

CASE STUDY Papua New Guinea



Introduction and mainstreaming of Inclusive Education in Papua New Guineas national system

A pilot project has been initiated by Callan Services for Disabled People which serves as model for further identification and formulation of inclusive policies and interventions at national level.

Area: Asia

Sector: Education

Phase of PCM illustrated: Identification and formulation

Degree of relevance: Degree 3 – Disability highly relevant projects

Implementing organisation: Partnership Faith Based organisation, NGO and Ministry of Education, with support of EC

The country context

In Papua New Guinea, disability mainstreaming is underway in a number of service sectors and areas such as inclusive education into the education system, mainstreaming of physiotherapy into the health system as well as of Community Based Rehabilitation into both education and health services. Mental health services and Child protection policy and practice are fields of concern that also call for mainstreaming.

Disability Inclusion in the national education system



Picture: CBM/Foto Backofen Mhm

This case study demonstrates the adoption of Inclusive Education by the independent State of Papua New Guinea which is a story of affirmation of rights to education of children with disability. At the end of 1990, the Congregation of Christian Brothers (PNG) Inc. established a new agency, called Callan Services in partnerships with CBM.

In 1990, there neither existed inclusive nor special education in PNG's education system. In the late 1990s, the National Education Board was advised that the Christian Brothers were going to integrate a training course for all student-teachers how to teach children with disabilities in regular schools in the curriculum for a new 3 year Diploma in Primary Teaching for St. Benedict's Teachers College in Wewak. It was estimated there were about 60,000 children with disability needing schooling in the country and that only the regular school system could respond to their learning needs. The basic rights of these

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children as affirmed in the country's Constitution were appealed to. Both the Churches Education Council and the National Board for Disabled Persons supported this pilot project funded by CBM and entitled Callan Services.

Inclusion of disability the national Education Plan

Mr. Keith Stebbins of the NdoE and Br. Graeme Leach of Callan, both members of the Committee of the National Special Education Committee, developed first a report to the National Education Board in 1992 and then a submission of a National Plan through the Minister of Education to the National Executive Council (Cabinet). It suggested extending the model project in Wewak to all Teachers Colleges. As a result, the enrolment of children with disabilities in regular schools became national policy and existing special schools were transformed into Resource Centres with their teachers being salaried by the national government. Following the Cabinet decision to adopt the Plan the Prime Minister directed the Secretary for Education to include the Plan in the budget for 2004.

Lessons learned and how this is an example for disability inclusion

- Increased ownership of the inclusion process in the education systems was encouraged through the partnership between the Church and the State and cooperation with the National Board for Disabled Persons and the Churches Education Council was helpful
- the combination of internal and external advocacy and diplomacy helped to enhance the government's commitment
- Referring to child rights and Constitutional rights minimises opposition
- Investing in a pilot project and making it a success story provides a helpful model to refer to in further activities. Training teachers in the project and including disability in the regular training project builds up capacity and motivates teachers to support inclusion in education in the long run.
- It is one thing to have a policy; it is quite another thing to implement that policy at all levels and to the point of having quality inclusive education in all schools. Although a start has been made in PNG with the direction set, in terms of a thorough implementation across the board, PNG has not yet arrived.

This text has been adapted from an article written by Graeme Leach, Callan Services for Disabled Persons

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