

ITA HOTSU
BAÁ ESKOLA!



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This report was written by Natalie Grove and prepared in English for translation to Tetun.

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Foreword

Children with disabilities are an important priority for the Ministry of Education in Timor-Leste. In 2007, Plan Timor-Leste and ASSERT came to speak to me about the idea of a research project focusing on the presence of children with disabilities in primary schools. Not only was I keen to support the research, I was adamant that the research should cover all thirteen districts and provide as complete a picture as possible of the situation of children with disabilities in schools across Timor-Leste.

The result of this research is this report: *Ita Hotu Baá Eskola! A Report on the First National Survey of Disability in Timor Leste's Primary Schools, 2008*. It is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Education, children's NGO Plan Timor-Leste and the disability agency ASSERT. It is the first step in identifying the level of involvement of children with disabilities in schools and it provides a baseline for future developments related to Inclusive Education in this country.

Both the Constitution of the Government of Timor-Leste and the National Education Policy of the Ministry of Education uphold the right of every citizen “to education and culture, and it is incumbent upon the State to promote the establishment of a public system of universal and compulsory basic education that is free of charge in accordance with its possibilities and in conformity with the law”.

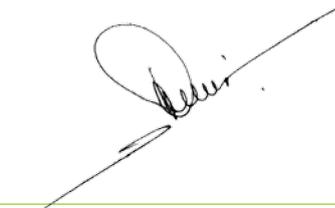
Children with disabilities face enormous challenges to claim their right to an education. Yet despite these enormous challenges, the research shows that in Timor-Leste approximately 2,000 children with various disabilities are regularly attending primary schools across the country. This means that in just about every school in Timor-Leste, at least one or more of the students will have a disability, and that children with disabilities are likely to be present in all schools.

This has enormous implications on how the Ministry of Education best develops policies and programs to support Inclusive Education in this country. The report that follows has a number of recommendations that the Ministry will be considering.

I know that the Ministry will not be alone in responding to the issues raised by the research and this report. We will continue to work with various organisations, including groups working on disability issues, parents, children and communities so that Education for All is also for children with disabilities in Timor-Leste.

I commend to you this report as a valuable contribution to the country's knowledge base on education and disability issues. It is an important start to all our future efforts in this area.

Ita Hotu Baá Eskola! Let this plea from children guide and inspire our work on Inclusive Education.



JOÃO CÂNCIO FREITAS, Ph.D.
Minister
Ministry of Education
Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste

Executive Summary

A survey was conducted in 336 primary schools across Timor-Leste to determine how many students have a disability and the type and severity of these disabilities. This was the first national survey of its kind and the data generated will act as a baseline for monitoring future initiatives towards developing a national policy on Inclusive Education, an educational model that is responsive to the needs of the individual learner.

- **Nationally, there are approximately 2000 primary school students, or 1 in every 100 students, with a disability.**

Implications: Because Timor-Leste has not yet developed a national policy on Inclusive Education, teaching strategies in local schools do not respond to individual needs, including the needs of children with disabilities who are attending these schools.

Comparing this figure of 2000 students with the 13 students currently enrolled in the only special school in the country (Taibesse Special School), it is clear that most children with a disability who go to school, go to their local school. This highlights the potential for Inclusive Education to make a positive change to these children's futures.

- **On average, each primary school can expect to have three students (2.89 per cent) with a disability. Although larger schools will have more, even small and remote schools are teaching students with a disability.**

Implications: There is demand both in towns and subdistricts for disabled children to attend school. Teacher training, resources and support services for disabled students should not be focused only in Dili or the large towns. Any policy on Inclusive Education will need a strategy and an allocation of resources that allows it to reach out to the smallest schools in the country.

- **The most common disability type is intellectual (24 per cent) followed by physical (21 per cent). In the study, children with problems in more than one area were classified as 'complex'. Of these, more than half had an intellectual disability.**

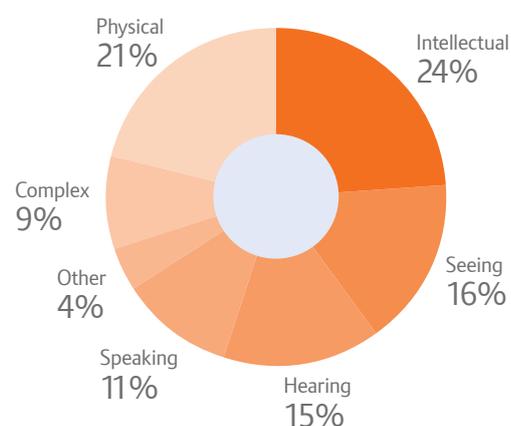
- **Many of the students with learning problems have already repeated at least two grades of school and 41.6 per cent of all disabled students are older than they should be for their grade ('over-age').**

Implications: Pre-service and in-service training for teachers should provide practical advice on how to deliver lessons in a way that makes material more accessible to a range of learners. Improved skills in classroom management and teaching groups of mixed ability as well as a greater awareness of multi-sensory learning will benefit all students. Repetition of grades creates major inefficiencies in the education system and does not benefit students. Guidance on determining when grade repetition is appropriate and a policy on alternative methods of assessment are urgently required.

- **One-third (33.2 per cent) of all disabled students have a moderate or severe disability.**

Implications: Many families recognise the importance of education and, even when their children have severe disabilities, will try to enrol them in school rather than keep them at home. However, schools and families need support to ensure that these children start school on time, stay in school and have a positive learning experience in which

Chart 1. Primary School Students with a Disability: Disability Type



they play and develop their skills and talents along with their friends.

- **There are more boys with a disability than girls with a disability attending primary school (63.6 per cent compared to 36.4 per cent).**

Implications: Further investigation is required to understand whether the rate of childhood disability is higher in boys than girls or whether disabled girls are less likely to go to school (and stay in school). Special attention needs to be given to the different needs of disabled boys and girls in school and innovative strategies such as a child-to-child approach should be developed to reach all out-of-school children with disabilities.

- **Global estimates of disability indicate that 10 per cent of the population have a disability, but in Timor-Leste only 1 per cent of those currently in school have a disability. It might be concluded that most disabled children are not in school. Many are never enrolled in school and others drop out after only a few years due to difficulties associated with their disability.**

Implications: Helping communities overcome the barriers to school participation for children with disabilities must be a priority if Timor-Leste is to have a truly Inclusive Education system where every child has a chance to learn. Raising awareness of the right of children with disabilities to go to school will be an essential component of this; however, it must occur alongside genuine improvements in the school environment itself, including better physical access, improved attitudes towards disability and higher quality teaching. Developing links and referral pathways between the education system and health workers, community-based rehabilitation networks, child protection officers, disability organisations, church and other community leaders will also help increase the enrolment of disabled children in school.

- **There is little routine data collected on disability at school or community levels. Nor is there reliable information about unenrolled children and rates of 'drop-out'.**

Implications: Strengthening of the Education Management Information System (EMIS) in the Ministry of Education is urgently required and must include strategies to collect information on children not attending school. All data needs to be disaggregated by gender and disability. This means a disability indicator must be added to the standard enrolment registration form and some training provided to school directors on how to use this. Regular reporting on the situation of disabled children in the education system will help monitor the impact of Inclusive Education policies and programs.

It is every child's right to go to school together with their friends. Adopting an Inclusive Education approach will ensure that Education for All really is for all!



PART I: INTRODUCTION



EDUCATION AND DISABILITY IN TIMOR-LESTE



an education, the same as all other children in the country. A school director cannot refuse to enrol a child just because they have a disability, nor can a teacher refuse to have a child in their class because the child is disabled. The law says the government has a responsibility to make sure children with disabilities can receive an education. This may mean making changes to schools or classrooms and providing extra resources, technical expertise and training to teachers when it is needed. To ensure that the rights of children are realised, the Ministry of Education, together with its partners, will need to pay particular attention to these issues in their routine monitoring of schools. Furthermore, they will need to work with communities, school staff and students to promote positive attitudes towards children with disabilities and develop learning environments where all children can reach their full potential.

What does the Constitution say?

The right to education for children with a disability is clearly enshrined in the Constitution¹ of Timor-Leste. Section 16 (Articles 1 and 2) states that everyone has the same rights and that no one shall be discriminated against, including on the grounds of 'physical or mental condition'. This is reinforced in Section 21, which states that a person with a disability has the same rights and duties as everybody else (Article 1). Children are afforded special protection against all types of discrimination (Section 18, Article 1), which includes being discriminated against because of disability. The state recognises and guarantees the right of everyone to have equal opportunities for education and vocational training and it is the state's responsibility to ensure that everyone in Timor-Leste has access to the highest level of education, in accordance with their abilities (Section 59, Articles 1, 2 and 4)².

What does this mean?

This means that children with a disability have a constitutional right to go to school and to receive

What is Inclusive Education?

Inclusive Education is an approach to improving schools to ensure that national strategies of 'Education for All' are really for all.

An Inclusive Education framework forces us to look at schools and education systems from the perspective of the community. When we ask, "Is this school inclusive?" we're asking, "Is this school really for everyone?" An Inclusive Education approach respects and values the individual differences of all children. It recognises that children have different learning needs and schools need to be flexible to meet these needs.

In the past, when students had different or 'special' needs, especially if they had a disability, it was felt that they could not fit into a so-called 'normal school'. If children used a wheelchair, needed special equipment like Braille books or were slower to learn than their peers, they were sent to a 'special school'. This is segregation and the opposite of Inclusive Education. It separated children with disabilities from their community and led to greater

¹ Constitution of the Democratic Republic of East Timor is available at http://www.constitution.org/cons/east_timor/constitution-eng.htm

² Timor-Leste is also a signatory to a number of international conventions that prohibit discrimination on the grounds of disability and protect the right to education for children with disabilities. These include the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

discrimination. Nowadays, we understand that children, all children, benefit from an inclusive learning environment and, wherever possible, children with a disability should attend regular school with non-disabled peers.

When we talk about disabled students in Timor-Leste, the first thing many people think about is the Special School or LBH in Taibesse. This school has only 12 students currently enrolled and is the only special school in the whole country.

The reality is that most children with disabilities, who go to school, go to regular (mainstream) schools. They attend their local primary school together with their friends and siblings. This is what Inclusive Education is all about - children with disabilities receiving the support they need to go to mainstream schools and learn in classrooms alongside their peers!

Results from this study suggest there are already approximately 2000 students with disabilities enrolled in primary schools across the country.

In fact, each primary school in Timor-Leste has on average two to three students with some kind of disability. The survey found students with every kind of disability going to school. These disabilities ranged from mild problems through to moderate and even severe disabilities. The survey team met children with severe mobility problems, who needed special equipment like walking frames and wheelchairs. Some children had profound hearing loss and relied on lip-reading to understand their teachers and friends while others had milder hearing problems. Some children could only hear on one side, so they always sat at the front of the class and had the teacher speak a bit louder for them. Some children had mild intellectual problems which made it hard for them to learn as quickly as the other children in their class; they required extra help to learn to read and write and especially to understand new information. Other children with more severe problems were repeating the same grade for many years. They were not able to understand the lessons the teachers gave and they also experienced social problems. For example, it was difficult for them to sit quietly during lesson time or to follow the rules of playground games.

Children with disabilities are not all the same; they are individuals with different skills and strengths, different personalities and different learning styles, and they have different problems to overcome.

Therefore, the support they need is never the same. Most children with disabilities do not need to go to a special school, but they might need some adjustments to their local school so they can learn well and fully participate in school activities. Some children will benefit from attending a special school or training centre for just a short time while they learn particular skills, like how to read and write in Braille. Others might spend some time at a special class and some time in their regular class.

Beyond disability

Exclusion takes many forms. This report focuses on issues of disability but there are many other reasons children become excluded from the education system. These include cost, distance to school, gender and language of instruction, among others. The establishment in April 2008 of a sub-working group on Inclusive Education demonstrates the interest, particularly of those in the disability sector, to pursue the goals of Inclusive Education. However, this is not just a disability issue; Inclusive Education is promoted by all those concerned about the quality of education available to all children. It is a framework that helps address the large numbers of children who do not go to school, who drop out early or who simply are not able to learn well in the current education system. When we use an Inclusive Education approach, we encourage schools to understand the needs of the particular children in their classrooms and in their communities, and to find creative ways of delivering education to all.

To learn more about Inclusive Education and how this model is being applied in other developing countries, search for 'Inclusive Education' on the UNESCO website at www.unesco.org/education.

