



Knowledge hub - Collection of best practices

Summary of the best practice

1. Title of the best practice (e.g. name of policy, programme, project, etc.) *

Inclusive data collection mechanisms

2. Country or countries where the practice is implemented *

Fiji

3. Please select the **most relevant** Action Track(s) the best practice applies to *

- Action Track 1. Inclusive, equitable, safe, and healthy schools
- Action Track 2. Learning and skills for life, work, and sustainable development
- Action Track 3. Teachers, teaching and the teaching profession
- Action Track 4. Digital learning and transformation
- Action Track 5. Financing of education

4. Implementation lead/partner organization(s) *

Fijian Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts

5. Key words (5-15 words): Please add key descriptive words around aims, modalities, target groups etc. *

inclusive, schools, inclusion, data collection, SDG4, Fiji, EMIS

6. What makes it a best practice? *

Fiji has been collecting through the Fiji Education Management Information System (FEMIS) high quality data on both children with disabilities and the school environment. In many countries education management information systems collect only aggregate data at the classroom level at the beginning of the school year. FEMIS is innovative in so far as it collect student level data at the classroom level, so that individual students can be tracked. Moreover, it is an electronic system which can be updated continually throughout the year as teachers get to know their students better.

Description of the best practice

7. Introduction (350-400 words)

This section should ideally provide the context of, and justification for, the practice and address the following issues:

- i) Which population was affected?
- ii) What was the problem that needed to be addressed?
- iii) Which approach was taken and what objectives were achieved? *

The Fiji Education Management Information System allows for better data collection on student with disabilities and consequently better planning.

Disability disaggregation was already possible under the previous system: the Fiji School Information Management System (SIMS). However, it had some limits. In fact, like many other education management information system, it was based on the a school census and provided school-level aggregate data. Moreover, the system solely allowed teachers top give simple responses to whether the disabilities mentioned on the list provided were present for students. Apart from that, no further training or instruction were provided for teachers to respond. This has resulted in data being difficult to interpret.

To address these limits, the systems was modified in 2013 to include a more sophisticated disability disaggregation toolkit based on the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) Module on Child Functioning.

This toolkit provides primary and secondary schools in Fiji with a standardized means of recording and analyzing information in FEMIS related to:

- disability in children (including type and severity of disability)
- accessibility of school infrastructure and transport
- qualifications and training of school staff in relation to disability-inclusive education.

8. Implementation (350-450 words)

Please describe the implementation modalities or processes, where possible in relation to:

- i) What are the main activities carried out?
- ii) When and where the activities were carried out (including the start date and whether it is ongoing)?
- iii) Who were the key implementation actors and collaborators? (civil society organizations, private sector, foundations, coalitions, networks etc.)?
- iv) What were the resources needed (budget and sources) for the implementation?

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The Fiji Education Management Information System (FEMIS) is an online system and contains individual student data entered at the school by teachers who are able to continuously update the information provided on the platform. Each child's record includes a large variety of data items, such as: student ID number, registered birth number, parent details, gender, ethnicity, date of birth, home situation (eg. household income, electricity, employment), school attendance, record of school fees, and financial assistance accessed, health and disability. Schools are provided with a toolkit containing several documents aimed at facilitating the process for schools and teachers. These include:

- the Fiji Disability Services Information and Referral Directory which provide assistance to persons and children with disability, the schools and their families.
- a sign language dictionary,
- a disability inclusive handbook for teachers and a DVD containing additional resources on inclusive education to give teachers a broader understanding and awareness on inclusive education and the range of disabilities that children can have.

The programme is being implemented by the Fiji Ministry for Education, Art and Heritage, in partnership with primary and secondary schools, the Ministry of Health and Medical Services. A focus is set on the involvement of organizations working with people with disabilities, the students themselves and their parent in the data collection process and after in the response.

The System was funded by the Australian government through the Australian AID Access to Quality Education Programme (AQEP).

9. Results – outputs and outcomes (250-350 words)

To the extent possible, please reply to the questions below:

- i) How was the practice identified as transformative? (e.g., impact on policies, impact on management processes, impact on delivery arrangements or education monitoring, impact on teachers, learners and beneficiary communities etc.);
- ii) What were the concrete results achieved with regard to outputs and outcomes?
- iii) Has an assessment of the practice been carried out? If yes, what were the results? *

FEMIS is being implemented in primary and secondary schools at the national level. It has allowed the collection of qualitative, reliable and disability disaggregated data on learners with disabilities which has then enabled a better planning and national response when it comes to making the education more inclusive. Through the material provided in the toolkit for Disability-Inclusive Education and the FEMIS disability Disaggregation Package, it can be assumed that the response to the needs of students with disabilities has been improved.

