

**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 Samoa component of Research**

**1. Introduction**

In May 2011, Samoa was the third 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 Samoa included one representative each from PDF and APIDS as well as two in-country researchers who are members of Nuanua O Le Alofa (NOLA).

**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 facilitated and participated in the following events in Samoa in the week 24 to 28 May 2011:

- Separate meetings .with the staff and Board members of NOLA
- Interviews with stakeholder groups, including education providers, support services, non-government organisations, representatives from Samoan Government Ministries.
- A workshop of members of NOLA.

### **3. What we found out**

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

1. Nuanua O Le Alofa (NOLA) Board, staff and members are determined to make Samoa a disability inclusive, barrier free society with a key being to communicate with the public to eliminate discrimination
2. NOLA is recognised by the Government as the focal point on issues for people with a disability in Samoa
3. NOLA is very successful at advocating for people with disabilities in many areas, including accessing education, employment and training
4. NOLA has some fundraising skills with the need to identify a member to take ongoing responsibility for future planning and activities
5. NOLA has strong and active leadership at Board and staff level
6. NOLA has capable staff who run the office, inform members about events and training and encourage members to participate in activities
7. NOLA has a strong governance system including a constitution, monthly Board meetings, conducting AGMs, a strategic plan and a transparent financial system
8. NOLA has the confidence of its members
9. NOLA is recognised for its successful awareness activities, including International Day for People with a Disability
10. NOLA has been instrumental in the development of the National Policy for People with Disability
11. NOLA has women's group committee and a youth group

12. NOLA seeks to decentralise its activities more into the rural areas including running training activities in districts and public awareness activities in villages
13. NOLA seeks to further develop skills of its members in fundraising, proposal writing, advocacy, financial management
14. NOLA seeks to make sure that members and staff understand the CRPD, and how to promote it with government and the community
15. NOLA seeks to work closely with stakeholders, such as NGOs, the Church and government, to promote the involvement of people with disabilities in their activities
16. NOLA seeks to inform the public that it advocates for all people with disabilities, including children and people with all types of disabilities
17. NOLA seeks to involve more people with intellectual disabilities and deaf people
18. NOLA seeks to advocate to government ministries on timely implementation of the National Policy for Persons with a Disability and the proposed Community Sector Plan
19. NOLA seeks to strengthen its networks with policy sections of government ministries
20. NOLA would like donors and development partners to act in partnership and be more flexible in their proposal and reporting processes
21. NOLA would like donors and development partners to fund an exchange program within DPOs across the region and internationally – to learn skills such as working with government
22. NOLA would like donors and development partners to share their expertise and knowledge by providing technical support, including suitable volunteers
23. NOLA would like donors and development partners to provide support according to priorities identified by people with disabilities in Samoa

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

- be determined and keep going even when others are not supporting them
- have a dream of a barrier-free, rights-based society in Samoa
- make sure office bearers and staff work hard for that dream to be achieved
- be trusted by members, communities, other NGOs and donors/partners
- advocate with respect to all in the community
- assist all to learn new skills
- participate actively in Pacific regional and international activities.

NOLA wants donor and development agencies to be flexible in their funding processes, and to provide funds for an exchange program within DPOs across the region to learn skills such as working with government. NOLA would like development partners to share their expertise and knowledge.

#### **4. Next steps**

A full research report of Samoa 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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