

**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 Vanuatu component of Research

1. Introduction

In March 2012, Vanuatu was the eleventh 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 Vanuatu included two representatives from PDF and one from APIDS as well as one in-country researcher.

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 Vanuatu in the week 19 to 23 March 2012:

- A two day workshop with the members and Board members of Vanuatu Disability Promotion and Advocacy (DPA)
- Interviews with stakeholder groups, including provincial and national government representatives

3. What we found out

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

1. DPA has active members who make the organisation strong
2. DPA has a young and energetic Board
3. DPA has a great office in Santo and strong presence at grassroots level
4. DPA has raised awareness about the rights of people with disabilities in Vanuatu, especially at community and Provincial levels
5. DPA has held its AGMs in Provincial Centres and rural areas and this has helped it to raise awareness and advocate for changes, for example in accessibility to transport services and accommodation.
6. DPA has been able to obtain funding from different partners, including PDF and APIDS.
7. DPA wants to continue its work to:
 - a. Raise awareness and reach out to people in villages, including by increasing the number of affiliates
 - b. Strengthen the capacity of its affiliates
 - c. Advocate for the rights of people with disabilities
 - d. Work with other organisations with similar objectives
8. DPA wants to increase the use of sign language in Vanuatu so people who are deaf can communicate with each other and be included.
9. DPA wants to increase the number of staff so it can undertake more activities

10. DPA is considering opening an office in Port Vila again (it had one previously but didn't have the funding to sustain it) so it can advocate more at national level
11. Board members and members of DPA want to continue to gain skills through training and workshop opportunities, and they are particularly keen for women to access these opportunities, so that DPA can more effectively achieve its objectives
12. DPA wants to advocate to achieve:
 - a. Sign language training
 - b. Teacher training in relation to inclusive and special education
 - c. Sign language translation in all meetings where deaf people are included
13. When DPOs move to other villages and islands to raise awareness, they would like to be able to access funding to cover the transport expenses.

The research team found that DPA has some outstanding strengths:

- the ability and willingness to grow itself slowly and persevere, particularly during times of challenge from others
- the ability to make sure office bearers and staff are committed to working hard towards the shared goals
- the ability to take ownership of the disability rights agenda
- the ability to be determined to achieve their goals, at local and national levels
- the ability to earn the trust of others, including members, communities, other NGOs and some donors/partners
- the ability to combine constructive awareness and assertive advocacy
- the ability to improve individual and organisational learning, particularly by maximizing opportunities for members to attend training, workshops, committee meetings etc.
- the ability to build connections with other organisations.

DPA would like assistance from development partners and volunteers to assist in strengthening the organisation, especially in the areas of

leadership, management and advocacy. They would also like support to develop the skills of members, in a range of income generation-type areas. This will assist DPA and its members to continue to grow in locally appropriate ways and achieve their shared objectives.

4. Next steps

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

The research team visited Vanuatu in March, and a report on the whole project will be released in September.

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.

For more information, please contact:

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