The United Nations reports that an Inclusive Education model:

- is cost-effective (compared to 'special schools')
- raises the quality of teaching for all students
- can reduce discrimination in the community

United Nations, 2007





PART II: DISABILITY IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS



DISABILITY IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Prevalence

A sample of 336 primary schools across the country identified 972 students with some type of disability. (See Appendix 1 for a description of the survey methodology.)

- **The projected enrolment rate for primary schools in 2008 was 195,954³. We can estimate that close to 2000 of these students have a disability. ($1.02\% \times 195,954 = 1999$)**
- **In Timor-Leste, approximately 1 in every 100 primary school students has some type of disability (1.02 per cent) and each primary school can expect to have an average of 3 students with a disability (2.89 per cent).**

Disability Type

The most common disability type was intellectual impairment (24 per cent) followed by physical problems (21 per cent) and visual problems (16 per cent). Children with problems in more than one area were classified 'Complex', of which more than

half (58 per cent) also had an intellectual impairment. (See Box 1 for an explanation of disability categories.)

Severity

- **One third of disabled students (33.2 per cent) were found to have a moderate or severe disability. This rate was similar for boys (34.5 per cent) and girls (31.1 per cent).**

Interviewers asked the school director or teacher to describe the student, their disability and how they performed in the classroom. Based on these open-ended answers an attempt was made to classify the disability as 'mild' or 'moderate/severe'. This is obviously a very subjective measure and the data associated with it should certainly be treated with caution. However, the research team felt it important to make some differentiation between, for example, a student using a wheel chair and a child with a mild limp requiring no mobility aids. Likewise, speaking difficulties in children ranged from speech impairments (slurring, stammering or stuttering) through to mute (no verbal communication).

Chart 1. Primary School Students with a Disability: Disability Type

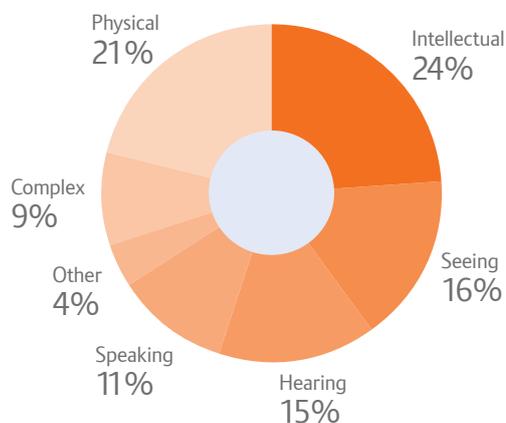
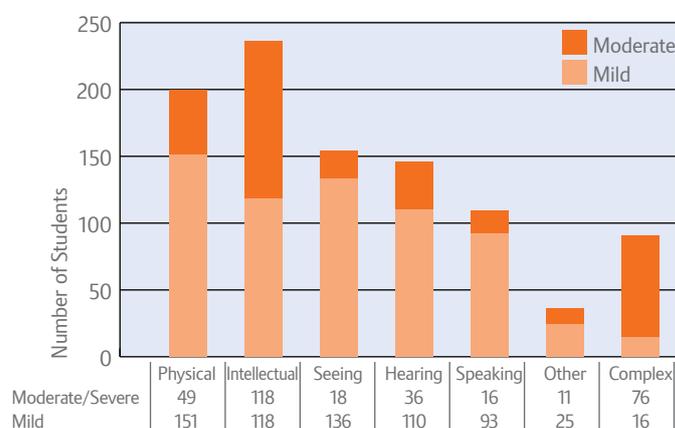


Chart 2. Number of Students by Disability Type and Severity



³Xavier H. Draft 1: State of the Nation Report Education Sector, 2008

Box 1: Types of Disability[#]

Physical: This includes problems with the body, especially arms or legs, problems walking and moving around, spinal problems and cerebral palsy. Included in the physical category are children with severe disabilities who might need a wheelchair as well as others with milder problems (for example, a broken arm or leg that did not heal properly and resulted in restricted movement).

Intellectual: This includes students who have problems learning, are slow learners, are not able to concentrate in class very well, and who thus find it difficult to learn in the same way as other children. Some children in this category have severe problems; they have not learnt to read or write after many years at school and they find it difficult to follow instructions or join in games with other children. Others have milder problems and with some help and extra time from the teacher they manage to keep up with the class.

Seeing: Visual problems include blindness in one or both eyes, near- and far-sightedness, turned and crossed eyes, as well as blurred vision. Some children have very serious visual problems and need some help from their friends to walk to school safely, while others are able to manage in the classroom when they sit close to the board but have problems when book print is too small. Only children with permanent visual problems are included in the survey.

Hearing: Hearing problems include complete and partial deafness. Children with severe hearing problems often cannot hear the teacher or other students speak and rely on lip-reading and visual cues to follow the lesson. Others have a milder hearing problem and when the teacher speaks very loudly they are able to understand most of what is being said. This category does not include children with temporary hearing problems from ear infections.

Speaking: This category includes children who are mute as well as others with speech or communication problems such as a stutter, stammer or cleft palate.

Other: An 'other' category was included to capture other conditions reported by the school director such as epilepsy, 'trauma' and albinism.

Complex: This category was used for students who had problems in more than one area -for example, a child who was deaf and mute or who had a physical and intellectual impairment. Most students in the 'complex' category had a moderate or severe disability.

[#] See *Appendix I Methodology* for further discussion on the terminology used to describe disabilities, the challenges in categorising disability and general limitations of the data.

Children with a moderate to severe disability may require additional support to ensure they are enrolled in school, stay in school and are able to learn. This could include mobility or communication aids or different teaching methods to help them learn. Students with milder disabilities may not require special attention but may still face difficulties related to discrimination, embarrassment or stigma which could affect whether they will go to school and remain in school or stay at home.

Gender Issues

- **There were significantly⁴ more boys with disabilities than girls with disabilities (63.6 per cent compared to 36.4 per cent).**

Our sample had a slightly higher number of boys than girls, consistent with the enrolment rates in primary schools, but this does not account for the gender difference in disability (Table 1).

Table 1. Survey Sample

| | School pop [^] 2006 | Sample | |
|--------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| | | School pop [^] | Disabled students |
| Boys | 52.6% (89,156) | 51.8% (49,544) | 63.6% (618) |
| Girls | 47.4% (80,501) | 48.2% (46,179) | 36.4% (354) |
| Total | 169,657 | 95,723 | 972 |

Table 2. Number of Disabled Students In Survey Sample

| | Boys | Girls | Total |
|---------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Physical | 217 | 73 | 200 |
| Intellectual | 162 | 74 | 236 |
| Seeing | 80 | 74 | 154 |
| Hearing | 95 | 51 | 146 |
| Speaking | 70 | 39 | 109 |
| Other | 17 | 10 | 36 |
| Complex | 67 | 24 | 91 |
| Total | 618 | 354 | 972 |

There are several possible explanations:

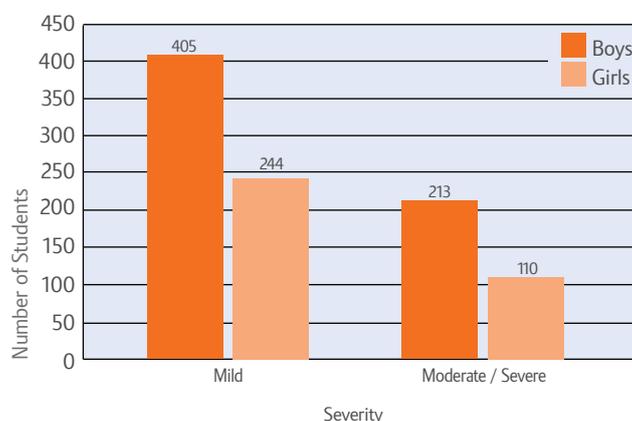
1) There are more boys with disabilities than girls with disabilities in the community. This alone would seem unlikely to account for the difference. Interestingly, however, the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MSS) reports that the 2002 Survey of Disability found disability in a population of all ages affected males disproportionately to females (68 per cent of disabled people were male, 32 per cent female), lending some support to this explanation.

2) There are similar numbers of boys and girls with disabilities in the community, but disabled boys are more likely to be enrolled in school than girls and less likely to drop out. (This would be consistent with experiences from other developing countries.)

3) There are similar numbers of boys with disabilities and girls with disabilities in the primary school population, but teachers are more likely to notice and report disabilities in boys than disabilities in girls. (There is some evidence that girls who have difficulties in the classroom, especially learning problems, are more likely to go undiagnosed/unrecognised.) The greatest gender difference was seen in the intellectual/learning difficulty category; however, there were also considerably more boys than girls with physical disabilities (Table 2).

4) There may be other cultural or social reasons why disabilities in girls are less likely to be reported.

Chart 3. Disability by Gender and Severity



⁴Chi test. P value <0.05

Age and Distribution by Grade

A higher percentage of students in the older grades (4 to 6) were identified as disabled, compared to the younger grades (1 to 3). Chart 4 shows the number of disabled students per 1000 students in each grade level.

There may be several factors influencing this, including a failure in early detection of disability. (Children may not be identified as having problems until they have been at school for a few years.)

However, an examination of age rather than grade reveals that many disabled students are 'over-age' (older than expected for their grade). Table 3 shows the percentage of disabled students in each grade who were 'over-age'.

- **41.6 per cent of students with a disability were 'over-age'.**
- **14 per cent of all primary school students with a disability were 14 years or older.**
- **The age range of students with a disability in primary schools was 5 to 19 years, with an average age of 10.7 years.**

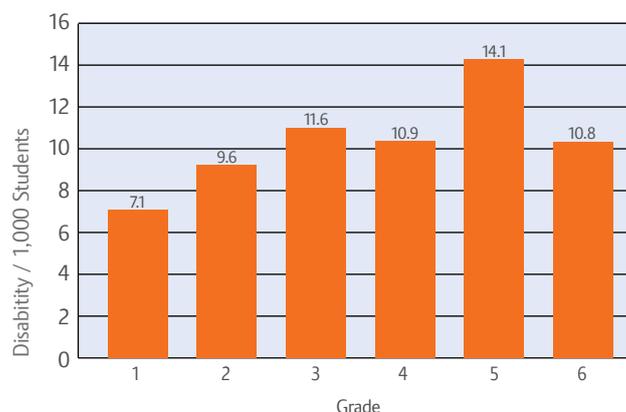
In examining this data, it is important to note that Timor-Leste has high rates of over-age enrolment in general, as a result of late enrolment in school, interrupted schooling and high rates of grade repetition⁵. Nationally, it is estimated that 16 to 20 per cent of all students in grades 1 and 2 are repeating the school year. By grade 6 the repetition rates are much lower (3 to 5 per cent nationally)⁶. However, we see in the disability data that over-age enrolments are high across all grades and highest in the older grades (4 to 6).

The survey included a question about the age at which the child entered school, but often this was not known and the data was too incomplete for analysis. However, anecdotal reports suggest that children with a disability, especially a milder disability (who were the majority), were as likely to start school on time as other children. It would appear then, that the high rates of over-age enrolment were related to repetition, indicating a failure of the education system to progress these students through the primary grades. This was particularly true of students with an intellectual disability and those with hearing and communication problems. The following page shows the distribution of each disability category by grade.

