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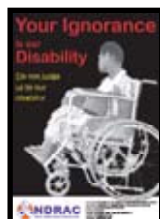
# The Network

**INCLUSIVE EDUCATION:  
IS IT REALLY BEING INTEGRATED  
INTO OUR EDUCATION SYSTEM?**



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**THE NATIONAL  
DISABILITY MAGAZINE**



EDITION 23. 2010

Papua New Guinea



Welcome to another edition of The Network!

This edition looks more closely at issues concerning Inclusive Education. The question arises to see if Inclusive Education is really being integrated into our education system in Papua New Guinea.

Are all our classrooms accessible to Persons with Disability (PWDs)? Are our classroom environment barrier free and inclusive?

For this Edition, I am most privileged to present to you all the concerns from most of the Service Providers throughout the country on issues stated concerning Inclusive Education.

Papua New Guinea's society still has a barrier that needs courage and determination to break through that can open up more opportunities to really and trully include PWDs in any learning environment.

They are many role model schools in PNG that can make way for others to see and follow.

## What is The Network

The Network started in 2004 is a quarterly magazine for all people involved and interested in the disability sector in Papua New Guinea.

The aims are to empower, share views, and spread accurate and inspiring information about disability in the country and abroad.

The Network is one of the activities of the National Disability Resource & Advocacy Centre. The magazine is free-of-charge, however we do like to encourage anyone who can to make donations.

The production of this national disability magazine is supported in different ways by:

- Divine Word University
- NGO PROMotion
- Creative Self-Help Centre
- Voluntary Service Overseas
- Callan Services
- Government of Papua New Guinea

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[www.ndrac.org](http://www.ndrac.org)

Rehabilitation centres such as Mt. Sion Centre for the Blind and many others throughout PNG can be examples if we are to have PWDs included in our societies.

Our gratitude and acknowledgement to NGO Promotion for their continual support to NDRAC to still stand and raise the voices for PWDs in PNG through The Network publication and other avenues. It is our anticipation that The Network will carry the voice of PWDs to make sure Inclusive Education really is Inclusive!

Thank you all and Happy Reading!!

Cheers.....

Robert Warel Banasi

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Advertise in The Network

As we continue to work in partnership with Persons with Disability in Papua New Guinea, we continuously meet many new friends both within our country and abroad. These good friends of ours help to build a better society that can be friendly and open to all.

In the last edition of The Network, we welcomed onboard a new Physiotherapist in the country, Ms. Genevieve Trembly. For this edition, it is my great pleasure to have a great friend join our team. It will be great if he introduces himself so I'll stop here and let him do the talking.



Shaun Gessler and Ian Apeit

“Hello everyone! My name is Shaun Gessler, I am currently the Disability Officer for Goroka Department for Community Development, Eastern Highlands Province. I will be working in Goroka for 12 months. I am volunteering through the Australian Youth Ambassador for Development program. Originally I am from Sydney, Australia, where I recently finished university. This is my first job outside of university! I have been in Papua New Guinea Since August 2010, and am thoroughly enjoying my time here.

My role is to implement the Department for Community Development's Disability policy in Eastern Highlands Province. I am helping to establish a formal structure for disability, at the District, Provincial and National levels. This structure will provide a voice for people with disability, and be a tool for advocacy.

Together with Mt Sion, Community-Based Rehabilitation and the EHP Human Rights Network Committee, we have established the Eastern Highlands Disability Committee, or EDC. This group will become the representative body, run by and for people with disability. Representatives from each district meet, to discuss the needs of other PWDs in the Province. I hope that in the future EDC will grow in size and support, so that PWD are given opportunities to participate as equal citizens in this nation.

In regards to inclusive education, I do not know much about PNG's policy. I have only been in the country for four months. What I can say, is that inclusive education is the right of every child with special needs. It is mutually beneficial, in that it benefits two groups of people. Firstly, the child with special needs benefits from learning from other students. Secondly, over the long-term inclusive education will help to reduce social stigmas PWD face every day. PNG faces the same challenges as Australia, regarding inclusive education. Exclusion, negative social attitudes and stereotypes exist in Australian society. In both countries, we must fight to ensure that each child with special needs obtains a quality education. This means informing teachers, Education Departments, and the Government about the rights of children with special needs. Governments and teachers will not do the work for us, we must inform them about their civil responsibilities. Our hard work now will help to secure our childrens' future.”

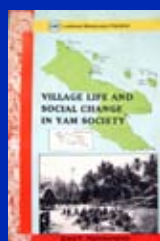


Shaun doing his presentation on Advocacy for the MOMASE Region recently in Madang.



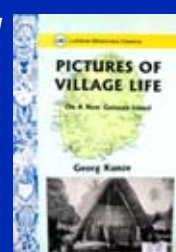
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# ARE PWDs IN PNG PART OF THE NATIONAL PURSE BASKET IN EDUCATION?

