



Advocating for rights & promoting abilities
of people with disabilities since 1999

Disability Promotion & Advocacy Association

our vision

2008-2012

DPA is a self-help national umbrella organization of and for
people with disabilities &
the NGO Focal Point for the BMF in Vanuatu

Promoting an Inclusive, Barrier-free & Rights-based Society for People with Disabilities

OUR VISION 2008-2012

Alone we can do so little. Together we can do so much.

Helen Keller

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FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF DPA

VALUE OF LIFE

We believe that the life of a person with disability has equal value to, and shall be accorded the same rights, dignity and respect as that of a person without an obvious disability.

HUMAN RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

We believe in the equal rights of men and women and that we have equal rights as all other citizens of Vanuatu including the right to participate in all aspects of spiritual, social, economic and political life and that these rights must be protected and promoted.

EQUALITY OF MEN AND WOMEN

We believe in the equality of men and women.

NON-DISCRIMINATION BASED ON SEX

We believe that discrimination based on sex is contrary to our belief in the equality of men and women. We therefore advocate for non-discrimination based on Article 1 of the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and will work towards promoting non-discrimination within DPA and in the nation.

PARTNERSHIP

We believe in the inspirational words of Helen Keller that alone we can do so little, but together we can do so much and will work with individuals, community groups, national and international developmental organizations that have similar values.

VALUE OF VOLUNTEERS

We acknowledge and value the work that volunteers give from their hearts and treasure their commitments to provide this invaluable service for the betterment of humanity.

*Adopted by the Annual General Meeting on 8 June 2006 on Motalava,
TORBA Province*

VISION, MISSION AND GOALS OF DPA

MISSION

The Disability Promotion & Advocacy Association is a not for profit association with members throughout the country committed to advocating for the human rights of persons with disabilities and promoting their abilities.

VISION

To work toward a society that is inclusive, barrier-free and rights based society for persons with disabilities.

GOALS

DPA's objectives are:

- a. To advocate for rights and promote abilities of persons with disabilities throughout Vanuatu;
- b. To lobby the national Government for the establishment of a National Disability Council;
- c. To ensure that the targets for actions during the Asia Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities 1993-2002 and the seven priority areas of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action toward the Asian & Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities 2003-2012 are implemented;
- d. To raise awareness that people with disabilities have the same rights as anyone else, no more no less;
- e. To liaise, promote, support persons with disabilities, caregivers, family members, communities, non government organizations and governmental agencies to recognize and promote these objectives;
- f. To promote and support the establishment of branches in each provinces to promote the above aims;
- g. To provide training and other skills for people with disabilities in order to promote their organizations and to participate fully in all levels of society.

PREFACE

'Our Vision 2008-2012' is an ambitious plan which takes a much more inclusive and broader plan than the previous strategic plan of 2005-2007. The development of this five year strategic plan puts into practice our slogan "*Nothing about us without us*" where persons with disabilities, volunteers and staff of DPA and members of the Coordinating Committee were active participants of the plan. Their input, based on their expert knowledge and experiences as persons living with one or more disability, as parents and caregivers, as advocates within DPA and their intimate knowledge of their individual as well as collective needs and abilities and an appreciation of the responsibilities and commitments made by them at the organizational level ensured that the strategies developed reflect the current realities of their lives within their respective situation.

Members reviewed the first strategic plan from 2005 to 2007 and noted that some 80 percent of the actions to be carried out during these last three years were either accomplished or mechanisms had been put in place to accomplish our goals. This was indeed a very positive signal of the work that had been carried out and spoke volumes of the work and commitments from members at all levels of the organization. Participants nevertheless noted this current five year strategic plan will need to continue its advocacy work and monitor more closely actions to be taken at the national level and incorporate new developments. In particular was the effort needed to advocate and promote the goals of the United Nation's the *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disability*.