Table 3. Percentage of Disabled Students Who Are Over-age by Grade

| Grade | % over-age |
|-------|--------------|
| 1 | 29% (≥9yrs) |
| 2 | 37% (≥10yrs) |
| 3 | 39% (≥11yrs) |
| 4 | 55% (≥12yrs) |
| 5 | 43% (≥13yrs) |
| 6 | 47% (≥14yrs) |

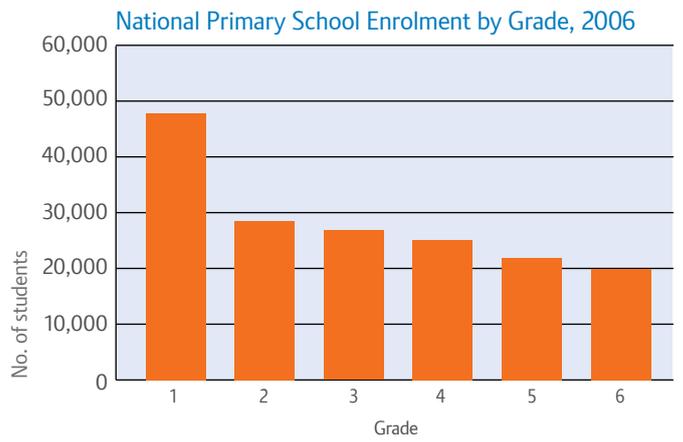
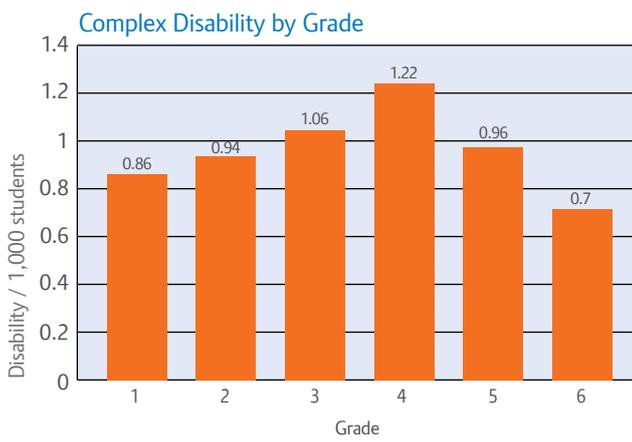
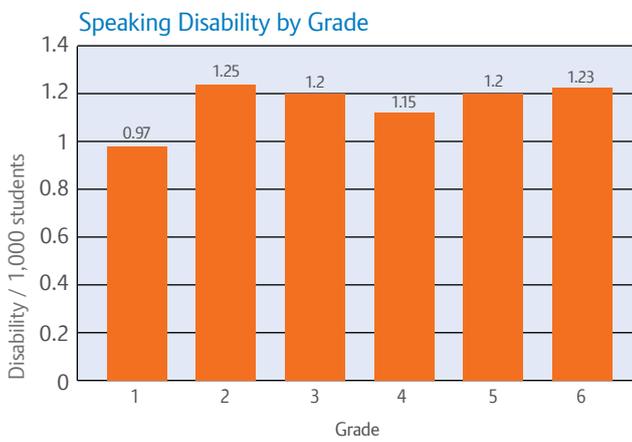
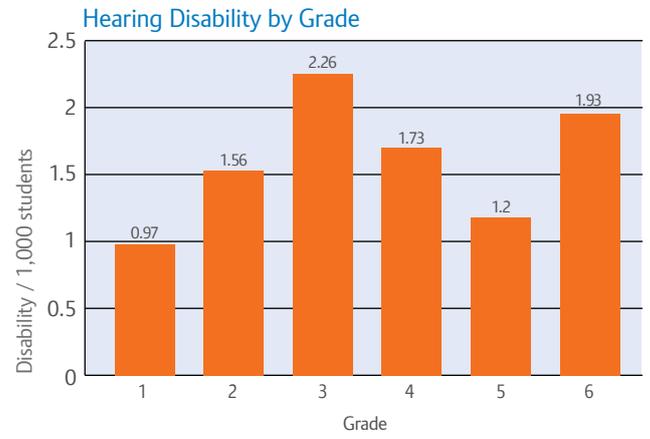
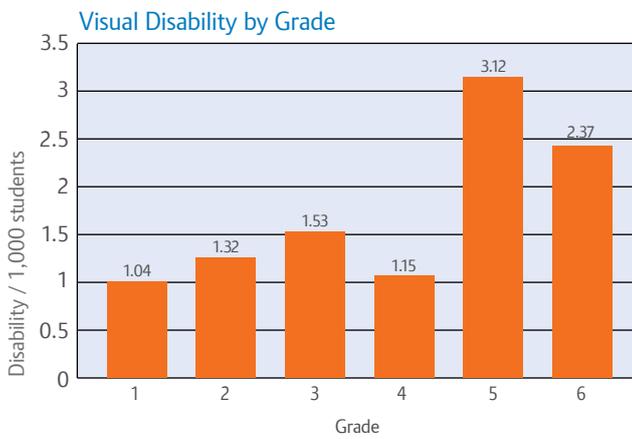
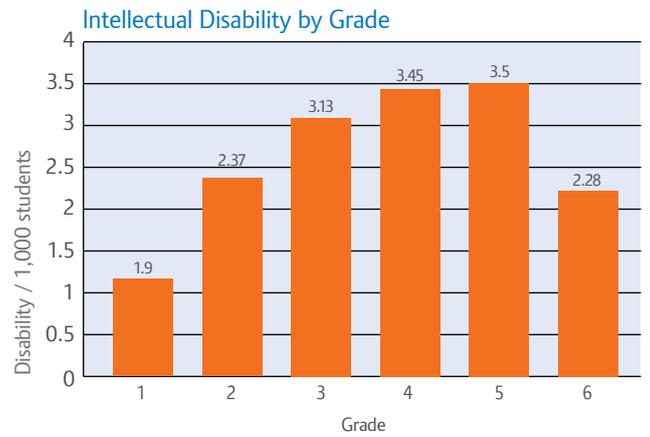
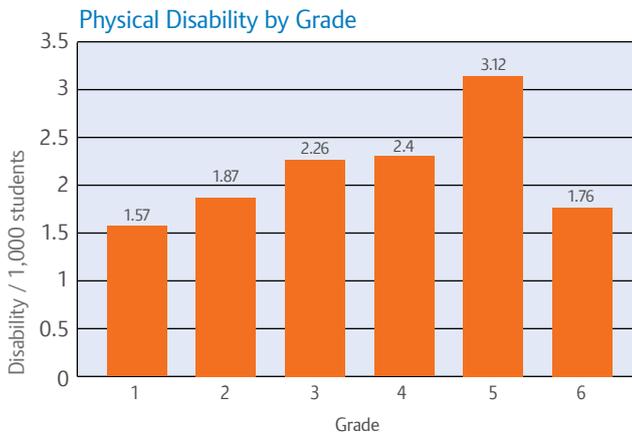
Chart 4. Disability by Grade



⁵ World Bank (2004), Timor-Leste Education Since Independence: From Reconstruction to Sustainable Improvement

⁶ Ministry of Education 2006, dataset provided by EMIS

Chart 5. Distribution of Disability Type by Grade



School Size and Type

We sampled 285 public schools and 51 Catholic private schools. See Table 4 for school sampling details.

- **Students with a disability were significantly more likely to attend a public school than a private school⁷.**

Public and private schools had a similar ratio of disabled boys to disabled girls, and, among those with a disability, the percentage with moderate or severe problems was similar (see Table 5).

Table 4. Schools Sampled by Region

| Region District | Students | Schools | | | Average size of school (range) | % of students with disability |
|----------------------|---------------|------------|-----------|------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | | Public | Private | Total | | |
| Region I | | | | | | |
| Baucau | 7,626 | 16 | 11 | 27 | 282 (26-1450) | 1.03% |
| Lautem | 6,839 | 26 | 1 | 27 | 253 (31-597) | |
| Manatuto | 5,644 | 25 | 3 | 28 | 202 (46-464) | |
| Viqueque | 7,163 | 23 | 4 | 27 | 265 (68-503) | |
| Region II | | | | | | |
| Dili | 20,403 | 31 | 9 | 40 | 503 (20-1305) | 0.67% |
| Liquica | 7,089 | 22 | 2 | 24 | 295 (31-597) | |
| Region III | | | | | | |
| Aileu | 5,893 | 24 | 5 | 29 | 203 (45-664) | 1.29% |
| Ainaro | 7,114 | 25 | 2 | 27 | 263 (42-600) | |
| Manufahi | 6,992 | 25 | 3 | 28 | 250 (105-554) | |
| Region IV | | | | | | |
| Bobonaro | 6,793 | 23 | 3 | 26 | 261 (92-728) | 1.30% |
| Cova Lima | 5,833 | 21 | 5 | 26 | 224 (99-479) | |
| Ermera | 5,661 | 18 | 1 | 19 | 298 (55-908) | |
| Region V | | | | | | |
| Oecussi [#] | 2,673 | 6 | 2 | 8 | 334 (155-500) | 0.52% |
| TOTAL | 95,723 | 285 | 51 | 336 | 285 (20-1450) | 1.02% |

[#]Data set from Oecussi is incomplete

Table 5. Disability in Public and Private Schools

| | Public | Private |
|--|--------|---------|
| No. of schools sampled | 285 | 51 |
| % of students with disability | 1.06% | 0.75% |
| % of disabled students who are boys | 63.90% | 61% |
| % of disabled students with moderate/severe problems | 32.60% | 39% |

⁷Chi test P value <0.05

The sample included some of the largest schools in each district, usually located close to the capital as well as small, remote and filial (branch) schools. The relationship between school size and number of students with a disability was weak.

On average, each school reported two to three students (2.89 per cent) with a disability; however, there was wide variation. In every district there were schools with no disabled students. Sixty schools in total, or 17.8 per cent, reported having no disabled students and 13 schools reported having 10 or more disabled students currently enrolled.

- **Although the number of students with a disability increases as the school population increases, even small and remote schools have children with disabilities.**

- **In many districts the smaller schools have a higher percentage of disabled students.**

It is important that Inclusive Education support is not confined to Dili or the capital towns but reaches all schools including small, filial schools in remote communities.

In a small village in Ermera we heard about a young man, aged 16 years who was currently in grade 2. Born with a disability (possibly cerebral palsy), he had difficulty walking and had never spoken.

Because he had never learnt to speak, it was assumed that he could not study or go to school. For many years while his siblings went to the local public school, he wandered the village and often spent time playing near the church. He befriended the madres and priest, often helping them with their chores. The parish priest encouraged him to become active in the church and the local scout group, and the community knew him well from the work he did assisting in mass and special church events. Two years ago a small Catholic primary school was established and the boy, wanting to be close to the madres and priest, followed them to school each morning. The priest decided to allow the young boy to sit in with the grade 1 class he was teaching. To his surprise the boy began to learn his alphabet, numbers and other things. He now goes to school everyday; he has moved up to grade 2 and is learning to read and write. His teacher reports that he is one of the best maths students in the class!

If we estimate that 10% of children in the community have some kind of disability and our survey found only 1.02% of primary students are disabled, we can conclude that most children with a disability in Timor-Leste, are still not attending school.

Out-of-school Calculations

This survey captures the number of currently enrolled primary school students with a disability; however, we are unable to compare this to community-level data to establish how many disabled children are *not* in school.

A National Disability Survey was conducted in Timor-Leste in 2002. Table 6 is the summary data table from this survey, provided by the Ministry of Social Solidarity. However, neither the raw data nor the final report with details of the methodology were available, making comparison and analysis of this information difficult.

However, we can see from the data table that the survey identified 12,957 disabled people of all ages in all districts in 2002. The population in Timor-Leste in 2001 was estimated at 787,342, so we could combine this information with the 2002 Disability data to estimate 1.65 per cent of the population were disabled. More recently, the 2004 Census⁸ recorded some disability data and reported that 29,365 or 15 per cent of private households

were affected by disability. However, without reliable age-disaggregated data we are not able to estimate the level of disability in the primary school-aged population.

More generally, it is estimated that approximately 10 per cent of the global population has a disability (and that this rate is probably higher in developing countries)⁹. Estimates of disability prevalence vary widely, depending on how disability is defined and how information is collected¹⁰, but if we accept this figure in Timor-Leste and assume it to be true of the school-aged population, we would expect to see around 10 per cent of primary school students with a disability. Our survey recorded a national prevalence of only 1.02 per cent, leading us to conclude that a large percentage of school-aged children with a disability are still *not* going to school.

An Inclusive Education framework prioritises reaching out-of-school children, including those with a disability. As schools become more inclusive and teachers better skilled at meeting the needs of different students, efforts will also need to be made at a community level to identify and attract children with disabilities to enrol in school.