By Ian N Apeit

## ARE PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN PNG MADE PART OF THE NATIONAL PURSE BASKET IN EDUCATION?

“Change happens in many ways, but sustained social change relies upon people to endure: the power of the people to advocate for the change that will benefit them, the power of people to negotiate through their differences, and the power of people to come together, to form social movements, in order to demand their rights” Hon. Vida Yeboah-founding president and chief executive officer of the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) Ghana Chapter



From left: Ms. Ipul Powaseu (PNG ADP Chairperson), Shaun Gessler and Mr. Ross Tito

In November, from the 8th to the 10th, Papua New Guinea Assembly of Disabled Persons (PNGADP) formerly known as Disabled People International-PNG and later National Assembly of Disabled Persons-an umbrella organization for all Disabled Persons Organizations (DPOs) in the country ran a Disability Advocacy Training Workshop in Madang. The purpose was to organize at the provincial level, persons with disabilities to form provincial disabled persons organizations and the self help organization at LLG and ward levels. By doing this, persons with disabilities are encouraged, empowered and capacitated to stand up together as one under one umbrella to air their collective views and voices, which is to fight for their Rights for the change they wanted to see-to gain recognition and to obtain much needed support to improve their livelihoods.

Emphasizing the importance of mainstreaming disability issues as an integral part of relevant strategies of sustainable development- in health, education, transport, communication, so forth, it is complex therefore, that social change persons with disabilities aspire for must come from them. The power lies in themselves! People with Disabilities have

to come together, form social movements, negotiate their differences, demand their rights!

For a prosperous, vibrant and strong nation to come about, education becomes the key element. Educational development for every citizen becomes a necessity but what has happened in PNG was not what should be as its constitutional obligation to its people it stands for, particularly Persons with Disabilities.

Let us see what confronts children with disabilities in attaining education in PNG.

Emmanuel Arua-a 20 year old wheelchair-user student of IT at the Divine Word University with muscular dystrophy-a situation where one encounters progressive degeneration of a body tissue such as muscles. They are caused by inadequate nourishment of the affected part, as a result of some unknown cause. In one of my interviews with him in 2009 regarding his education successes, when asked if any person or organisation was behind him negotiating with the sponsors for this successful package from CBM, he said; “it was a self-trial, a matter of trial.”

He said “while reading a Post-Courier issue of December 2008 as I was awaiting my offer after year 12 examination at the jubilee Secondary School, Port Moresby (PNG), I came across the notice at the notice section and got a try. I filled in the Application Form and together with necessary documents sent it off. I forgot all about it until I was notified by Br. Andrew Simpson-Vice President Academic, DWU in May 2009 after he return from Australia”



Emmanuel Arua (Seated on a wheelchair) and his carer, Benjamin at Divine Word University.

When asked how did he feel? He said:

“Hat long bilip, mi hat long bilip. Mi hamamas, yes, hat long bilip tasol mi hamamas long kisim dispela sponsa long CBM”

(Hard to believe, it's hard for me to believe. I was excited-I was happy, yes, hard to believe but I was happy to be a recipient of the sponsorship from CBM). "It pays of my family's and my struggles!"

CBM awarded to Emmanuel Arua the scholarship package of K8, 000.00 for Information Technology (IT) course at the Divine Word University. The K8, 000.00 sponsorship package covers tuition fee, school supplies and equipments for his impairment. The sponsorship runs for four years.

Another person with a disability named Petrus Kupp. He is in his late thirties, married and has two children. He is from Western Highlands and is visually impaired. He has an interest in Special Education so he could teach after his studies children who are his kind. He enrolled at the University of Goroka in the degree program on Special Education. He stayed on trying his best to study. He could hear lectures, but he could not read letters that were written on the papers that make words. He said:

"There are no Braille lessons for people like me. How can I do my assignments and present them to lecturers who do not know Braille? There are no Braille resource materials for people like me. There are no privileges for people like me. Education is mine too, but I am not going to get it! If able lecturers and teachers could not teach me, they could not teach people like me who want to study here (UOG) in future".

What happened then was he left his studies.



*Mr. Petrus Kupp, a Person with Disability who is Visually Impaired*

## **Madang:**

### **NGO PROMotion Partners Workshop**

**N**GO PROMotion Program, an Austrian Non- Governmental Organization based in Madang held its 2nd Annual Parnters Workshop at Alexishafen from the 2nd to the 5th November 2010. The four days workshop was greatly appreciated by most of its partners throughout the country. NGO PROMotion Program was praised for its assistance to Community Based organizations by its partners in terms of capacity building to help those in communities to be more self sufficient and capable to sustain programs or projects.

The workshop for the this year was aimed at strengthening the partnership, networking and peer learning amongst partner organizations and strengthening awareness and increase knowledge in sustainable NGO management and Organization Development. This annual workshop has equiped its parnters with valuable capacity to run individual organizations at a community level or even at the provincial and national levels.

