of children with disabilities for the provision of early intervention is yet to be fully achieved.

【Policy/program title】	Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) Strategies (Ministry of Health)
【Year implemented】	1990
【Description】	This strategy promotes early identification and intervention of disabilities in rural community settings where there is only limited access to rehabilitation facilities and services. Community Rehabilitation Assistants (CRA) are based in sub-divisional health centers. The CRAs work with public health nurses and members of a public health team to treat disabilities.

【Policy/program title】	Strategy to Support Early Intervention (Ministry of Education)
【Year implemented】	1970
【Description】	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify if the child is performing well or not. Slow learners are referred to special schools or assisted by class teachers - Educational and medical assistance to children up to 8 years of age - Early development and improvement programs

【Policy/program title】	Family Health Care Policy (Ministry of Health)
【Year implemented】	
【Description】	To assist parents in identifying disabilities of their children

Medical Service and Rehabilitation

【Current situation】

Medical Service

There is only one hospital (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 a week. This financial requirement is waived however for the poor and those suffering severe accidents or death threatening diseases. There is no fee waiver based on the disability status of a person. Accommodation and outpatient services are also charged, although there are exceptions to this rule with no charges imposed on certain classes of patient (including people with mental disabilities).

【Policy/program title】	Medical Rehabilitation Policy (Ministry of Health)
【Year implemented】	1970

<p>【Description】 The National Rehabilitation Medicine Hospital</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides medical rehabilitation such as physiotherapy etc. - Assists patients to be self-reliant as soon as possible - This service is provided only in St Giles and Tamavua rehabilitation units since there is only one occupational therapist
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【Policy/program title】	Mental Health Act (Ministry of Health)
【Year implemented】	1970
<p>【Description】 St Giles Psychiatric Hospital</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides medical assistance to patients with mental health problems - Community services to outpatients with mental health problems 	

Assistive Devices

At present, Fiji has no explicit government policy on assistive devices. The FNCDP has appointed an advisory committee on health, which will consider such a policy. There are no quality-control standards for assistive devices and there is no national standards body.

Currently, assistive devices are provided from three sources:

- (a) The Prosthetics and Orthotics Laboratory in Tamavua
- (b) The Fiji Red Cross Society, for wheelchairs, walkers, and white canes
- (c) The Government Ministry of Health, for hospital equipment

The domestic sources are in Suva, a fact that puts rural people with disabilities at a disadvantage. Assistive device needs are met through personal funds, sponsorship, or temporary loans of devices from various government hospitals.

Only two calipers and five prosthetic devices are produced in Fiji each month, as there is only one prosthetic/orthotic technician in Fiji who is based at the Tamavua Prosthetics and Orthotics Laboratory. No training is available in Fiji. There are currently no repair workshop, carpentry or welding workshops capable of producing assistive devices either.

Ninety per cent of the assistive devices including wheelchairs, walkers, walking sticks and daily living equipment used in Fiji are imported from primarily Australia and New Zealand. Sixty per cent of these are donated. Charity organizations can import assistive devices

duty-free, but a 10% value-added tax is required. Fiji will continue to rely heavily on imported, expensive devices for the time being.

Assistive devices in Fiji are distributed through the Ministry of Health and NGOs. Well-off persons with disabilities can buy their own devices but many of them cannot afford to purchase those devices. Others apply to the Fiji Red Cross Society whose funds are raised from sponsorship-lottery agencies. The main source of institutional support for assistive devices is the Fiji Crippled Children Society, an NGO.

Education

【Current situation】

The Special 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 this unit involve:

- screening of children with disabilities
- establishment of new special schools
- provision of specialist training for non trained teachers in special schools
- grant assistance for and guidance on special school management

Although special schools are supervised under the Special Education Unit of the Primary Education Section of the Ministry of Education, these schools are owned and managed by charitable organizations. Special schools follow the primary education curriculum as well as the special education curriculum for skills development which was introduced in 1995.

According to the Ministry of Education's 1999 annual report, 972 children with disabilities of a number of races were attending 16 special education institutes. A grant of \$250,000 was distributed equally to all special schools to assist with managing funds and operational costs. However, most of these schools were established in urban areas, which has meant most rural children are not able to attend.

The FNCDP, in pursuance of the work of its advisory committee on education, continues to convince the Ministry of Education of the need for positive changes to disability-related education, which include the following:

- Develop a clear policy on disability-related education, including integration into the

mainstream education system

- Provide qualified special education teachers
- Provide remedial teachers and admit children with disabilities into the secondary education system
- Provide a proper curriculum for vocational training
- Provide Braille facilities for children with visual impairment
- Establish a separate unit with resources to look after special education
- Provide scholarships for teachers and students with disabilities for further training and higher education.

Secondary and higher education opportunities do not exist for the children who are currently attending the 16 primary-level institutions in the country. This is because the Ministry of Education does not provide mainstreaming support, and facilities required such as Braille for persons with visual impairment and other teaching aids and staff are not available.