Table 6. People with Disabilities in Timor-Leste, 2002

| No | District | Number of Disabilities | Sex | | Type of disabilities and total number | | | | | |
|----|--------------|------------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|
| | | | M | F | Physical | Blind | Mute | Mentally ill | Chronic | Multiple |
| 1 | Aileu | 853 | 558 | 295 | 402 | 157 | 149 | 120 | 4 | 21 |
| 2 | Ainaro | 799 | 484 | 315 | 302 | 178 | 149 | 128 | – | 42 |
| 3 | Baucau | 1610 | 983 | 627 | 626 | 381 | 272 | 219 | 25 | 87 |
| 4 | Bobonaro | 1627 | 1021 | 606 | 656 | 382 | 344 | 148 | 10 | 87 |
| 5 | Covalima | 827 | 528 | 299 | 326 | 243 | 142 | 76 | 2 | 38 |
| 6 | Dili | 1022 | 628 | 394 | 475 | 186 | 152 | 144 | 8 | 57 |
| 7 | Ermera | 1663 | 1079 | 584 | 734 | 331 | 247 | 246 | 7 | 86 |
| 8 | Liquisa | 360 | 217 | 143 | 187 | 78 | 36 | 45 | – | 14 |
| 9 | Lautem | 756 | 466 | 290 | 370 | 176 | 108 | 71 | – | 31 |
| 10 | Manufahi | 811 | 532 | 279 | 380 | 183 | 128 | 93 | 2 | 25 |
| 11 | Manatuto | 655 | 372 | 283 | 275 | 168 | 105 | 70 | 8 | 29 |
| 12 | Oecussi | 1343 | 799 | 544 | 385 | 376 | 311 | 85 | 131 | 55 |
| 13 | Viqueque | 631 | 419 | 212 | 259 | 205 | 98 | 42 | 4 | 23 |
| | Total | 12,957 | 8,086 | 4,871 | 5,377 | 3,044 | 2,241 | 1,487 | 201 | 595 |

[Data table provided by the Ministry of Social Solidarity.]

⁸ Timor-Leste Census of Population and Housing, 2004, available at <http://dne.mopf.gov.tl/>

⁹ World Bank (2007), Measuring Disability Prevalence, SP Discussion Paper No. 0706, available at <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DISABILITY/Resources/Data/MontPrevalence.pdf>

¹⁰ See Measuring Disability Prevalence cited above, for a detailed discussion on why Census questions produce the lowest prevalence estimates for disability and are likely to significantly underestimate the true rates of disability.



PART III: DISABILITY IN PRESCHOOLS



Disability in Preschools



Twenty-nine preschools (19.8 per cent) were sampled, 6 in Dili and 23 in other districts, with a total enrolled population of 1,889 children (Table 7).

There are 146 registered preschools across the country; these are a mix of government, Catholic, NGO and community-run schools. In 2006/07, 7,924 children were enrolled in preschools, with a slightly higher rate of enrolment for girls (52.2 per cent) than boys (47.8 per cent).

In examining the situation of children with disabilities in preschools, it is important to recognise that preschool attendance is currently the exception rather than the rule for East Timorese children. Whether disabled or not, the vast majority of children in Timor-Leste do not receive any form of preschool education¹¹.

Using the same survey instrument described in the main study, 18 children were identified as having a disability, 9 boys and 9 girls (Table 8).

Nine of the students with a disability (50 per cent) had a physical problem and five (27.8 per cent) had a complex problem involving difficulties in more

than one area. The complex difficulties included two children with physical and communication problems, one child with physical and visual problems, one child with physical and learning difficulties and one child with a significant hearing impairment also affecting his speech.

Table 7. Preschool Sample

| District | No. of Preschools | Survey Sample |
|--------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Aileu | 12 | 3 |
| Ainaro | 5 | 2 |
| Baucau | 3 | 0 |
| Cova Lima | 16 | 4 |
| Dili | 35 | 6 |
| Ermera | 7 | 0 |
| Liquica | 18 | 2 |
| Manatuto | 13 | 4 |
| Lautem | 8 | 2 |
| Maliana | 12 | 3 |
| Manufahi | 10 | 2 |
| Oecussi | 2 | 1 |
| Viqueque | 5 | 0 |
| Total | 146 | 29 |

Table 8. Children in Preschools with Disabilities Showing Disability Type and Severity

| Disability Type | No. of disabled children | | Total |
|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------|
| | Mild | Moderate/Severe | |
| Physical | 3 | 6 | 9 |
| Intellectual | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Seeing | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Hearing | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Speaking | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Other | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Complex | 0 | 5 | 5 |
| Total | 6 | 12 | 18 |

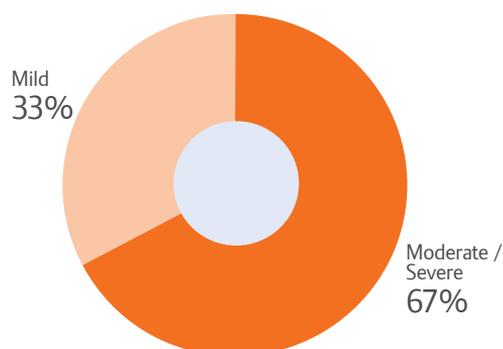
¹¹ UNICEF estimates only 2 per cent of children aged 36-59 months attend an early childhood education program, (2003).

Most of the children in preschools who were identified as having a disability have serious difficulties (66.7 per cent). This may indicate that milder problems especially sensory (seeing/hearing) and learning difficulties are less likely to be noticed by preschool teachers.

Improving preschool teachers' knowledge of early childhood development and their understanding of developmental milestones will be an important step in improving early detection of disabilities.

However, as noted above, most children will never go to preschool so early intervention for children with disabilities will need to work through other avenues including parents, health clinics and community health volunteers, and by coordinating with *chefe sucos* (village chiefs) who often collect community data, including information about disability.

Chart 6. Severity of Disability in Preschool Sample



Early Inclusion Matters

Jose is 5 years old and lives with his parents and three sisters in Same. He is very clever and loves to learn. At the beginning of the year, he was excited to go to preschool with his friends. His preschool teacher describes what happened:

Jose cannot really walk. His arms and legs are too stiff and it's difficult for him to sit normally. Also, when he talks his speech is not clear. So he came to school for 3 or 4 weeks and then he dropped out. He was embarrassed and shy because he saw that he was not like the other children; he could not run around with the others, when they went to the blackboard to write, he could not, when they played games or when we did singing, he couldn't join in and so he was embarrassed. It was difficult for him and he didn't want to come back to preschool. He is actually very clever. When the teacher sits with him, he quickly learns things. He already knew all the letters and numbers and was learning to read. His parents wanted him to come to school but he didn't want to, so now he just stays home. Soon his friends will start primary school. I'm not sure if he will go or not.

There are many simple ways that lessons can be adapted so that everyone can participate. Teachers like this one in Same need support and training to make their classrooms more inclusive.



PART IV: RECOMMENDATIONS



Recommendations



- **A National Policy from the Ministry of Education on Inclusive Education is required.**

The Ministry of Education has a duty to realise the right to education for all children in Timor-Leste and a National Policy can formalise their commitment to achieving this through an Inclusive Education framework. Although meeting the needs of disabled children requires a multi-sectoral approach involving Ministries of Health, Education and Social Solidarity, without a single national framework there is a danger of fragmented services.

The National Policy should outline a systematic approach to meeting the learning needs of children with a disability, including the allocation of staff and budget to this end. This Policy should be linked to broader initiatives aimed at making schools safe, secure and free of violence. Both management and teaching staff will require initial orientation on the principles of Inclusive Education and opportunities for continuing professional development (including study tours and exchanges).

Regional level: In line with the current restructure of the Education sector, it is recommended that each of the five new Regional Education Offices allocate at least one staff member to manage Inclusive Education and that their job description clearly outline duties in coordination of services for children with disabilities.

Each Region will also require a Resource Support Centre. These support centres could provide specialist technical advice, in-service trainings and short courses, house equipment, textbooks and other resources, produce and/or disseminate specialised learning materials and coordinate national awareness raising activities. The support centres will need to draw on the local expertise available in the region, work closely with NGO partners and tap into relevant networks such as community-based rehabilitation (CBR) groups.

* Development of a National Policy on Inclusive Education could include a review of the role of the Taibesse Special School and examine the feasibility of transforming the school into a national resource and training centre.

Sub-district level: Current plans indicate there will be 65 Education Inspectors working at sub-district level. It is important that these inspectors have a solid understanding of the key issues of Inclusive Education, especially disability and gender, as they carry out their duties. They can play a critical role in liaising between schools and district and national levels on issues of disability and ensuring that strategies to attract out-of-school children into the education system are reaching children with disabilities.

A senior disability worker in Liquica talks about the challenges of supporting children with disabilities to go to school...

"There is no firm policy and no information comes down from the Ministry of Education... At the school level then, sometimes it seems like we are the ones that force them. It's difficult to get them to take responsibility. Maybe they think there should be some other place that these children go. I can tell you that here, in this district, if we didn't facilitate it [children with disability enrolling in schools], then they would never go."

A young teacher in Viqueque...

“One thing that would really help is if there was someone with this experience (expertise) and they could visit the schools and give some ideas about how we can teach. Because I see that we don’t really know what to do, like for a child who is deaf, there is no one who knows about sign language so then we don’t know how to have them in the classroom.”

School level: Support to schools and communities will need to be organised through the cluster system, with clear responsibilities allocated to the 240 nuclei or lead schools in terms of coordination (with disability NGOs), dissemination of resources and communication of national initiatives for students with disabilities¹². Schools and Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) need to know how to mobilise funding needed for school improvements such as modifications to the classrooms and the rebuilding of latrines. Others in the community such as disability NGOs and health workers need a clear mechanism for referring children with disabilities to schools.

- **Pre- and in-service training for teachers is required.**

Integrating Inclusive Education into the pre- and in-service training for teachers is critical and will have the greatest impact on whether children with disabilities are able to reach their full learning potential.

Improving the capacity and skills of primary school teachers and directors is already a priority of the Ministry of Education and providing teachers with strategies to make their classroom a more inclusive environment will benefit all students. Training on general classroom management, strategies for teaching large classes and classes of mixed abilities, and an awareness of multi-sensory learning are essential starting points. For example, encouraging teachers to use pictures, songs, stories and movement in their everyday teaching can help make the basic curriculum immediately more accessible to children with different learning needs¹³. While specialist short courses and training could be arranged through regional Resource Support Centres and, at the cluster level, through the Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) Program.

The CFS Program could also provide peer-support for teachers to share their experiences of teaching children with disabilities. It could encourage local initiatives that bring parents and other adults with disabilities into classrooms and promote full integration of disabled people in the community. At a local level, schools can connect with disability NGOs to receive basic training on early detection of disabilities.

* The survey found the most common disability in primary schools is intellectual or learning problems

and that many of these students have very high rates of grade-repetition. Some have repeated each grade two or three times. Teachers urgently need training to support children with learning disabilities and to develop alternative methods of assessment as well as advise when grade repetition is appropriate.



- **Awareness-raising in communities is needed.**

Promoting the right of children with disabilities to attend school will be an important component of any Inclusive Education strategy; however, it should not be the sole focus, nor should it target parents and teachers exclusively.

Improving enrolment and retention rates in primary schools is the responsibility of the whole community. Our survey indicates that teachers and school directors are not necessarily a good source of information about children with disabilities who are not in school but in many places the *chefe suco* is. Child protection officers¹⁴ working at the district level will be another important community resource to draw upon. Innovative approaches such as child-to-child strategies could also be used to help raise awareness of out-of-school children and the challenges faced by disabled students who are in school.

Health workers, family health promoters and church leaders can play a crucial role in influencing community attitudes, while teachers can also do much to ensure that children with disabilities are genuinely welcomed into the school. They can demonstrate their commitment and belief in children’s learning abilities by following up with

¹² In 2006/07 the Ministry of Social Solidarity provided financial support to 42 disabled students in mainstream primary schools across the country. There is considerable confusion about who is eligible for this support and whether it will be continued, and most teachers and school directors do not know how parents can apply for it.

¹³ UNESCO has developed Toolkits for Promoting Inclusive Education with practical advice for teachers working in resource-poor settings.

¹⁴ The Ministry of Social Solidarity plans to support one Child Protection Officer or Focal Point in each district, who will work with district-level Child Protection Networks and sub-district level animators. These networks could be usefully employed to raise awareness of Inclusive Education in particular and also issues that affect disabled children in general.

families when a disabled child is not enrolled in school (but their siblings are) or when a child with difficulties drops out. Linking with local disability NGOs and drawing on the knowledge and expertise of CBR networks will be vital to successfully locate children with disabilities and to raise awareness about Inclusive Education.

* Our survey indicated that more disabled boys than girls attend school. Further investigation at a community level is needed to understand this finding and to address other gender issues.

- **There is a need to strengthen data collection on children with disabilities.**

It is only by collecting data and monitoring the situation in communities and schools that we can know if children are really benefiting from new laws, policies or programs on Inclusive Education¹⁵.