NGO PROMotion now looks forward to working closely with its partners as it enters into its phase three with a vision for a greater success in building capacities of communities in Papua New Guinea.

The NGO PROMotion Program is a great benefactor of the National Disability Resource & Advocacy Centre.



*NGO PROMotion Partners of 2010 posing for a group photo after the 2010 Partners Workshop.*

# The Leprosy Mission in Action



By Robert Banasi & Dr. Johnstone Riven, Country Director TLMI-PNG

The Leprosy Mission International is an international Christian Non Government Organization working in Papua New Guinea in partnership with the National Department of Health to address the issues and consequences of Leprosy for over 30 years. They have been caring in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for people affected by leprosy and striving to eradicate the causes and consequences of leprosy.

The Leprosy Mission is not just providing a cure, but also addressing the underlying causes, working to prevent disability and to restore dignity and wholeness to people and communities affected by leprosy around the world. The organization has been working right in the rural and remote areas in PNG. With a vision to have a world without leprosy, their team has been traveling to most parts of the country bringing hope to those who thought have lost everything.



*The Leprosy Mission Team crossing the ramu river with medical supplies.*

The organization has three main global priorities. Firstly and foremost, they stay focused on the leprosy until the work is finished. Secondly, they work together to strengthen and expand their work to include people with physical disabilities due to other causes. And then lastly, but most importantly, we include all individuals that the society excludes. All these priorities are carried out respectively in our work with the leprosy throughout all countries including Papua New Guinea.

The Leprosy Mission International also has integrated physical rehabilitation and socio-economic development projects that has a national focus. It addresses issues through empowerment by means as: provide technical assistance to field health staff in areas of leprosy and ensures that there are ways to promote case finding, and assisting in MDT deliver; production of IEC materials and health promotion

and education to schools, community and churches; capacity building of health staff, disabled persons, community and local partners in areas of basic leprosy, prevention of disability and self-care, basic book keeping, leadership and management, project development, disability assessment and livelihood; Assess, register and facilitate disabled persons for appropriate attention, provision of assistive devices, including facilitating reconstructive surgery for foot drops and claw fingers; Establishment of self-care groups and disabled persons associations including community based organizations; Facilitate socio economic development projects for DPOs within the parameters of best practice.

Recently, having heard of leprosy concern in the Middle Ramu District of Madang Province, the team set out on a challenging journey to treat those affected by the epidemic. Crossing the mighty Ramu River in the upper ramu district in Kesowai was one great task ahead of them but that did not stop the amazing team of four heroes from the Leprosy Mission. In the company of the Officer in Charge (OIC) and a trainee nurse from the Sausi Health Centre they brought medical supplies to the Omusa, Nahekasepa, Weisa and Kesowai villages. The good news that they delivered to the people was, "Leprosy is curable and must be treated at its early stages."

Upon the three day trip to these villages, Ms. Maggie Aihi, the nurse in charge from the Leprosy Mission also gave on job training and technical support in areas of leprosy to the health staff at Sausi and Kesowai Health facilities.

The Leprosy Mission in Papua New Guinea also works in partnership with the National Disability Resource & Advocacy Centre and other stakeholders in doing awareness that if the signs and symptoms of leprosy is not taken seriously and treated at its early stage, this can lead to a transmission of the disease and disability.



*Mr. Sali taking the foot measurement of a patient.*

## Community Information Centre

By Imelda Yabara & Robert Banasi



The Community Information Centre (CIC) is a department within the Office of the President of Divine Word University.

The CIC enables the University to keep its stakeholders and the general public informed about its academic, research and community service activities. This is done through the use of the various forms of mass media including the DWU Website ([www.dwu.ac.pg](http://www.dwu.ac.pg)).

DWU makes a significant contribution to higher education in Papua New Guinea and is expanding its services to the Pacific region. CIC is tasked to make the public aware, through the mass media about the important role higher education plays towards the betterment of the PNG and Pacific societies.

It is the role of the Centre to ensure the contribution of DWU to higher education and community service within its campuses and in the wider community as an agency for higher education is brought to the attention of the general public as envisioned by the University.

CIC also has the task of promoting and marketing DWU as an Authentic Model for National Unity where the University is a proud host of students from every province in PNG and staff who come from many nations of the world.

The CIC is also responsible for the publication of books and the University's flagship research journal, Contemporary Papua New Guinea Studies, and other public information material through Divine Word University's publishing arm DWU Press.



*CIC Public Relations Officer, Mrs. Aiva Tamate*

The National Disability Resource and Advocacy Centre is preveliged and proud to be working in partnership with the Community Information Centre (CIC) under the care of Divine Word University. The University has been very helpful through CIC in providing office space including equipment through the years and also in printing of the National Disability Magazine, The Network.