【Policy/program title】	Special Education Strategy
【Year implemented】	1960
【Description】	17 Special Education schools have been established for children with disabilities ¹⁰

【Policy/program title】	Support in terms of teachers, teacher training, and financial grants
【Year implemented】	
【Description】	All schools are managed by societies and the special schools operate with governmental assistance

Social Services

【Current situation】

The Department of Social Welfare does not provide any special allowances to persons with disabilities but does manage the Family Assistance and Poverty Alleviation Scheme.

No allowance, duty free concessions or any other form of assistance is given to persons with disabilities for imported wheelchairs and other accessibility aids and devices.

Accessibility is seen in the wider context, encompassing accessibility to education, health

¹⁰ There were supposedly 16 special education schools as of the 1999 survey.

social welfare, legislation, communication, employment, etc. The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare appointed the advisory committee to discuss accessibility in November 1995. The immediate task of the committee was to draft a proposal for the inclusion of the needs of persons with disabilities into the National Building Code.

The unfriendly environment for persons with disabilities in the main centers of the country in terms of road curbs, pathways, crossings, stairs, public conveniences and transportation have prompted the FNCDP to request that all District Disabled Committees assess their own needs, and if possible approach municipal councils so that the needs of persons with disabilities can be incorporated into municipal development plans. Suva, the capital city has taken the initiative of installing car parks, road signs, and toilets suitable for persons with disabilities and is considering other requests made by its committee. The Lautoka City Council has given its District Disabled Committee its support and is trying to incorporate persons with disabilities into its development. Other urban centers are also said to be making plans to make their friendly environments for persons with disabilities and an increasing number of organizations have become aware of the needs including the Fiji Institute of Technology and the local University of the South Pacific where no provisions were initially made.

However, no action has been taken to incorporate the needs of persons with disabilities in the public bus and taxi industries. The advisory committee is also responsible for this, but the inclusion of the Road Safety Council as a member may pave the way to a solution on this matter. Legislation, cost changes and perhaps tax incentives or exemptions to the operators are foreseen.

Access to secondary schools, university education, vocational training, employment and community participation is highlighted under other items currently being discussed by the advisory committees. Urgent legislative provisions are required on the rights of individual persons with disabilities.

Athletes with disabilities in Fiji have always been a pride to sports-loving Fijians by winning medals in the many international competitions, despite insufficient training facilities and funds. The administration of disability sports has involved both non-disabled persons and persons with disabilities. As sports and recreation are items under the Agenda for Action under the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons 1993-2002, the Minister for Health and Social

Welfare, and the FNCDP appointed an advisory committee to look into the sporting needs of persons with disabilities. This advisory committee found that the present situation was far from satisfactory and much more could be achieved through involvement of the Ministry of Youth and Sports in terms of formulating a national policy on sports for persons with disabilities incorporating the provision of sporting facilities, equipment and annual funding.

Social rehabilitation is mainly carried out by charity organizations. Special schools use the special education curriculum, which includes cognitive development, communication skills, daily living skills, social development, as well as creative and expressive skills. For instance, the Fiji Society for the Blind has been providing training on daily living, community living, and communications. The Society also trains within the CBR scheme, aiming to integrate persons with visual impairment into active and full participation of the community and help them lead a self-reliant life.

【Policy/program title】	Social Service policy and poverty alleviation strategy (Ministry of Social Welfare)
【Year implemented】	1980
【Description】	Grants and assistance scheme for organizations and individuals.

Vocational Training and Employment Promotion Services

【Current situation】

The establishment of vocational training facilities for students who have been unable to proceed academically and prepare them with some skills to enter the workforce or be self employed has been a priority since the mid-1970s. The Fiji Rehabilitation Council was established in 1979 as the organization responsible for vocational programs but its inability to service senior students from schools of person with disabilities in Suva and nearby areas has led to schools starting their own vocational programs. However program sustainability and the provision of equipment and funds remains a problem.

For training and employment, FNCDP's work is supported by the appointment of an advisory committee is comprised of human resource development experts. The involvement of the Ministry of Labor, the Fiji Institute of Technology and the Fiji National Training Council in this advisory committee was initially very encouraging but progress has been slow and very little has been achieved. The absence of qualified personnel and an established curriculum by the Ministry of Education has been one of the main reasons for the failure of disability-related

vocational training. As a result, the system has not been able to provide young persons with disabilities with the basic knowledge and skills required for employment or self-employment.

There are workshops in Suva and Lautoka that do small contract jobs. Labasa has continued to improve its vocational program producing an assortment of items from toys to household goods and office furniture.

The FNCDP participated in Careers Expositions held in Suva in 1996 and 1997.