Currently there are major difficulties accessing basic information about children in schools and an absolute lack of reliable data on numbers of 'out-of-school children' (including drop-out rates). The collection of this information is critically important to the education sector as a whole and should be prioritised. More generally, it is important that inclusive education issues are integrated into any future plans to strengthen and reform EMIS.

Schools: A disability indicator could be added to the routine enrolment data collected by EMIS to assist with monitoring and planning support services. The experience of this study suggests that training of school directors will be required to develop a common understanding of disability terms and ensure the data collected is reliable.

Community: In many places, the chefe suco already collects information about people in the community (of all ages) who have a disability. This data can be used at a local level, to identify children who are not currently in school. At a national level, consolidating this data will help monitor trends in the community and allow more reliable estimates on the numbers of children 'out-of-school'.

- **The building codes for schools need to be reviewed to ensure appropriate access for students with a disability.**

The Law on the Design Codes for engineering of schools and a Building Code for schools is yet to be written. There are substantial cost savings in designing buildings with universal access as opposed to ad hoc modifications to meet the needs of individual users. There is an opportunity now for the Ministry of Education to ensure that these design codes reflect the need for schools to be inclusive and, in particular, to consider issues of access for students with a disability.

"We still need to do a lot of work with the community, otherwise some parents would never send them [their disabled children] to school. And from the schools' side I can see that when we approach the teachers, they pretend to receive the students but in their hearts they don't. They don't believe the children can learn. They don't believe yet, that they can study and learn to be independent in the future."

Interview with CBR worker, Districts.

¹⁵ Developing routine data collection systems will also help Timor-Leste meet its reporting duties related to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other human rights instruments.

¹⁶ Xavier, H. (2008) Draft 1: State of the Nation Report Education Sector.

Conclusion

This was the first national survey of its kind¹⁷ and our intention is to provide the Ministry of Education and its development partners with basic data on students with disabilities in the primary school system. It is hoped that this information will form a useful baseline for planning and monitoring future Inclusive Education initiatives.

Many countries have been struggling for years in a long process of moving from segregated education (where disabled students are separated from their peers and taught in special schools and institutions) to a modern Inclusive Education system. As it rebuilds and reforms its basic education system, Timor-Leste is in the unique position of being able to develop a truly inclusive approach to schooling that will ensure education for all. The opportunity exists now to learn from the experiences of neighbouring countries and test different models of Inclusive Education to determine what will best suit Timor-Leste now and in the future.

The goal of Education for All will only be met if special attention and resources are given to marginalised children including those with a disability¹⁸. There is much work to be done at a policy level and within schools and communities to ensure that disabled students are enrolled in primary school and that teachers can provide a quality education to all their students. The results of this survey indicate that disabled children can and do go to regular schools and that many in the community already recognise the value of education for all children. It is our firm belief that by adopting an Inclusive Education approach, the Ministry of Education together with its development partners can achieve its goal: that by 2015, every primary school-aged child will attend and complete six years of primary education¹⁹.



¹⁷ Hanjan, R. (2006) has provided an interesting analysis of the situation of children with disability in Timor-Leste, using secondary data.

¹⁸ UNESCO (2008) Education for All Global Monitoring Report

¹⁹ ibid



APPENDIXES



APPENDIX I METHODOLOGY

This was a quantitative study designed to answer the question: ‘How many children with disabilities are currently going to school?’. The results form baseline data that can be used to help monitor the impact of Inclusive Education initiatives.

Collecting data

The survey instrument

The research team conducted face-to-face interviews with school directors and teachers using a standard survey form and analysed secondary data sources such as the Census and EMIS datasets where these were available. When face-to-face interviews were not possible due to road conditions, the survey forms were given to the Education Office and later completed by the school director. The data produced in this way was often less reliable. It was either clarified with follow-up phone interviews or removed from the analysis.

The challenges in collecting data about disability are best demonstrated with a sample interview transcript (see box 2). This was very typical of the interviews that took place and show the importance of explaining exactly what is meant by disability, and providing examples. Terms such as *alejadu* are often reserved for people who have obvious physical problems affecting their arms or legs, while other terms such as *disabilidade* or *deficiente* (disability) are less commonly used and can be interpreted very broadly as ‘difficulties’, including having economic problems or being orphaned.

The sample

There were 32 subdistricts in the national sample. This included the capital of each district and at least one other, randomly selected subdistrict. EMIS data was used to create a sampling frame of all schools (public and private) in the selected subdistricts; schools were then randomly selected to provide a sample of 30 schools from each district²⁰. As the prevalence of disability in schools was known to be low, we required a reasonably large sample of schools to enable meaningful analysis at a district level.

Data from 336 schools formed the final data set for analysis (from a sample of 390 schools). In most districts we had a response rate of 85 per cent or higher. In some schools there were no staff present when we visited, other schools had closed or merged with larger schools and on a few occasions the schools were unreachable due to bad weather conditions. Travel in Oecussi and Ermera was affected by heavy rains and security, respectively, and resulted in low response rates in both districts.

The team was concerned to include both large and small schools (including filial or branch schools) and remote schools, as well as those closer to towns. In total we sampled 34 per cent of all primary schools in Timor-Leste and approximately 56 per cent of the total primary population (Table 9).

²⁰ 40 schools were selected in Dili district.

Table 9. School population and sample size

| Region District | Total Primary Population 2006 [#] | | Survey Sample | | | |
|----------------------|--|------------|---------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| | Students | Schools | Students | Schools | | |
| | | | | Public | Private | Total |
| Region I | | | | | | |
| Baucau | 18,618 | 135 | 7,626 | 16 | 11 | 27 |
| Lautem | 12,815 | 76 | 6,839 | 26 | 1 | 27 |
| Manatuto | 7,826 | 48 | 5,644 | 25 | 3 | 28 |
| Viqueque | 16,121 | 86 | 7,163 | 23 | 4 | 27 |
| Region II | | | | | | |
| Dili | 20,824 | 73 | 20,403 | 31 | 9 | 40 |
| Liquica | 11,111 | 50 | 7,089 | 22 | 2 | 24 |
| Region III | | | | | | |
| Aileu | 8,728 | 62 | 5,893 | 24 | 5 | 29 |
| Ainaro | 11,134 | 64 | 7,114 | 25 | 2 | 27 |
| Manufahi | 9,182 | 62 | 6,992 | 25 | 3 | 28 |
| Region IV | | | | | | |
| Bobonaro | 17,160 | 121 | 6,793 | 23 | 3 | 26 |
| Cova Lima | 9,520 | 79 | 5,833 | 21 | 5 | 26 |
| Ermera | 17,877 | 89 | 5,661 | 18 | 1 | 19 |
| Region V | | | | | | |
| Oecussi [#] | 8,741 | 46 | 2,673 | 6 | 2 | 8 |
| TOTAL | 169,657 | 991 | 95,723 | 285 | 51 | 336 |

[#] This was the most recent data available from EMIS on school enrolments. There are clearly some anomalies including the reported number of students enrolled in Dili.

Data analysis

All data was checked, coded (to de-identify students) and then entered and analysed using Excel 2004.

Classifying disability

Seven broad categories of disability were used – 5 areas of functional limitation (physical and intellectual disabilities, problems seeing, hearing and speaking), an ‘other’ category and a ‘complex’ category (combinations of two or more different disabilities). Very few children with disabilities have ever been formally diagnosed and even among those that have, it is not clear that the school director or teachers would know this information. The research team was not able to assess children to determine the exact nature or extent of their difficulties, and relied on verbal reporting from the school director. Interviewers focused on trying to identify children who had obvious impairments or were having some type of difficulty at school and the team chose simple disability categories that seemed to reflect the way people thought and spoke about disability.

The team developed a series of prompts and probes to use during the interview which helped clarify which children had a disability (by asking what it was that they had difficulty doing – seeing, hearing, speaking etc) and how severe the disability was.²¹

A disability or not?

Illness: It was important to determine whether the problem being described was permanent or temporary (related to a bout of illness). Interviewers asked: How long has she had this problem? When did it first begin? What happened? Does anyone else in his family have the same problem? This was especially useful in eliminating children who appeared to have temporary ear or eye infections.

In the category of ‘other’, some conditions such as epilepsy were included. These may not technically be classified as a disability, but teachers felt it important to report them.

Over-reporting: Determining whether children had an intellectual or learning problem was often difficult and required much discussion with teachers and directors. Sometimes the teachers identified many students who were not performing well and reported that all of them had an intellectual disability. Upon further questioning, teachers were able to say whether they thought the problem was an intellectual disability or something else; namely, that the student didn’t come to school regularly, was not motivated or did not try hard in class, or was disruptive or lazy (*baruk ka nakar*). In doing so, it’s recognised that some of these behaviours were probably a result of learning difficulties themselves (which had not been identified); however, it served as a useful indicator to help reduce the over-reporting of intellectual disability.

Under-reporting: There are very high rates of grade-repetition in Timor-Leste and a perception that it is ‘normal’ for children to repeat, especially grades 1 or 2. Clearly there are multiple factors that affect how well a child learns (beyond disability), including the appropriateness of the curriculum, attendance of teachers, hours of instruction, quality of teaching, support available at home etc. Again, with further questioning, we were usually able to identify children who were clearly delayed (compared to their peers) and whose failure to progress as expected could not be explained by other factors.

²¹ Our approach was informed by *Measuring Disability Prevalence* (World Bank, 2007) which highlighted the importance of asking about functional difficulties rather than disability diagnoses and the need to differentiate at least two levels of severity in disability measures.

Language issues: In Timor-Leste, many children are being taught in a language other than their native tongue, and especially in the early years of school this is likely to affect how they learn and participate in the classroom. With some clarification by the interviewers, teachers were able to report whether problems listening and following instructions or answering questions and speaking clearly were the same in Tetun as in the child's first language²² (e.g. Mumbai or Makasai).

A conservative estimate

On balance, the interview process produced a reliable but conservative estimate of the level of disability in primary schools. The data was dependent, however, on the ability of teachers to identify disability. So, as the general level of awareness of disability increases in the community and schools we could expect to see these rates increase in future years (this is aside from any actual increase in enrolment and retention of disabled students produced by Inclusive Education policies/ programmes).



²² It is estimated that less than 50% of school children speak Tetun as their first language. (World Bank, 2007b)

Box 2. Sample Interview with a School Director in Manufahi

Interviewer: [Introduces the study, explains about different types of disability and the purpose of the survey. Collects demographic data on school, number of students/ teachers, etc]. Do you have any students like this, like we've discussed, who have a disability?

Director: No. We don't have any.

I: Like with a physical disability? Could be a problem with their legs, or arms, any students who can't really walk properly... stiff arms or legs, or one side of their body is not good (paralysis), or soft arms/ legs, they might have problems trying to sit up in class?

D: Ahh yes we have. One, Carlos. His left leg doesn't bend, he walks like this [demonstrates limp] and sometimes if he tries to run too fast he just falls down.

I: Ok, right, like that. What happened to him?

D: When he was in grade 1 he fell from a horse and broke his arm and leg and now that leg is not good, his left leg, it's too thin and doesn't really work, it's just straight.

I: Does he use a stick or anything to help him walk? How does he come to school?

D: No, he doesn't use a stick, just walks, he walks to school with his brothers, but sometimes he's late.

I: [collects details about this student] Any others with physical problems like that?

D: No, just Carlos.

I: What about any children who are blind or deaf - have problems seeing or hearing?

D: Deaf, no. Blind? We have... like one with white eyes [matan mutin]? She can see but not very well, so she always sits at the front, close to the board.

I: [collects information about this student] Ok. What about any students with problems speaking, who don't speak at all [monok] or they don't speak very clearly, it's really hard to understand them?

Teacher [who had been listening to the interview] interjects: Before we had, Lola, she had cleft palate [ibun sakit] but now she is in SMA [secondary school].

I: Ok, so she's not at this school anymore? Ok, we won't write her down but any others like that who are at school now?

T: No, now we don't have.

I: Ok, and what about any children who have an intellectual problem, like their thinking is not good [hanoin fracu] and they can't/ don't really learn [labele aprende]?

D: Yes we have many - [to the teacher] don't we?

I: Ok, so we are really interested in students who have an intellectual disability... some children don't pass their exams because they don't come to school very much or they are not really interested in studying, they are lazy or they play up in class [baruk ka nakar]- not those students. We are thinking especially about students who really don't understand what is being taught in their class, the teacher explains things many times but they still don't understand. When the other children have learnt to read or write they still can't manage this even though they try hard to learn. Sometimes they have to repeat the same grade several times or sometimes the teacher needs to pass them to the next grade even though they have not really learnt the material at all.