We thank them for their continual support and look ahead for the future with confidence.

The CIC can be reached on telephone numbers (675) 422 2937 or Fax (675) 422 2812 or email: [cominfo@dwu.ac.pg](mailto:cominfo@dwu.ac.pg).



By Robert Banasi

## Madang: DEAF OLYMPIC GAMES ENDS IN HIGH NOTE

The Deaf Olympic Games was held from the 27th of August to the 1st of September 2010. The games was the first of its kind in the country and was held at the Tusbab Secondary School Oval in Madang Province. Teams came from all over the country to participate in this 1st ever deaf games in Papua New Guinea. This was a milestone set by the disability organizations in PNG.

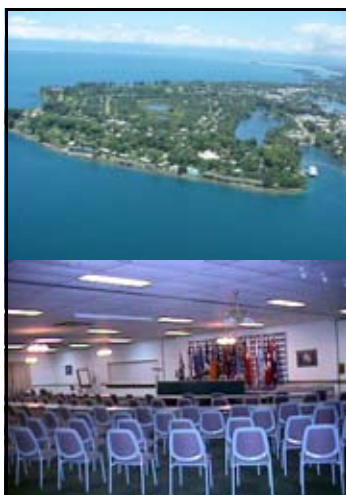
This five day event ended in high note with the Team Sepik from the East Sepik Province taking the shield away and Team Madang scoring most gold medals. The game was a friendly start for all hearing impaired teams throughout the country and the games are set to be hosted biannually in the coming years.

The next Deaf Olympic Games for the Hearing Impaired is set for the year 2012 and is to be hosted by the East New Britain Province in Rabaul. The coordinator for Callan Services in Rabaul, Mr. Paul Valuka, was quite hesitant to host the next deaf olympic games in his province but reassured all the other centres that with the support from his staff, they would do their best.

All the other teams throughout the country are now gearing up and looking forward to the upcoming games in 2012 and would like to invite all teams from all centres who have not participated this year to join them in Rabaul.



Team Madang showing their new team uniforms set for the games.



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As we look into Inclusive Education in this edition and assessing Papua New Guinea's status in making a classroom or school environment more friendly for Persons with Disability. Let us hear what the citizens of this nation have to say.

“As a born citizen of Papua New Guinea, I say that as a country, we have not really given much attention to people with disabilities (either it be mental or physical) to help them achieve what they want to achieve in life.. I know our PNG Constitution calls for integral human development and equality and participation irrespective of sex, culture, etc... but honestly people with disability cannot attend a normal school because there are nil facilities to cater for their needs..... I know only of the blind school up in Eastern Highlands province (Mt. Zion Cetnre for the Blind) & the Cheshire Home (now Centre for Disability Services) here in POM which caters for people with disabilities but apart from that I am not aware of any facilities provided in our government educational institutions... the problem I see is that our leaders do not know the need for these things because I am more than certain that many (if not all) of them do not have friends, family or children who have disabilities so they are most probably ignorant about the need to have in place facilities to cater for people with disabilities..... thus our education system is more focused on teaching people who are perceived to be able to learn under the normal conditions.....”

*Ms. Roselyn Gwaibo  
Principal Legal Officer & Acting Environment Council Secretary  
Department of Environment & Conservation  
Port Moresby*

“...inclusive education is the right of every child with special needs. It is mutually beneficial, in that it benefits two groups of people. Firstly, the child with special needs benefits from learning from other students. Secondly, over the long-term inclusive education will help to reduce social stigmas PWDs face every day.”

*Mr. Shaun Gessler  
Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development  
Goroka*

“I believe it will be very unfair of the government if there is not much recognition and attention being given to Inclusive Education. We are said to be a Christain Country but our actions say otherwise. A policy is in place for Inclusive Education in the country but looking at the implementation, there is very little being done about it. Classrooms are still inaccessible for Persons with Disabilities. Let us all join hands together to give these once marginalized individuals a chance to show their ability in schools.”

*Mr. Gideon Jones  
Mt. Hagen*

“I believe that all Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) should be included in the mainstream schools in PNG. In order to do that, our younger generation will have to change their mindset and this will also include their parents as well. They have to be given an opportunity to mingle with each other in order to learn from one another. We will have to accept them the way they are. It will take time for any school to adjust itself in order to cater for Persons with Disabilities just like in the case of Hagita Secondary School. This does not mean that we cannot try, there is always a time for change and a need for adjustments to be made.”

*Mr. Tony Gilson  
Academic Principal  
Sacred Heart Secondary School, Hagita  
Alotau*

“I support the view that there must be opportunities available to all, including the disabled. Integrating the people with special needs into the mainstream educational system would vary according to the specific needs of the person. If the assessment shows that the person can develop their full potential by interacting with others, the opportunity should be offered. The possibility is there.

