

**COUNTRY REPORT: PAPUA NEW GUINEA**  
**Submitted to the Pacific Regional Forum,**  
**International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment**  
**Perth Western Australia, 5-6 January 2007**

by Mr James D Aiwa, University of Goroka, PNG, December 2006

**Government**

**Question 1. How much support does your government give to each of the following?**

- UNESCO's Millennium Development Goals
- Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper – (International Monetary Fund, IMF and World Bank)
- UNESCO's "Education for All Children by 2015" campaign
- Blindness Prevention Programs, eg Vision2020

Answer 1. Information unavailable at present

**Question 2a. What (a) government legislation, (b) policies, and (c) programs are in place to ensure access and full participation in education for children with vision impairments?**

Answer 2a. There is no specific policy on vision impairment in PNG. The National Department of Education has a general National Special Education Plan & Policy and Guidelines for Special Education including vision impairment (1993). Revised 5 year Plan from 2004 – 2008 (2003)

**Question 2b. What evaluation mechanisms exist for these government legislation, policies, and programs?**

Answer 2b. National Department of Education through its National Special Education Unit has a permanent SE Inspector who does yearly inspection at SERCs and Primary Teachers' Colleges to ensure that the policy is implemented. The SERCs are visited 2 -3 times per year. Yearly institutional reports are compiled to the Secretary of Education for comments, action and information.

**Question 3. Does your country have a National Education Plan, and if so, does the Plan:**

- (a) focus on inclusive education, and**
- (b) include provision for children with disabilities, including children with vision impairments?**

Answer 3. The National Department of Education has a general National Special Education Plan & Policy and Guidelines for Special Education including vision impairment (1993). Revised 5 year Plan from 2004 – 2008 (2003)

**Country-wide data**

**Question 4. Are there national data on the number of children and adults with disabilities, including those with vision impairments?**

Answer 4. Currently there are 3134 people with disabilities receiving services from SERCs in PNG. The programs include CBR, centre based programs, inclusive education. Of the 3134, only 306 are vision impaired. (NDOE, 2006) This does not include data from other agencies providing services for people with disabilities including VI.

**Question 5. Are there national data on the number of pre-school and school-age children with vision impairments who:**

- a. are enrolled in education settings (mainstream and special school) – full-time and part-time?
- b. are not enrolled in education settings?
- c. have “dropped-out” of schooling (retention rates)
- d. receive community-based rehabilitation (CBR) services in their communities?

Answer 5. Information unavailable.

### **Organizations providing support and services**

**Question 6. Is there an association of blind citizens? Is it an active group?**

Answer 6. None

**7a. What national and international government and non-government development organisations (NGDOs) provide support to your country in the area of vision impairment?**

Answer 7a. St. John Association for the Blind, Mt. Sion SERC, CBM, Save the Children, NDOE, all SERCs, Callan Network.

**Question 7b. What types of support do they provide (please list)?**

Answer 7b. funds, training, equipment, personnel, infrastructure, vehicles.

**8. What training and professional development opportunities currently exist for teachers and CBR workers in the area of disability and special education?**

*For example, national and international university and college courses, braille courses, O&M courses, etc. Please list organisations/agencies that provide training and other support.*

Answer 8. Training at certificate, diploma and degree levels are offered at all Pre service Primary Teachers' Colleges, PNG Education Institute, Callan Training Centre at Wewak, University of Goroka, Divine Word University. Other short courses organized by both national and international organizations.

**Question 9. What are some examples of “best practice” in education of children with disabilities, including children with vision impairments, in your country? Please describe how these “best practices” came about.**

Answer 9. Most children with special needs including vision impaired attend mainstream schools from elementary to secondary. Regular teachers have the opportunity to teach all

children including those with special needs. Some children do progress into higher institutions for various reasons. The fundamental issue is those children had the opportunity to attend school. E.g. Last year a low vision enrolled at this University in Diploma in accounting. He completed his studies successfully. For the first time this year we are enrolling another blind student in Diploma in teaching. His is settling in well. Every one here is supportive of his enrolling including the VC.

**Question 10. Can you identify any deficiencies in the current provision of education services for children and youth with vision impairments?**

*For example, curriculum and class activities.*

Answer 10. The deficiencies in the current NDOE policy on inclusive education are training of teachers, curriculum and materials, attitudes, awareness, monitoring, incentives for teachers. The biggest deficiency is the ability of NDOE to monitor schools to ensure teachers practice inclusive teaching.

**Question 11. What are your country's priorities for improving access to schools, curriculum, and programs for children with vision impairments?**

Answer 11. There are no specific priorities for access to schools and curriculum modification and adaptation in PNG. The National Department of Education has a general National Special Education Plan & Policy and Guidelines for Special Education including vision impairment that allows "where feasible all children with special needs should attend local schools near to their village" (1993). Revised 5 year Plan from 2004 – 2008 (2003)

## **Resources**

**Question 12. What types of resources are needed to support (a) teachers, (b) children and adults with vision impairments, (c) their parents and carers, (d) volunteers, and (e) others working in the field of vision impairment?**

*Please identify specific human, financial, and physical resources.*

Answer 12. The type of support they would need would be training of teachers, volunteers, CBR officers, personnel, equipment, funds, help start parents support group, O & M training, awareness, curriculum materials, change attitudes & beliefs.

**Question 13a. Is there a resource centre or facility for the provision of resources for (a) pre-school and (b) school-age children with vision impairments?**

*For example, centre for braille production, provision of low-tech and high-tech adaptive technology, including low vision aids.*

Answer 13a. Mt. Sion has facility for Braille production. The productions are mainly text books into Braille and exam papers. Apart from Braille production there is no provision of low-tech and high tech, adaptive technology, low vision aids.

**Question 13b. If yes, what organisation or agency provides this resource centre?**

Answer 13b. None

## **Education services**

**Question 14. What educational options currently exist for (a) pre-school and (b) school-age children with vision impairments?**

*Please include regular school and special school options.*

Answer 14. Some SERCs (Special Education Resource Centres) conduct inclusive centre based programs for pre-school. School age children with special needs including vision impairments attend mainstream schools in PNG.

**Question 15a. How many teachers and CBR workers provide services to children with vision impairments, including children with additional disabilities?**

Answer 15a. There are approximately 120 staff (teachers, nurses, CBR officers, health educators). They are permanent officers salaried by the NDOE.

**Question 15b. Where are these teachers and CBR workers located? (eg regular school, special centre, special school)**

Answer 15b. They are located in SERCs through PNG.

**Question 16. What is the background and level of training (qualifications) of these teachers working in the field of vision impairment?**

Answer 16. They are trained teachers and health officers holding various qualifications from certificate to degree.

**Question 17. What are the training/professional development needs of teachers, CBR workers, parents, and education volunteers?**

*Please include needs in the areas of vision impairment and additional disabilities.*

Answer 17. Their training need would be in O&M, certified braille/transcriber, low vision, early intervention, production of low cost teaching aids, certified CBR officer, diploma/degree in vision impairment.

**Question 18. Can you recommend ways of promoting the Education for All Children with Vision Impairment (EFA-VI) campaign in your country?**

Answer 18. Awareness, attitude change, training of teachers, CBR officers, building network. All activities should be coordinated at the national level.

**Question 19. Can you suggest ways of increasing demand for education of children with vision impairments, including children with additional disabilities?**

Answer 19. Talk to parents to change belief and attitudes and free education for all children with special needs including those with vision impairment, or help pay fees for those children parents can not afford. Use role model to change beliefs of parents and communities to enroll VI children in schools.