D: [nods] Ok, hmm, Markus. He's in grade 4 but still can't really read or he can just read a few words. He's 14 years old, and his older sister was the same. She's gone out from school now (dropped out).

I: [collects details about this student, age, grade etc.] ...Any others?

D: Just him and his sister.

I: What about any other children with problems or disabilities, anything we haven't talked about?

T: We had one girl before, with epilepsy [bibi matan] in grade 2, but she's moved to Dili now.

[Interviewer reviews the completed survey form with the director and teacher.]

APPENDIX II: DISTRICT SUMMARIES

The national data was disaggregated by district in order to assist Regional and District Education Offices to plan programs and services. Differences between districts or regions should be treated with caution. More reliable school population data is required before any conclusions can be drawn about actual differences in rates of disabled students between districts. Likewise, estimates on the level of disability (in the general community) in each district is required to understand whether there are more children with disabilities in some parts of the country or there are regional differences in the likelihood that disabled children will attend school.

Table 10: Disability in Schools by District

| Region/ District | Disabled Students per 1,000 enrolled | Average no. of disabled students per school |
|----------------------|--|---|
| Region I | | |
| Baucau | 9.7 | 2.7 |
| Lautem | 9.5 | 2.4 |
| Manatuto | 10.1 | 2.0 |
| Viqueque | 11.9 | 3.1 |
| Region II | | |
| Dili | 4.5 | 73 |
| Liquica | 13.0 | 3.8 |
| Region III | | |
| Aileu | 11.7 | 2.4 |
| Ainaro | 16.6 | 4.4 |
| Manufahi | 10.0 | 2.5 |
| Region IV | | |
| Bobonaro | 12.5 | 3.3 |
| Cova Lima | 16.0 | 3.7 |
| Ermera | 10.2 | 2.9 |
| Region V | | |
| Oecussi [#] | N/A | N/A |

[#] Data from Oecussi is incomplete

REGION I

- Baucau
- Lautem
- Manatuto
- Viqueque



BAUCAU DISTRICT



- In our sample of 27 schools **we identified 74 students** with a disability (from a total student population of 7626).
- In Baucau district we can estimate **for every 100 students in primary school at least 1 is disabled (0.97%)**.
- **There were more girls (38) than boys (36) with disability. This finding is the opposite of the national trend but was not statistically significant²³.**
- **The most common disability reported was intellectual or learning problems (43 per cent)** followed by visual problems (22 per cent). However, there were no severe visual problems reported in this group.
- Seven per cent of students with a disability have problems in more than one area, classified as “Complex”. This included two students with a combination of physical and learning problems similar to cerebral palsy, and one student described as having emotional/ behavioural problems combined with visual difficulties.
- **Twenty students (or 27 per cent of those with a disability) were classified as having moderate or severe impairments** – these are children who are likely to have particular difficulty participating in school and are ‘at risk’ of dropping out if they do not receive special assistance [see Chart 8].
- The average age of students with a disability is 10.5 years (with a range of 6-15 years).

Chart 7. Type of Disability - Baucau

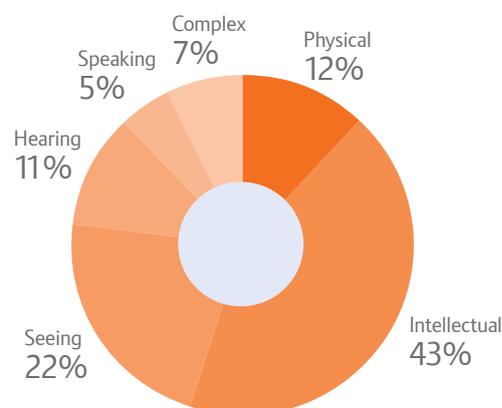
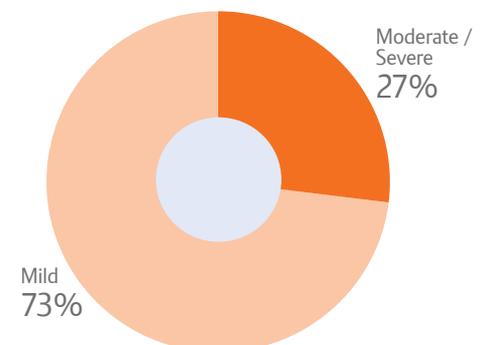


Chart 8. Severity of Disability - Baucau



²³ The finding could have occurred due to chance. ($p = 0.48$)

LAUTEM DISTRICT



- In our sample of 27 schools **we identified 65 students** with a disability from a total student population of 6839.
- In Lautem district we can estimate almost **1 in every 100 primary school students has a disability (0.95 per cent)**.
- **There were significantly more boys (44) than girls (21) with a disability²⁴. Although boys made up 51 per cent of the student population, they accounted for 68 per cent of disabilities reported.**
- **The most common disability reported was intellectual or learning problems (32 per cent)** followed by physical problems (31 per cent). Sixty-six per cent of the learning problems reported were moderate or severe.
- Three students had problems in more than one area, classified as “Complex.” One student had difficulties classified as “other” and had albinism and associated visual problems.
- **Twenty-four students (or 37 per cent of those with a disability) were classified as having moderate or severe problems** – these are children who are likely to have particular difficulty participating in school and are at risk of dropping out if they do not receive special assistance [see Chart 10].
- There were more students identified with a disability in the older grades (classes 4, 5 and 6) than the younger grades (classes 1, 2 and 3), which was the opposite of the national pattern. Grade 5 had the highest number of disabled students reported.
- The average age of students with a disability was 11.5 years (with a range of 6 to 17 years). This was higher than the national average.

Chart 9. Type of Disability - Lautem

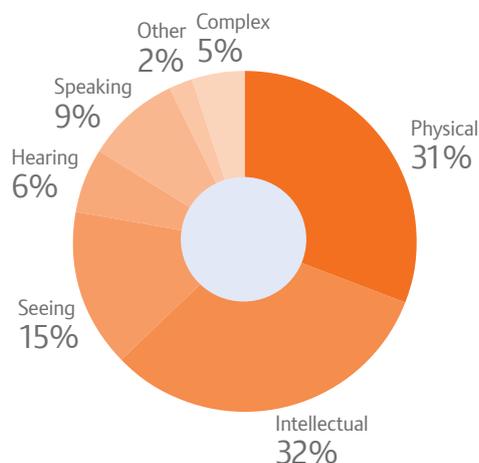
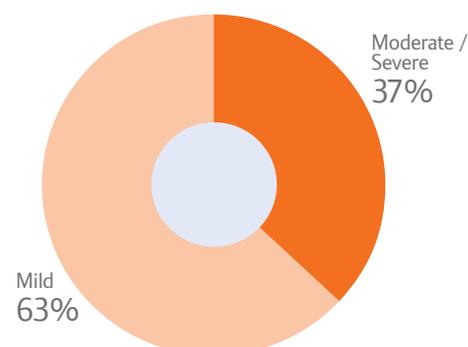


Chart 10. Severity of Disability - Lautem



²⁴ $p < 0.05$

MANATUTO DISTRICT



- In our sample of 28 schools, **we identified 57 students** with a disability from a total student population of 5644.
- In Manatuto District, we can estimate **1 in every 100 primary school students has a disability (1.01 per cent)**. This is consistent with the national average.
- **There were significantly more boys (43) than girls (14) with disabilities²⁵**. Although boys made up 51 per cent of the student population, they accounted for 75 per cent of the disabilities reported.
- **The most common disability reported was intellectual or learning problems (33 per cent)** followed by physical and visual problems (both 23 per cent). However, only 2 of the students with visual problems had a moderate or severe problem (15.4 per cent), whereas 63.2 per cent of the students with intellectual disabilities had moderate to severe problems.
- Three of the students with a disability (5 per cent) had problems in more than one area, classified as “Complex.” In each case their disability included intellectual or learning problems. One student had difficulties classified as “other” and was described as suffering from trauma or emotional/behavioural problems.
- **Twenty-four students (or 42 per cent of those with a disability) were classified as having serious or significant impairments** – these are children who are likely to have particular difficulty participating in school and are at risk of dropping out if they do not receive special assistance [see Chart 12]. This was higher than the national average.
- The average age of students with a disability was 10.5 years (with a range of 6 to 17 years).

Chart 11. Type of Disability - Manatuto

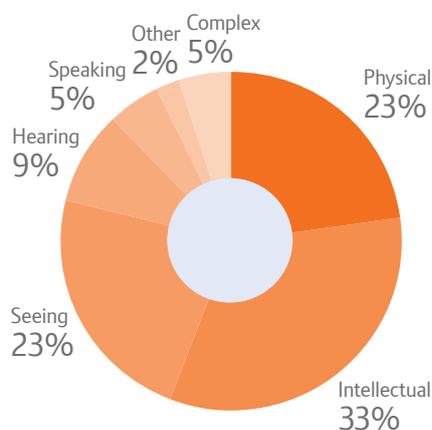
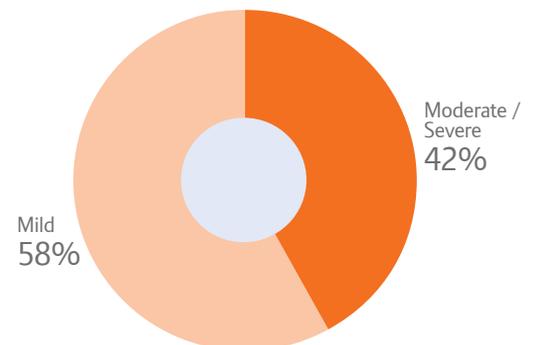
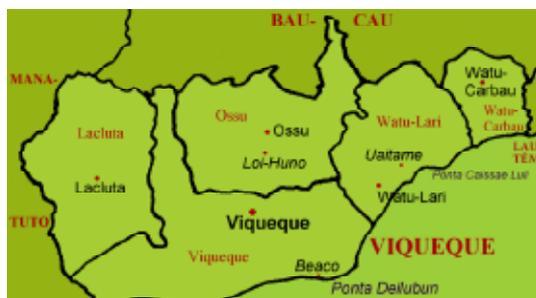


Chart 12. Severity of Disability - Manatuto



²⁵ p < 0.05

VIQUEQUE DISTRICT



- In our sample of 27 schools, **we identified 85 students** with a disability from a total student population of 7163.
- In Viqueque district, we can estimate **at least 1 in every 100 primary school students has a disability (1.19 per cent)**.
- **There were more boys (50) than girls (35) with disabilities, although this was not statistically significant²⁶.**
- **The most common disability reported was speaking problems (29 per cent)** followed by physical and hearing problems (21 per cent and 20 per cent, respectively). Twelve of the 25 students with speaking difficulties had cleft palates and have not been operated on.
- Ten students have problems in more than one area, classified as “Complex.” Four students had difficulties classified as “other” of which 3 had epilepsy and 1 had problems associated with albinism.
- **Twenty-six students (or 31 per cent of those with a disability) were classified as having moderate or severe impairments** – these are children who are likely to have particular difficulty participating in school and are at risk of dropping out if they do not receive special assistance [see Chart 14].
- The average age of students with a disability is 9.8 years (with a range of 6 to 15 years). This was younger than the national average.