As seen in a true story of a blind girl who graduated with top honors at one of the Philippines's finest universities. She was fortunate to be supported by the university administration and the lecturers who had to adjust to a different format of teaching and assessment. My question would be: “Would a university in PNG be willing to make adjustments for even just one or a few students in order to develop their potential?” We have the example of Dr.Limbie Kelly Kelegai and I commend the lecturers and University administration of UNITECH for developing the wholeness and capacity of Dr. Kelegai.

In such cases we are reminded of Jesus the Good Shepherd, who left the flock to seek out one missing sheep. The success stories of people whom we felt were physically disadvantaged proved that as human beings; we all have an indomitable spirit in the face of adversity. It also shows how beautifully unique we all are. Indeed, a person is of more value than the whole world.”

*Ms. Annie Manango  
Executive Officer  
Divine Word University  
Madang*

# PERSONAL PROFILE

By Robert Banasi

Name: Leonard Kania Junior  
Age: 20 years old  
Home Province: East New Britain  
Type of Disability: Paraplegic

## Mr Music Man on Wheels!!

### Where was Leonard born?

Leonard was born at the Vunapope Catholic Hospital in Kokopo, East New Britain Province through a normal delivery.



*Junior Leonard Kania belting out a tune at Ralum Club, Kokopo*

### How did Leonard get his disability?

In 2000, Leonard had an accident from climbing a laulau tree. He fell from the tree causing injury to his spinal cord that left him paraplegic since then.

### What are Leonard's favorite hobbies?

Art has always fascinated Leonard since he was not able to continue his education. Composing songs, listening to music and making up new tunes keeps Leonard focussed on his dream to becoming a great musician one day. He also loves reading books, painting and drawing.

### What is Leonard's favorite food?

Watermelon is this young musician's favorite fruit. A great desert he says with a smile when you finish your aigirr, rice and lamb flaps.

### Does Leonard go to School?

Leonard has not been able to complete his education since he had his accident. But this young lad is determined to pursue his dream in the music industry.

### Does this young musician have a dream for the future?

Junior Leonard Kania with great raw talent in music, has his music now on CD. He dreams of making more music and would like to form a band made up of Persns with Disability. He only asks the Government of PNG, the general public, music houses, friends, families and everyone out there to be supportive in any means to help him achieve his dream.

### What are others perspective of you?

"Well its obvious that the first thing that everyone sees is my disability. But when they look closely to see my ability, that is when they appreciate and see the real me," says Leonard with a smile.

### What kinds of activities can you do well?

"I can do anything," Leonard says with a grin.

### How do you see your own future?

Without uttering a single word, anyone could read from the smile on his face that Leonard is definitely confident in his carrier in music and looks forward to the future without regrets.

### What kind of support would you like to get from other organizations such as the Callan Services in Rabaul?

Junior Kania says, "I would love to get more support from the Callan Services. Not only in terms of Rehabilitation programs but also to empower me and build my capacity in terms of my talent."

### What would you like to say to the people to help them understand people similar to yourself?

"Stop looking more closely at their disability and start realizing and appreciating their ability!"



*A few friendly visitors for Junior Leonard Kania at Vunapope Hospital.*

By Genevieve Tremblay

The world confederation for physical therapy (WCPT) has designated 8th September, since 1996, as World Physical Therapy Day. For the past two years, Divine word University (DWU) organizes activities to celebrate this special day for physiotherapist. It is an opportunity for the staffs and students in the department of physiotherapy to raise awareness about the crucial contribution of their profession makes to keeping people well, mobile and independent.

This year, the theme suggested by the WCPT was a Movement for health. The students and lecturers organized different outdoor physical activity such as jogging and yoga. The students practiced their leadership skills by doing specific session for stretching, strength, and endurance and coordination exercises. A group of students also demonstrated that disabled people can also do sport by playing sitting volley-ball. Students from other program were invited to join them in every activity.



*The Physiotherapy students set to celebrate the World Physiotherapy Day.*

As part of the awareness program a free campaign was arranged in the new clinic on the campus, the DWU Physiotherapy research and rehabilitation centre. We offered free consultation and treatment for the public who have problems such as backache, neck pain, shoulder pain, knee pain, sports injuries, neurological problem (stroke, cerebral palsy) etc... The students were assisted in the process of the consultation and treatment. The national staffs were assessing and treated the patient. The treatment part was mainly consisting in exercises and advices. The third year students had to find the proper exercise for the patient under the supervision of lecturer. During the day, over thirty patients came for a free consultation and treatment. This allowed the staffs and students to enhance their knowledge on assessment and treatment skills.

Most of the students enjoyed themselves during the World Physiotherapy Day. We asked the first year

students: why is it important for you to participate in a World Physical Therapy Day? Here are some of the answers:

"I'm proud to be a physiotherapist student. In such

special days, I showed others what physio is all about", Louis Amos.