DPA expresses its deep gratitude to Mr Joel Path, Secretary General of the SANMA Provincial Government whose words of encouragement have always been inspirational to us. The following analogy given at the closing of the meeting on Wednesday 23 January 2008 speaks amply to this support and encouragement:

Over the years DPA has looked around and identified the land which it will make its garden. It has identified the people, not just any person but you who are involved in this meeting by marking the boundaries of your garden and now planted different plants in it. You have understood the importance of being united in your thoughts, in your aspirations and in your collective action to prepare your garden. Without this unity of thought and action, you will be pulled from all directions and your plants will not bear fruits.

Today you have in your hands a document which has shown this unity of purpose where each one of you has contributed to: a garden which shows that there are a variety of food and plants that are needed to sustain your community: coconuts, pandanus, manioc, taro, yam, kumala, carrots, onions, bananas, island cabbage, English cabbage, Chinese cabbage, pineapples, tomatoes, beans, fruit trees and trees to provide you shade and also to build your future houses.

This is your garden. That you have such a variety of food crops and trees for building your house as well as trees to give you fruits and shade is because all of you have contributed to the garden. If there were only one or two gardeners, they might very well plant just a couple of crops and forget some important plants to sustain you into the future.

But this garden will need your constant care to make sure that all the different plants and trees will be harvested when their time comes. So it will need your time, your patience and your commitment to nurture these plants and weed out the '*nilgras*', keep the snails out, throw out any stones you find and train the yams for a fruitful harvest in the future.

I congratulate you all for having developed your strategic plan. "**Our Vision 2008-2012**" is your garden. Look after it well. And you can be assured of my continuing support and that of the Sanma Provincial Government.

DPA's Strategic Planning Meeting which reviewed '*Our Vision 2005-2007*' and developed '**Our Vision 2008-2012**' was made possible with the financial support from NZAID. We are indeed grateful to them for this support under the *Strengthening the Capacity of DPA to Advocate for Rights of Persons with Disabilities* project through the Government Indicative Programme, Project Number 07P507.

DPA is also grateful to the support received from APIDS whose support to the training in sign language was initiated during this week.

DPA would like to acknowledge the following participants whose contributions ensured that the plan and actions contained in this document reflected the needs and visions of persons with disabilities, parents and caregivers and the organization as a whole:

- MALAMPA Province: Danny Sale, Joshwin Aimalgel, Reitaky Aimalgel, Saki Missak, Silas Kensen, Wendy Vere & Wensio Tom
- SANMA Province: Janet Selwyn, Marian Paia, Martine Remy, Monique Willie, Richard Leona & Vivian Vira
- SHEFA Province: Angela Poilapa, Christine George & Frankie Salili
- TORBA Province: Edgar Howard, Joshua Welin & Peter Tingris
- Secretariat staff: Andonia Piau-Lynch & Nelly Caleb

Andonia Piau-Lynch
National Coordinator

Santo
23 January 2008

1. INTRODUCTION

The Disability Promotion & Advocacy Association (DPA) was established on 4 April 1999 with the mandate to advocate for rights and promote abilities of persons with disabilities in Vanuatu. On 13 September 2002 it was formally registered as a charitable organization with the Financial Services Commission.

Over the past eight years it has contributed significantly to advancing the rights of people with disabilities through the development of its affiliate members and through developing a positive and proactive working relationship with the Government of Vanuatu. This has ensured that disability is on the local, national as well as regional agenda. However, most of the work done has remained at the policy level. While economic development features prominently on the national agenda, social aspects of development of a group of people who are disadvantaged features less prominently on the national agenda. DPA's mandate to advocate for rights of persons with disabilities and promote their abilities has provided us the opportunity to contribute to advocating for change at the national level and specifically to ensure that policies are effected to benefit people with disabilities who also have the right to the benefits from development.