10. Lessons learnt (300 words)

To the extent possible, please reply to the following questions:

- i) What were the key triggers for transformation?
- ii) What worked really well – what facilitated this?
- iii) What did not work – why did it not work? *

Triggers for transformation:

- The involvement of organizations working with people with disabilities, the students themselves and their parent in the data collection process and after in the response.
- Resources on inclusive education provided to teachers a broader understanding and awareness on inclusive education and the range of disabilities that children can have.
- Ability to further disaggregate data by learners' characteristics, to better understand education participation, learning and completion of education by students with disabilities.

Tips from implementation in Fiji:

- Verification required if there is financial incentive (e.g. eligibility for the Special & Inclusive Education Grant and the data in the staffing formula
- Check language interpretation ("a little difficulty" replaced "some difficulty")
- 'Descriptors' table - for teachers, to increase consistency in selecting response category
- Developing the online system with the I.T. programmers – allow time
- School accessibility and inclusion data (in addition to child-based data)

The FEMIS presents certain limitations.

First, the system solely focuses on children who are enrolled in schools. Yet many children with disabilities are not enrolled in schools. By focusing on children enrolled in school, FEMIS leaves behind children with disabilities who access non formal education, including home schooling.

Second, the system mostly relies on teachers and head teachers. This is challenging considering the that teachers are frequently transferred throughout the country. A model solely based on teacher-screening may not be totally adapted to the context.

Thirdly, the FEMIS is an online system requiring schools to have access to electricity and internet. Which is not the case for some schools in Fiji. This can affect data entry. However, this challenge has been addressed by the Ministry of Education which provided an alternative option: collecting the data on paper format and giving it to the District EDUCATION Office who will undertake the data entry on the behalf of the school.

11. Conclusions (250 words)

Please describe why may this intervention be considered a “best practice”. What recommendations can be made for those intending to adopt the documented “best practice” or how can it help people working on the same issue(s)? *

Fiji Education Management Information System can be considered as a best practice when it comes to inclusive education data collection for several reasons.

First, it allows for the collection of qualitative, reliable and disability disaggregated data on learners with disabilities which then enable a better planning and national response when it comes to making the education more inclusive.

Moreover, FEMIS does not stop at data collection. In fact, the system provides schools, teachers, parents to become more aware of the existing disabilities that children may have and be able to adequately, direct, refer and respond to the needs of learners.

12. Further reading

Please provide a list and URLs of key reference documents for additional information on the “best practice” for those who may be interested in knowing how the results benefited the beneficiary group/s. *

Fiji website: <http://www.education.gov.fj/special-inclusive-education/>

See here: Rights of Persons With Disabilities Act 2018 (Act No.4 of 2018)

A National Policy on Persons Living With Disabilities (2008-2018)

Toolkit for Disability-Inclusive Education

FEMIS Packages and forms including:

Fiji Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts. 2017. Fiji Education Management Information System (FEMIS): Disability Disaggregation Package – Guidelines and forms. Suva, Access to Quality Education Program, Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts.

<http://www.education.gov.fj/wp-content/uploads/Special-Education/FEMISdisabilitydisaggregationpackageFinal.pdf>

FEMIS Training film <https://youtu.be/wKWmie22UTk>

Disability Fact Sheets

Sprunt, B. 2014. Efforts to Improve Disability Disaggregation of the Fiji Education Management Information System. Paper for expert group meeting on Disability Data and Statistics, Monitoring and Evaluation: The Way Forward – A Disability Inclusive Development Agenda towards 2015 and Beyond, Paris, UNDESA and UNESCO, 8-10 July.

Sprunt B and Korovulavula J. 2021. Fiji Education Management Information System (FEMIS) disability disaggregation approach. Asia-Pacific Disability Inclusive Education Working Group. <https://bangkok.unesco.org/sites/default/files/assets/article/Education/files/PPT%204.%20Sprunt-Korovulavula%20-%20Fiji-EMIS.pdf>