"We were able to assist and observe our seniors as they assess the patients and treat them. At the same time, the exercises that we displayed outside were helping the public to know the importance of physiotherapy," Shirlybina Ramtonic.

"In Papua New Guinea, physiotherapy is a new profession and participating in such event is very important", Victor Mark.

"It gives us the opportunity to educate students from other department as well as the general public about physiotherapy", Siyih Johang.

"It is one way to make the world aware of how important physiotherapy is in both normal and abnormal human lives", Shadrach Paii.

The World Physical Therapy Day was a success this year and the department of physiotherapy at DWU wants to keep this significant tradition and celebrate it yearly. As we all know, physiotherapy is a new career in Papua New Guinea (PNG) and it is important to seize this opportunity to promote our profession. The physiotherapy team of DWU would like to invite the other physiotherapy department in PNG to participate next year in the World Physical Therapy Day.



*Staff and Students at DWU stretching their muscles*





## Dame Carol Kidu

By Robert Banasi

### How integrated is Inclusive Education in our current Education system?

Inclusive education is a recent phenomenon in the education system in Papua New Guinea. It is about giving equal educational opportunities to all children, whether with disabilities or not in the regular school or classroom. Schools are considered as social institutions that should attempt to enhance all children's lives through appropriate teaching and learning practices.

Papua New Guinea has recently also advocated the implementation of inclusive education supported by relevant policies, the work of non-government organizations and the National Department of Education (Department of Education, 2002, 2003, & 1993). Although the movement of inclusive education has gained momentum in recent years like for the case of this nation, there are still barriers we encounter in inclusive schools or classrooms.



Students from Kusbau Primary School, Madang.

The greatest barriers to inclusion are caused by society, not by particular medical impairments. Negative attitudes towards differences result in discrimination and can lead to a serious barrier to learning. Negative attitudes can take the form of social discrimination, lack of awareness and traditional prejudices. Regarding children with disabilities, some regions still maintain established beliefs that educating the disabled is pointless. Often the problem is identified as being caused by the child's differences rather than the education systems shortcomings.

As we encounter in PNG, let us honestly look at the barriers in inclusive education. What are the real

barriers?

The vast majority of centers of learning in PNG are physically inaccessible to many learners, especially to those who have physical disabilities. In poorer, particularly rural areas, the centers of learning are often inaccessible largely because buildings are rundown, poorly maintained or the building was designed without much realization of students who may be with a disability. These can be unhealthy and unsafe for all learners. Many schools are not equipped to respond to special needs, and the community does not provide local backing. Environmental barriers included: doors, passageways, stairs and ramps and recreational areas. A major problem identified by many students is physically getting into schools.

Other barriers that can be found in our education system include the curriculum which is supposed to be one of the major obstacles or tools to facilitate the development of more inclusive system. Curriculum is often unable to meet the needs of a wide range of different learners. In many contexts, the curriculum is centrally designed and rigid, leaving little flexibility for local adaptations or for teachers to experiment and try out new approaches. The content might be distant to the reality in which the students live, and therefore inaccessible and un motivating.

Speaking of classrooms, teachers' abilities and attitudes can be major limitations for inclusive education. The training of staff at all levels is often not adequate. Where there is training it often tends to be fragmented, uncoordinated and inadequate. If teachers do not have positive attitudes towards learners with special needs, it is unlikely that these children will receive satisfactory education.



Teachers attending an Inclusive Education Training in Madang.

Teaching and learning often takes place through a language which is not the first language of some learners. This places these learners, at a disadvantage and it often leads to significant linguistic difficulties which contribute to learning breakdown. Second language learners are particularly subject to low expectations and discrimination.

Inadequacies and inequalities in the education system and are most evident in areas which have sustained poverty and high levels of unemployment. The impact of violence and HIV/AIDS can also have adverse effects.

A major constraint is serious shortages of resources – lack of schools or inadequate facilities, lack of teachers and/or shortage of qualified staff, lack of learning materials and absence of support. The inadequacy of resources available to meet the basic needs in education is a pervasive theme.

If our education systems are often centralized, this can inhibit change and initiative. Responsibility for decisions tends to be located at the highest level and the focus of management remains orientated towards employees complying with rules rather than on ensuring quality service delivery. There is also a lack of information within many systems and often there is not an accurate picture of the number of learners excluded from the school system.

Only a small percentage of learners who are categorized as having 'special needs' receive appropriate education in ordinary schools or special settings and there is no support available for those learners who are outside the system. Existing provision after primary school is inadequate to meet the needs.

Policy makers who do not understand or accept the concept of inclusive education are a barrier to the implementation of inclusive policies. In some countries there may still exist policies that facilitate the possibility for authorities to declare that some children are 'uneducatable'. Usually this practice applies to children with severe intellectual disability. In some other countries, the education of some specific groups of learners might be the responsibility of another authority than the Ministry of Education. Very often this leads to a situation where these learners are not expected to participate in mainstream education and, consequently, they do not have equal opportunities for further education or employment.

