

Pacific Disability Forum (PDF) and Australia Pacific Islands Disability Support (APIDS)

Capacity Development for Effective and Efficient Disabled Persons Organisations in Pacific Island Countries

Report on Papua New Guinea component of Research

1. Introduction

In July/August 2011, Papua New Guinea (PNG) was the fourth country to be studied in a Pacific-wide research program “Capacity Development for Effective and Efficient Disabled People’s Organisations (DPOs) in Pacific Island Countries”. Twelve countries are part of the program and will be visited before June 2012. This research is run by Pacific Disability Forum (PDF) and Australia Pacific Islands Disability Support (APIDS) and is funded by AusAID.

The research team in PNG included one representative each from PDF and APIDS as well as two in-country researchers who are board members of PNG Assembly of Disabled People (PNGADP)

2. What did the research team do?

Before the research started, we all agreed that the research would:

- Look at what DPOs are good at (strengths based approach) and how these strengths can help the organisation grow
- Make sure that people with any disability could take part
- Make sure that all people are respected in meetings and workshops

- Respect community protocols and customs

The research team had the following events in Port Moresby, Madang and Goroka in PNG from 27 July to 4 August 2011

- Separate meetings were held with the staff and Board members of PNGADP
- Meetings with self help groups in Goroka and Madang
- Interviews with stakeholder groups, including education providers, support services, non-government organisations, government departments
- A workshop of members of PNGADP

3. What we found out

People who took part in the research told the research team that:

1. There is strong leadership at national level in PNGADP. There is emerging leadership potential in self help organisations (SHOs) operating at provincial and district levels.
2. There is good family support for people with disabilities, including those who are leaders and office bearers in SHOs.
3. Service providers are supportive of and contributing to the development of SHOs at district and provincial levels.
4. People place value on being a member of self-help organizations.
5. When people with disability learn about their rights, it empowers them to stand up, speak out or organize themselves into groups.
6. The issue of disability is getting an increasing profile at the national level and people with disability are increasingly aware of their rights: PNGADP is contributing to these changes.
7. The Government of Papua New Guinea through the Department for Community Development, and particularly the work of Dame Carol Kidu, recognise disability as a cross-cutting issue, work collaboratively with others and allocate money through its development budget for disability activities.

8. There is a strategic plan which guides PNGADP and this includes development of a national structure.
9. Data collection about potential members and their needs is a priority for many people and organizations in the disability sector. Despite valiant efforts, the recent national census did not include questions about disability.
10. Self help associations want ongoing training for their officials and members on a range of topics including governance, administration, leadership, financial management, monitoring and evaluation, advocacy and CRPD.
11. There is a shared commitment to increase systemic advocacy in relation to rights as included in CRPD.
12. There is increasing connection between the different associations across PNG despite great challenges in communications and transport.
13. Although there is inadequate funding for self-help associations across the country, they are still emerging and growing.
14. SHOs increasingly understand and apply the rights based approach and some service providers are beginning to be aware of this approach and to consider its implications for their work. Many service providers currently use a medical or charity model to approach their work.
15. To help them strengthen and grow their organizations, some self-help associations are seeking volunteers or other sources of expertise in relation to office and program management as well as organizational governance.
16. SHOS are recognizing the importance of governance integrity and still seek assistance to enable them to understand how to achieve this.

The research team found that PNGADP has some outstanding strengths, including being able to:

- motivate and bring people together to identify shared objectives

- develop a plan and use it as a framework to guide action
- work collaboratively with and advocate to the Government of PNG and service providers
- develop a complex national structure to maximise representation, recognise diversity and emphasise the emergence of locally driven organisations
- promote the disability rights agenda
- organize a Board and its meetings and to appoint staff members
- build connections and earn the respect of others, including partners, Government representatives, communities, other NGOs and donor agencies
- improve individual and organisational learning, particularly by maximizing opportunities for members to attend training, workshops, committee meetings etc.

PNGADP wants donor and development agencies to provide funds for training for board members

- provision of information and skills development in advocacy and awareness raising about rights and how to use rights based approach
- communications (phone and computers and internet connections) and transport costs to be able to organize meetings of members and boards and to raise awareness in rural areas
- equipment to assist members and to enable organisations to operate

PNGADP would like development partners to provide:

- workers (such as volunteers) to assist organisations in systems, structures, proposal-writing and financial management
- ongoing moral support on how to address disability inclusion

4. Next steps

A full research report of PNG will be given to all the people involved in the research.

The research team will visit another 8 countries in the next 12 months, and then a report will be written about the whole project in mid-2012.

The researchers hope that this project will help DPOs to become stronger organizations, both through their own efforts and through appropriate support provided by other organizations.

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