【Policy/program title】	Occupational Rehabilitation
【Year implemented】	1970
【Description】	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assists patients to perform daily services - Assists and supports persons with disabilities towards rehabilitation as quickly as possible - Occupational rehabilitation services are provided at the Fiji Vocational and Technical Training Center, Naroro Rehabilitation Center, Veilomani Boys Center and Nadroga Rehabilitation Center

【Policy/program title】	Vocational Training and Assistance Strategy (Ministry of Education)
【Year implemented】	1970
【Description】	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fiji Vocational Technical Training Center caters for youths with disabilities - Employment - Education

Community-based Rehabilitation (CBR)

【Current situation】

CBR has been in Fiji for over ten years. CBR projects initially aimed to develop ways to promote early identification and intervention of children with disabilities living within the rural community setting and who had very limited access to rehabilitation facilities and services offered within urban areas. The program has since been extended to include adults with disabilities.

A National Plan for the CBR Program with an emphasis on health under community rehabilitation assistant (CRA) projects within the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare has been formulated. The advantages of using CRA projects are that staff are widely spread, and

that closer supervision of staff members and their accountability is possible. In addition, their data is quite reliable because they have accounted for those they have reached and serviced in their course of work throughout Fiji. The overriding factor here is that they are paid by the Ministry, and therefore are required to perform. On the other hand, the number of community workers with paid allowances is very few, whilst many continue as volunteers to disability-related NGOs.

A total of 13 CRAs have been appointed to undertake work associated with the project. They are trained in basic physiotherapy techniques and have received some training in other disciplines such as speech and occupational therapy. The CRAs are based in sub-divisional health centers. They work with public health nurses and members of public health teams to deliver treatment to persons with disabilities. For families, village health workers and community members, CRAs provide services that include assessment of needs, development of rehabilitation programs, provision of prevention education, delivery of training on disability and provision of basic media equipment.

The FNCDP continues to persuade the Ministry of Health that there is a need to come together to discuss and hopefully formulate a CBR plan that helps identify and set-up communities, as well as utilizes local resources.

【Policy/program title】	CBR project
【Year implemented】	1994
【Description】	This project implemented by the Fiji Disabled Peoples' Association (Non-Government Initiative) involves community development, case management, organization and record keeping, and professional development.

【Policy/program title】	Primary Health Care Policy (Ministry of Health)
【Year implemented】	1990
【Description】	Community Rehabilitation Assistants Works along with members of the community, the public health team, including sub-divisional physiotherapy, other government and non-governmental organizations help organize and develop CBR in line with government policies relating to primary and preventive health care, disability management and rehabilitation.

【Policy/program title】	Community Rehabilitation Assistants by Fiji Society for the Blind (Non-Government Initiative)
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【Year implemented】	1980
【Description】	To assist and support the development of people with visual impairments

Communication Tools

【Current situation】

N/A

3-5. Experts and Workers in the Field of Disability

【Job title】	【Role and activity】	【Training and qualification system】
Teacher (Special Education)	Teaching at special schools	Government qualification
Physiotherapist	Provision of physical therapy	Government qualification
Occupational Therapist		Excellence in Health Science
Social Worker		Government qualification
Community Rehabilitation Assistants (CRA)	Provision of community rehabilitation in rural areas	

4. Disability-related Organizations and Activities

4-1. Activities by Disability-related Organizations

* See Annex 1 for a list of organizations

Self-help Organization

Self-help organizations received a major boost in February 1996 when the FNCDP played host to the Pacific Workshop on Management of Persons with Disabilities Self-Help Organizations in Suva. Representatives from Vanuatu, Tonga, Samoa, the Solomons and Fiji participated in the one-week workshop held at the South Pacific Commissions Training Center in Narere under the auspices of the Regional Secretariat of Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) for the Asian and the Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons 1993-2002.

The effective development of self-help organizations in Fiji will depend on how well Fiji's persons with disabilities can pull together to manage and make decisions on matters and issues that will create full participation, equal opportunities and an acceptable quality of life for persons with disabilities.

4-2. Cooperation Projects on Disability Organized by International and Other Donors

* See Annex 2 for a list of projects

Assistance by Multilateral/Bilateral Organizations and International NGOs

The British, Australian, and New Zealand governments have supported disability-related facilities. International NGOs, such as Save the Children, have provided continuous support.

Assistance by Japan

In 1996 the Japanese Government provided \$70,000 under a small grant scheme for a school bus for the Levuka Intellectually Handicapped School. The bus has improved school attendance, by approximately 68%.

Japanese Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) have worked at the Levuka School for Special Education, the Fiji School for the Blind and the Labasa School for the Handicapped. In total, nine JOCVs have worked at different special schools of persons with disabilities in Fiji since 1998.

The Embassy of Japan financed \$55,815.26 for a new wood workshop at the Labasa School for the Handicapped.

5. References

This report is based on a main source drafted by a local consultant.

Main source:

Fiji Disabled Peoples Association (2001), *A Country Study on People with Disabilities: Fiji*

Other references:

ESCAP (1999), *Asian and the Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons: Mid-Point ~Country Perspective*, New York: United Nations

ESCAP (1997), *Production and Distribution of Assistive Devices for People with Disabilities*, New York: United Nations