In Papua New Guinea, we all can individually ask ourselves where our country stands in regard to Inclusive Education.



*Ms Willie communicating a message to a deaf student at Lutheran Day Primary School, Madang.*

# STRENGTHENING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN PNG

By Cecilia Bagore, Project Manager-CBRIES-Mt Sion Blind Centre

I am very privileged to have been asked to honestly highlight some of my views in relation towards this month's edition in the Network on 'INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN PNG'

By way of introduction, Special Inclusive Education was in Papua New Guinea well before schools system was introduced and the government was unable to assist with special education and had to totally rely on the assistance from private agencies and religious, charitable and local bodies. Many educators (teachers) at that time were not aware of the best strategies to overcome individual needs respectively.



## **The REASON for CHANGE**

In addition the PNG Education Department has had a policy that concentrated solely on the provision of the education of normal children. Anyway, we have come this far, where the position changed with the Philosophy of Education 1986, which acknowledges the National Constitution's Goal of Integral Human Development; 'giving each individual the opportunity to develop as an integrated person in relationship with others' [p. 6 Philosophy of Education 1986]. In 1991, Sector Study made number of recommendations to strengthen Inclusion of students with Special Needs be mainstreamed and teachers trained through courses offered at the Primary Teacher Education Colleges to cater for these students needs.

## **The EMPHASIS**

Since then much emphasis on recognition of services for organizations providing such vital services eg; blind school etc. creation of two national co-coordinators positions within the Education Department. Even before all these came about students who were physically impaired were attending normal schools. Braille Tests were done for blind students.

St Benedict's Teacher Education College trialed the programme for Community School Teachers who

were trained to be aware and meet Special Needs Students needs. There were 13 service providing agencies carrying out activities for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) and were partly supported financially by the Education Department, Health Department, Home Affairs & Youth. The Nation Board for Disable for Persons (NBDP) at the advocacy level urged the departments to increase their amounts per year. ,

In 1993, The National Special Education Plan & Policy Guidelines for Special Education was approved by National Education Board (NEB).

## **The PRESENT:**

To date the Special Inclusive Education Policy is a decade over old and needs to be reviewed to meet the current status of its implementation strategies. With only three (3) National Staff within the Unit and the increased number of Special Inclusive Resource Centres (SERCs) and increased human resource, demand to meet their professional and program needs are very, very high.

Realistically, Statistics have increased throughout the years, respective program activities increased rapidly every year varying in different SERCs, more and more training needs for teachers and volunteers, inclusive, outreaches and home visits for clients demanding. Funding allocations were very minimum.

## **INCLUSIVE EDUCATION – GOROKA EHP.**

Mt Sion is one of the oldest of the Callan Services Network Service Providing agency in PNG. In its 28th year of service, there were lots that have happened to meet Person with Disabilities needs. For the start, the visually impaired and have changed to meet the needs of all other disabilities. With its positive stand with the community and promoting Partnership through Networking with all provincial departments, stakeholders, business houses, etc. Mt Sion had progressed this far despite constrains encountered.



**The famous Blind Band of Mt Sion Centre for the Blind in Goroka**

There was very good team effort from all the staff in the execution of all planned activities. Provincial Education Division is very supportive of mainstream educational activities for teachers and students in the province. Provincial Health and Community Development Departments are others we work closely together.

### **STRENGTHS**

The CBRIES [Community Based Rehabilitation Inclusive Education Services] team working together from the beginning in planning of the yearly calendar, evaluating monthly and moving ahead together. Outreach activities were evaluated, again by the team. In doing so resources such as funds mainly, other materials, human resources and shared and security measures are vital to consider. Mt Sion plans and conducts Capacity Training for staff, volunteers and PWDs and parents as it is vital to enhance skills development so to meet the needs of those we serve.

Networking with other partners is very important and we don't overlook. We grab every opportunity that comes. Involvement with their organizations also made them aware of our needs and support where they can. E.g.; raising awareness.

Case Review meeting are done to discuss related issues per child by the team.

More students included in schools, both obvious and others who have special needs such as 'Learning Difficulty'

### **CHALLENGES**

- Change in the mindset of SERCs staff to accommodate for positive and productive output. Attitude in our approaches when it comes to meeting PWDs needs is a great barrier to getting work done efficiently.

- Lack thorough and advance planning by the team

- Unwilling to take ownership and simply exercising leadership of an activity/task hindering planned programs

- Lacking skills e.g.; Braille, sign language.

- Loss of Trust & Confidence from staff or by senior to junior staff

- Yearly Calendar clashes with incidental events.

- Limited funds to cater for the purchase of a new Braille Embosser.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- a. Staff Capacity Building compulsory and ongoing

- b. Continue positive Networking and Partnership with other government departments, NGOs, CBO, etc..