Chart 13. Type of Disability - Viqueque

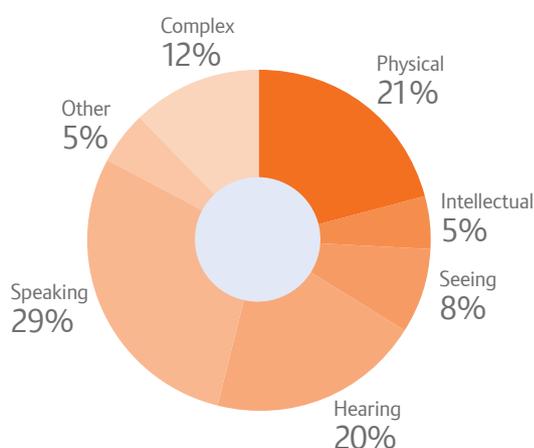
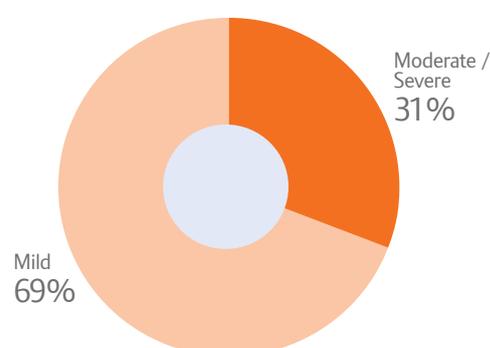


Chart 14. Severity of Disability - Viqueque



²⁶ $p > 0.05$

REGION II

- Dili
- Liquica



DILI DISTRICT



- In our sample of 40 schools, **we identified 90 students** with a disability from a total student population of 20,101.
- In Dili district we can estimate **that less than 1 in every 100 primary school students has a disability (0.45 per cent). This is was the lowest level of reported disability in all the districts and was significantly lower than the national average.**
- There were more boys (57) than girls (33) with a disability; however, **this was not statistically significant**²⁷. There were more boys than girls in the total student population of our sample (54.3% compared to 45.7%). This was the largest gender difference in enrolment in any of our samples.
- **The most common disability reported was physical problems (23 per cent)** followed by complex problems (21 per cent) and visual problems (20 per cent). Three students had difficulties classified as “other”, of which 2 had epilepsy and 1 was described as suffering from trauma or emotional/behavioural problems.
- **Forty-two students (or 47 per cent of those with a disability) were classified as having moderate or severe impairments** – these are children who are likely to have particular difficulty participating in school and are at risk of dropping out if they do not receive special assistance [see Chart 16].
- There were more students identified with a disability in the younger grades (classes 1, 2 and 3) than the older grades (classes 4, 5 and 6). Disabilities reported in the older grades were more likely to be mild [Chart 16].
- The average age of students with a disability was 10.6 years (with a range of 6 to 17 years).

Chart 15. Type of Disability - Dili

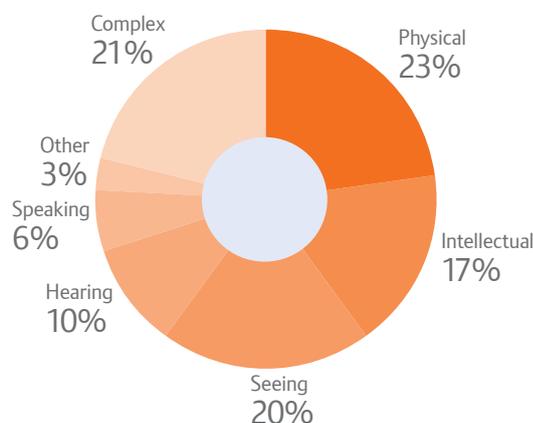
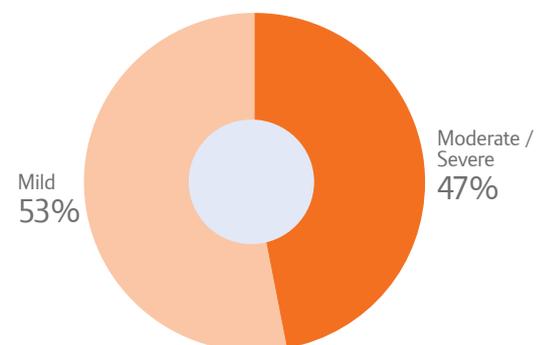


Chart 16. Severity of Disability - Dili



²⁷ $p > 0.05$

Why did Dili schools report fewer students with disabilities than other districts?

It is unclear why the primary school population in Dili would have fewer students with disability. It is most likely an error in reporting.

As Dili was the first district we surveyed we considered whether the finding might be a result of the interviewers still developing their survey skills. To check this we sampled a further 10 schools at the end of the data collection period but found the results for Dili unchanged.

Dili schools are considerably larger than district schools (in this sample Dili schools had an average of 510 students compared to 285 nationally). As school directors at such schools were much less likely to know all their individual students, this may have resulted in under-reporting of disability.

This explanation is supported by the severity of disability data that showed much higher than average rates of moderate/severe disability – it would seem that directors know about the students with significant and obvious impairments, but may not have reported students with milder visual/hearing/learning problems.

LIQUICA DISTRICT



- In our sample of 24 schools, **we identified 92 students** with a disability from a total student population of 7089. Due to unpassable roads in one of the subdistricts, we were unable to collect information from four of the schools in the sample. A further two schools provided data that was unreliable and was removed from the data set.
- In Liquica district we can estimate **at least 1 in every 100 primary school students has a disability (1.3 per cent)**.
- **There were significantly more boys (65) than girls (27) with a disability²⁸. Although boys made up 52 per cent of the student population in the schools, they accounted for 71 per cent of disabilities reported.**
- **The most common disability reported was physical problems (24 per cent)** followed by intellectual and hearing problems (21 and 20 per cent, respectively).
- Seven students with a disability have problems in more than one area, classified as “Complex.” A further 7 students had difficulties classified as “other”, of which 5 had epilepsy and 2 were described as suffering from trauma or emotional/behavioural problems.
- **Twenty-three students (or 25 per cent of those with a disability) were classified as having moderate or severe impairments** – these are children who are likely to have particular difficulty participating in school and are at risk of dropping out if they do not receive special assistance [see Chart 18].
- There was no discernable pattern of disability across the grade levels; however, grade 3 reported the most numbers of students with disability.
- The average age of students with a disability was 11.2 years (with a range of 6 to 18 years). This was older than the national average.
- The average number of disabled students per school (3.8) was higher than the national average; however, this might be explained by the sample having only 1 very small school (less than 100 students).

Chart 17. Type of Disability - Liquica

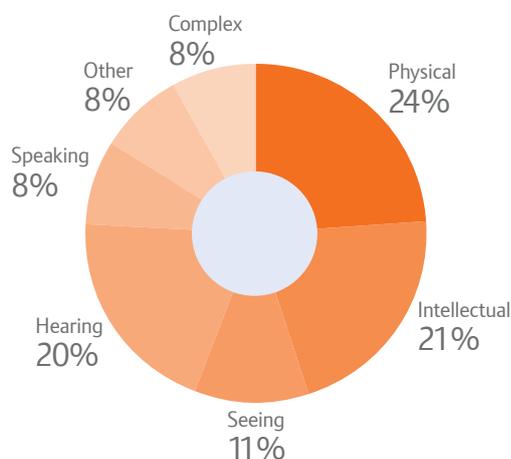
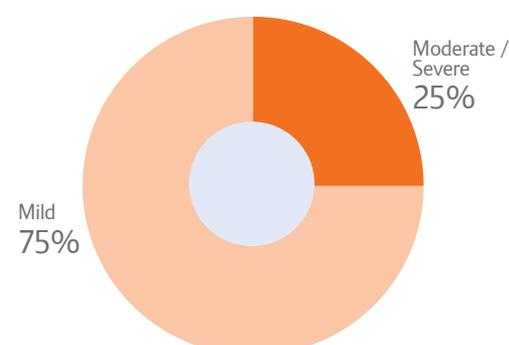


Chart 18. Severity of Disability - Liquica



²⁸ $p < 0.05$

REGION III

- Aileu
- Ainaro
- Manufahi



AILEU DISTRICT



- In our sample of 29 schools, **we identified 69 students** with a disability from a total student population of 5893.
- In Aileu district, we can estimate **1 in every 100 primary school students has a disability (1.17 per cent)**.
- **There were more boys (42) than girls (27) with a disability. However, this was not statistically significant given that there were more boys in the total population of students sampled.**
- **The most common disability reported was hearing problems (32 per cent)** followed by physical problems (28 per cent). This was an unusual finding; Aileu had the highest percentage of hearing problems reported. It is possible that the survey question was not understood correctly and schools in Aileu were reporting ear infections, which may be associated with temporary hearing problems, rather than permanent disabilities.
- Seven students (10 per cent) with a disability had problems in more than one area, classified as “Complex.” Of these students, 5 had a disability that included an intellectual or learning problem.
- **Twenty-nine students (or 42 per cent of those with a disability) were classified as having moderate or severe impairments** – these are children who are likely to have particular difficulty participating in school and are at risk of dropping out if they do not receive special assistance [see Chart 20].
- There were similar numbers of disabled students in early and later grades (35 and 34, respectively). Grade 4 had the highest number of children with disabilities.
- The average age of students with a disability was 10.6 years (with a range of 6 to 17 years).

Chart 19. Type of Disability - Aileu

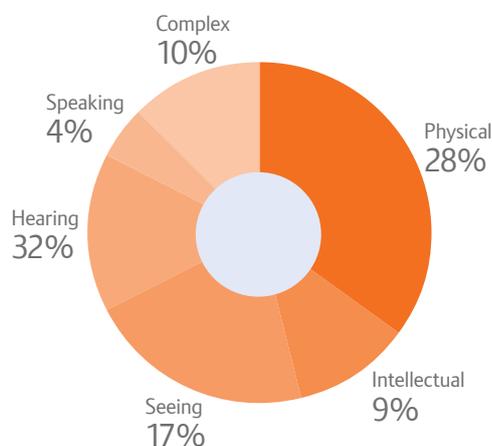
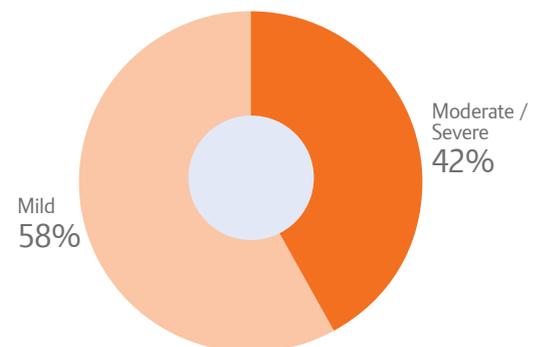


Chart 20. Severity of Disability - Aileu



AINARO DISTRICT



- In our sample of 27 schools, **we identified 118 students** with a disability from a total student population of 7114.
- In Ainaro District, we can estimate **1 in every 100 primary school students has a disability (1.66 per cent)**. This is higher than the national average.
- **There were significantly more boys (79) than girls (39) with a disability²⁹. Although boys made up 51 per cent of the student population in the schools, they accounted for 67 per cent of the disabilities reported.**
- **The most common disability reported was speaking problems (21 per cent)** followed by physical and intellectual problems (19 per cent each). However, only 1 of the students with speaking/communication problems had a moderate or severe problem (4 per cent), whereas 36 per cent of the students with a physical disability and 35 per cent of those with intellectual problems had moderate or severe problems.
- Twelve per cent of students with a disability have problems in more than one area, classified as “Complex.” Four students had difficulties classified as “other” of which 2 had epilepsy and 2 were described as suffering from trauma or emotional/behavioural problems.
- **Thirty-six students (or 31 per cent of those with a disability) were classified as having serious or significant impairments** – these are children who are likely to have particular difficulty participating in school and are at risk of dropping out if they do not receive special assistance [see Chart 22].
- There were more students identified with a disability in the older grades (classes 4, 5 and 6) than the younger grades (classes 1, 2 and 3), which was the opposite of the national pattern. However, there were more students with moderate to severe disabilities in the younger grades.
- The average age of students with a disability was 10.7 years (with a range of 5 to 16 years).

Chart 21. Type of Disability - Ainaro

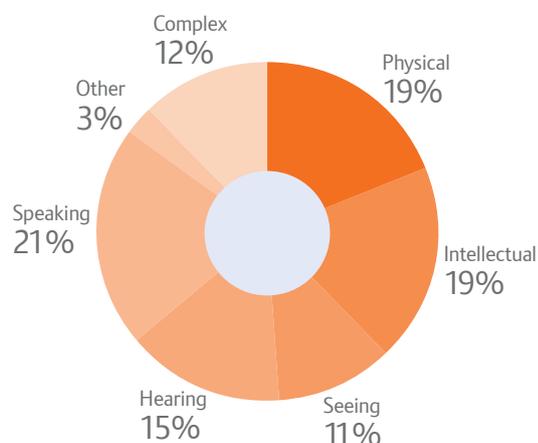
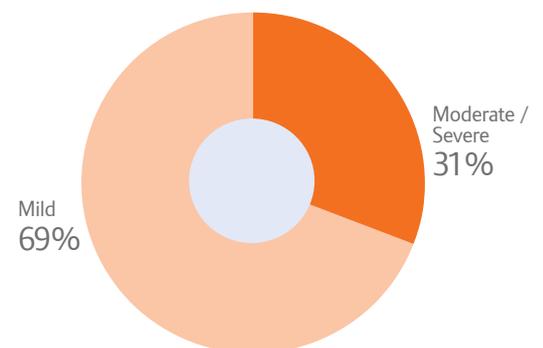


Chart 22. Severity of Disability - Ainaro



²⁹ $p < 0.05$

MANUFAHI DISTRICT



- In our sample of 28 schools, **we identified 70 students** with a disability from a total student population of 6992.
- In Manufahi district we can estimate that **1 in every 100 primary school students has a disability (1 per cent)**.
- **There were more boys (44) than girls (26) with disabilities. Although boys made up 51 per cent of the student population in the schools sampled, they accounted for 63 per cent of the disabilities reported³⁰.**
- **The most common disability reported was intellectual or learning problems (32 per cent)** followed by visual problems (21 per cent).
- Six of the students with a disability had problems in more than one area, classified as “Complex.” Five students had difficulties classified as “other”, of which 4 had epilepsy and 1 was described as suffering from ‘trauma.’
- **Twenty-five students (or 36 per cent of those with a disability) were classified as having moderate or severe impairments** – these are children who are likely to have particular difficulty participating in school and are at risk of dropping out if they do not receive special assistance [Chart 24].
- The spread of disabled students across the grades was relatively even with grade 5 having the largest number of disabled students.
- The average age of students with a disability is 10.7 years (with a range of 6 to 16 years).

Chart 23. Type of Disability - Manufahi

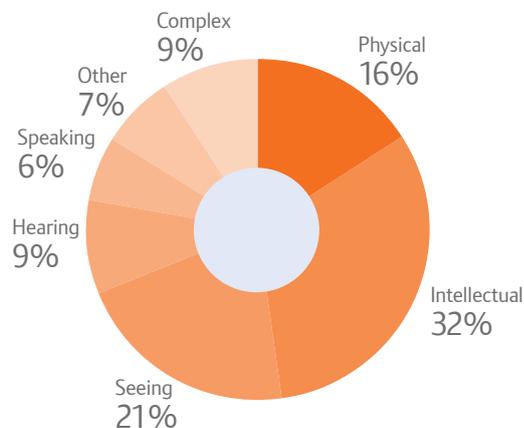
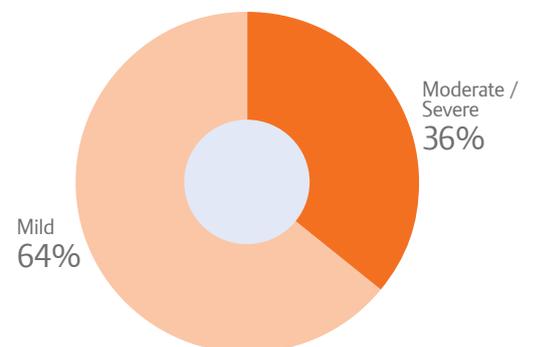


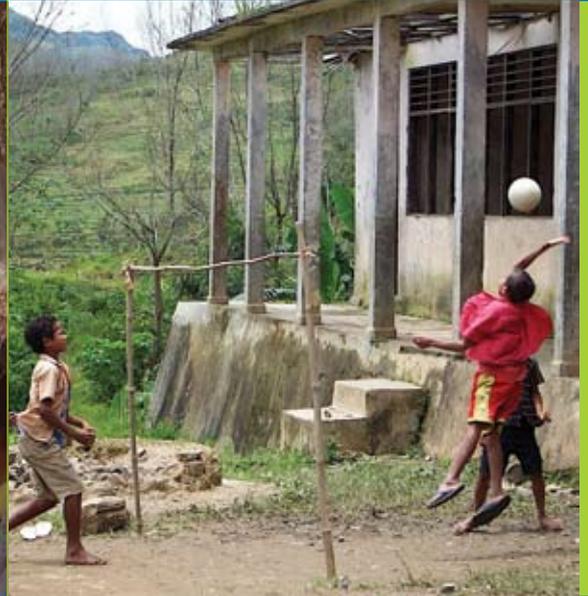
Chart 24. Severity of Disability - Manufahi



³⁰ With a p value of 0.056 this finding may not be statistically significant.

REGION IV

- Bobonaro
- Cova Lima
- Ermera



BOBONARO DISTRICT



- In our sample of 26 schools, **we identified 85 students** with a disability from a total student population of 6793.
- In Bobonaro district, we can estimate **1 in every 100 primary school students has a disability (1.25 per cent)**.
- **There were significantly more boys (53) than girls (32) with a disability³¹. Although boys made up 51 per cent of the student population, they accounted for 62 per cent of the disabilities reported.**
- **The most common disability reported was intellectual or learning problems (29 per cent)** followed by physical (22 per cent) and hearing problems (21 per cent).
- Five students with a disability have problems in more than one area, classified as “Complex.” One student in the sample had epilepsy, classified as “other.”
- **Twenty-six students (or 31 per cent of those with a disability) were classified as moderately or severely impaired** – these are children who are likely to have particular difficulty participating in school and are at risk of dropping out if they do not receive special assistance [see Chart 26].
- The distribution of disabled students across the grades was relatively even, with grade 3 having the largest number of disabled students.
- The average age of students with a disability was 10.7 years (with a range of 6 to 16 years).

Chart 25. Type of Disability - Bobonaro

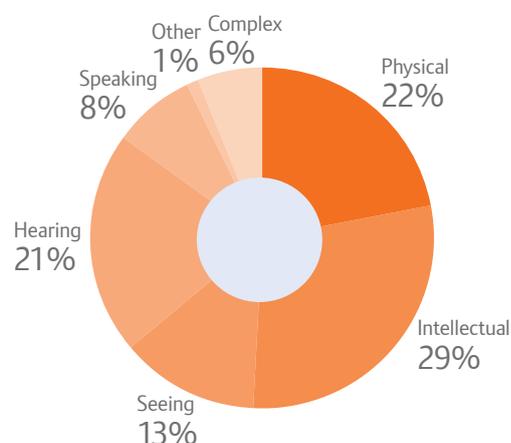
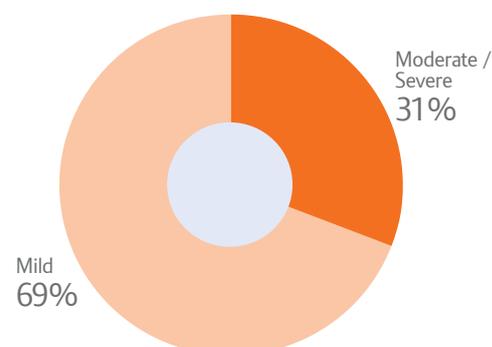


Chart 26. Severity of Disability - Bobonaro



³¹ p < 0.05

COVA LIMA DISTRICT



- In our sample of 26 schools, **we identified 95 students** with a disability from a total student population of 5833.
- In Cová Lima district, we can estimate at least **1 in every 100 primary school students has a disability (1.6 per cent)**. This is higher than the national average.
- **There were significantly more boys (60) than girls (35) with a disability³²**. Although boys made up 52.5 per cent of the student population, they accounted for 63 per cent of the disabilities reported.
- **The most common disability reported was intellectual or learning problems (25 per cent)** followed by visual problems (21 per cent).
- Four students with a disability had problems in more than one area, classified as “Complex.” Seven students had difficulties classified as “other”, of which 4 had epilepsy and 3 were described as suffering from trauma or emotional/ behavioural problems.
- **Twenty-seven students (or 28 per cent of those with a disability) were classified as moderately or severely impaired** – these are children who are likely to have particular difficulty participating in school and are at risk of dropping out if they do not receive special assistance [see Chart 28].
- There were more students identified with a disability in the younger grades (classes 1, 2 and 3) than the older grades (classes 4, 5 and 6). Grade 3 had the highest number of disabled students.
- The average age of students with a disability was 10.6 years (with a range of 6 to 15 years).

Chart 27. Type of Disability - Cová Lima

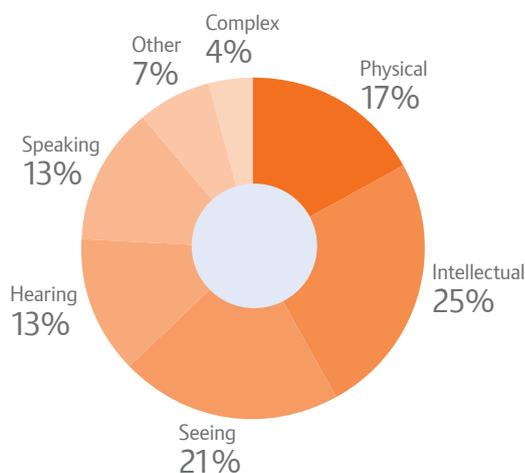
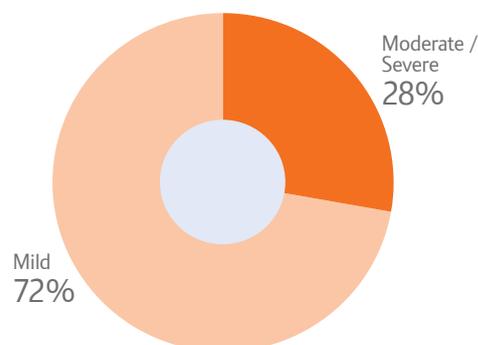


Chart 28. Severity of Disability - Cová Lima



³² $p < 0.05$

ERMERA DISTRICT



- In our sample of 20 schools³³, **we identified 58 students** with a disability from a total student population of 5661.
- In Ermera district, we can estimate at least **1 in every 100 primary school students has a disability (1.02 per cent)**.
- **There were more boys (36) than girls (22) with a disability, but this was not statistically significant.**
- **The most common disability reported was intellectual or learning problems (38 per cent)** followed by physical problems (14 per cent).
- Six students with a disability (or 10 per cent) had problems in more than one area, classified as “Complex.” Three students had epilepsy, classified as “Other.”
- **Twelve students (or 21 per cent of those with a disability) were classified as having moderate or severe impairments** – these are children who are likely to have particular difficulty participating in school and are at risk of dropping out if they do not receive special assistance [Chart 30].
- There were similar numbers of students identified with a disability in the older grades (4, 5 and 6) and the younger grades (1, 2 and 3), with grade 3 reporting the highest number (17 students).
- The average age of students with a disability was 11.3 years (with a range of 7 to 19 years). This was higher than the national average.

Chart 29. Type of Disability - Ermera

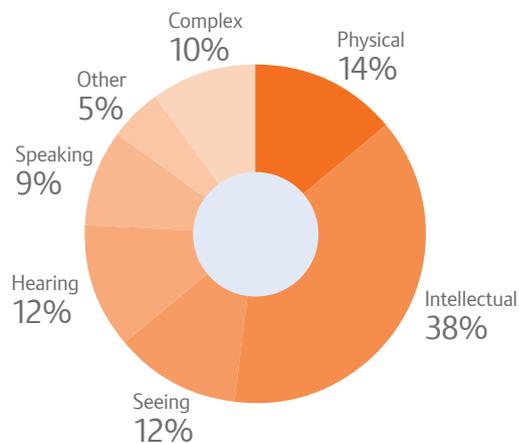
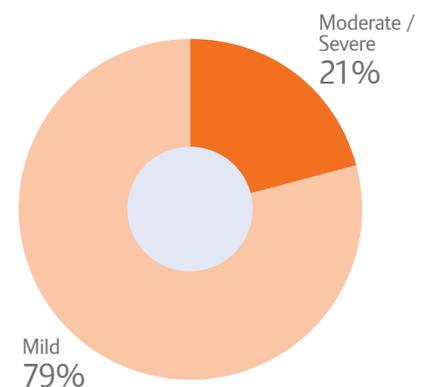


Chart 30. Severity of Disability - Ermera



³³ Joint Command Operations were active in Ermera during our data collection and this affected our access to some schools. The result was a smaller sample compared to other districts.

REGION V

- Oecussi



OECUSSI DISTRICT



- Unfortunately, poor weather conditions made the river impassable during our Oecussi fieldwork and prevented access to most of the schools in the sample.
- Attempts to follow up data collection from Dili proved unsuccessful.
- Data was collected from only 8 schools in Oecussi, producing a sample too small to provide meaningful analysis as a single district; however, this data was included in the national data set.
- Oecussi was the only district to already have records on students from grades 1 to 12 with a disability. This information was collected in 2006/07 and is available from the District Education Office in Oecussi. This data indicates that 419 (3.67 per cent) of the 11,404 primary schools students in Oecussi have a disability. Different disability definitions and categories were used in this report, so it could not be compared with this national survey data set.



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