- c. Strengthen M & E systems

- d. Report all implemented plans and activities and send copies to respective authorities concern.

- e. Regular visit to SERCs staff by Inspectors

- f. Seek increased funding to meet the current

SERCs needs by the Special Education Unit.

- g. Other SERCs plan share expertise staff and resources within PNG.

- h. Additional Funding request needed for an additional Braille Embosser.

To conclude, in a recent visit by North Mendi Primary School Teachers to Mt Sion, the team leader 'Mr Ron SUMA' in his opening remark made and I quote: 'Special Inclusive Education is every bodies business and we all must have a Change of Mindset, and be prepared to take Ownership of the program, because we play a vital part in the development of every individual child's [IHD]

If what Mr Suma had said is what every teachers, parents, stakeholders etc..posses, then we will definitely can build a barrier free and accessible inclusive society for all.

Acknowledgements:

Finally, I wish to acknowledge all provincial departments, teachers, partners, stakeholders, other NGOs, PWDs, their parents and the general public in the Eastern Highlands for your support one way or the other in strengthening Mt Sion scheduled specific activities for PWDs in moving forward since 1982. Another word of appreciation to the National Department of Education, Health & Community Development and not forgetting the Congregation of the Christian Brothers who initiated the idea at the start with the support from the Catholic Diocese of Goroka.



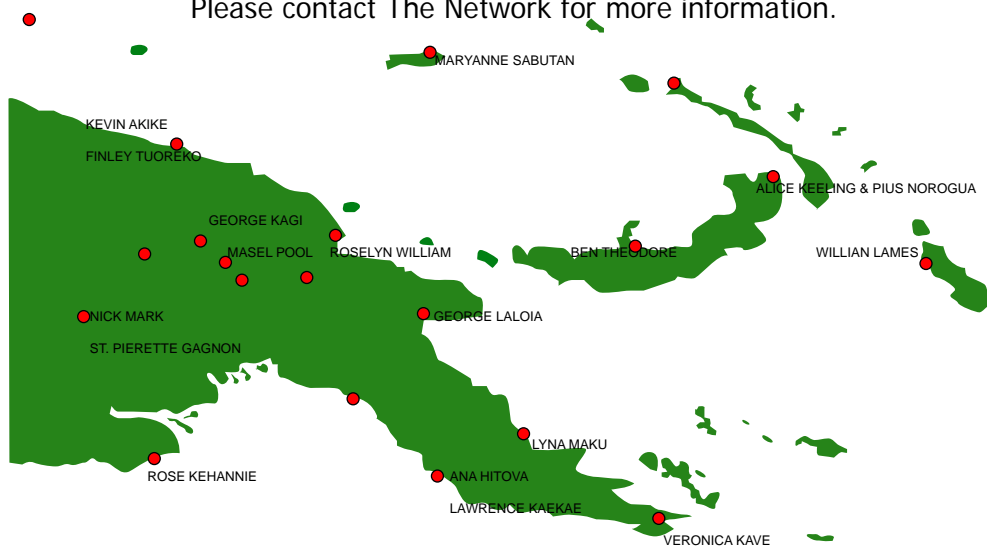
*Special Education Teachers in Goroka*

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The Network wants to include articles from all over PNG and have greater involvement from persons with disabilities. Local knowledge of what is happening on disability issues is easier to access through people who are living in that area. So we have established a promoters network team who are constantly sending us information. Articles and information presented in this issue is the product of their effort.

We have promoters in Mt. Hagen, Goroka, Lae, Madang, Alotau, Popondetta, Kiunga, Port Moresby, Aitape, Wewak, Bougainville and Rabaul. Now we have David Iriap in Markham, Nick Mark at Tabubil, Finley Tuoreke in Wewak, Lawrence Kaekae in Central Province and Warian Wafie in Gulf Province. The editor is regularly in contact with all promoters and gives guidance if needed. Our promoters are looking for inspiring stories and they are actively encouraging organizations and persons in their region to submit materials to the National Disability Magazine.

Is there a promoter in your area above? Do you want to be a promoter in your area? Please contact the editor for more information.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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We also thank all people who sent articles which unfortunately could not be published in this edition.

**THE NEXT EDITION**

The

Next Edition will be published in December 2010

The Theme for the next edition is:

“Voices of the Public on Disability Issues in PNG”

Do not forget to send in your news and views for the next Edition.

The Network started in 2004, it is a quarterly magazine for all people involved and interested in the disability sector in Papua New Guinea.

Its aims are to empower, share views and spread accurate and inspiring information about disability.

This edition has over 2000 recipients and an estimated readership of 3000.

Among the recipients are individuals with and without disabilities, government, media, business houses, donor agencies, church groups, NGO's within PNG as well as overseas in the Pacific, Europe, Asia, America and Africa.

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