Rights of people with disabilities must be promoted and protected with opportunities created to promote these rights and responsibilities in all areas of life. This relate to having in place legislation and programmes to promote and protect human rights of persons in the service sectors such as education, employment, health, housing, access to transport and public building. To create these change in attitude and develop programmes requires advocacy that will raise awareness of disability and needs of persons with disabilities themselves as well as in partnership with Government. The existence at the policy level of *the National Disability Policy and Plan of Action 2008-2015* is one major collaborate achievement between DPA and Government.

As the National Focal Point for the Biwako Millennium Framework toward the *Asian & Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities 2003-2012* (BMF), it will remain the obligation of all members of DPA to advocate at the local, national and regional levels the commitments both DPA and Government have made. These commitments to effect the plans under BMF, the *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disability*, the Millennium Development Goals, the Pacific Plan, the Planned Agenda and Actions 2007-2015 and the National Disability Policy and Plan of Action 2008-2015 are the major thrust of this five year plan.

"Our Vision 2008-2012" represents the views, hopes and aspirations of people with disabilities and their representatives collected during a three-day strategic planning meeting held in Santo from 21-23 January 2008. It outlines strategies to assist us to achieve these goals over the next five years.

As a self-help non government organization whose commitments have borne much result, support from the National and provincial Governments, donor agencies, national and regional development agencies and civil society organizations is therefore crucial. Together these aspirations and the vision to create a society that is inclusive, barrier-free and rights based society for all can be realized.

2. PROGRESS SINCE 2005

This is the second strategic plan developed by DPA. The plans identified in 2004 and contained in "*Our Vision 2005-2007*" were reviewed in January 2008 which saw that much had been achieved over the past four years. The achievement of the goals over the past three years would not have been possible without the active participation of persons with disabilities and the commitment and partnership between the Government of Vanuatu and its various agencies. These include the National Disability Committee, Department of Justice & Social Welfare, Department of Education, Department of Health, Department of Foreign Affairs, Department of Infrastructure and Public Works, National Statistics Office, National Disaster Office, Department of Finance, Provincial Governments of SANMA, TORBA, MALAMPA and SHEFA.

Our relationship with donor agencies such as NZAID and AUSAID, national organizations such as VANGO and regional organizations such as the UN ESCAP Pacific Operations Centre, Asia Pacific Development Centre on Disability, Disabled Peoples' International Asia Pacific, Forum Secretariat, Pacific Disability Forum and partner organizations such as PWD Australia and the Australia Pacific Islands Disability Support (APIDS) have also contributed to the achievements of our goals.

Following are some of these achievements during the first strategic plan from 2005-2007 attesting to the collaborative partnership between DPA and these agencies:

- Participation of DPA Chair on the UN Ad Hoc Committee on the drafting of the Disability Convention from 2004-2006.
- Successful lobbying with the signing of the UN Disability Convention in May 2007 making Vanuatu the first country in the Pacific.
- Inclusion of women and girls with disabilities in Vanuatu's Initial, 2nd and 3rd periodic report on CEDAW (2005).
- Ratification of the Ban Land Mine Convention in June 2005 as a result of DPA's advocacy against land mines since 2003.
- Translation of the BMF into Bislama in 2006.
- Establishment of Vanuatu's National Disability Committee by Council of Ministers in February 2006 following DPA awareness raising of the BMF to senior public servants in 2005.
- Inclusion of 12 recommendations on women and girls with disabilities in the National Plan of Action for Women 2007-2011 following the 1st National Women's Forum in 2006.
- Opening of the DPA Santo Branch and the Secretariat in 2007.
- Financial support from NZAID for the strengthening of the DPA Santo Branch in 2007.
- Establishment of DPA's '*Yumi Save Seŋ*' saving scheme in Santo in 2007;
- Establishment and formal affiliation of 12 self-help community based disability organizations as at 31 December 2007.
- Drafting of the National Disability Policy & Plan of Action 2007-2015 in January 2007.
- Regional recognition of DPA through winning the runner-up award of the RRRT 7th Pacific Human Rights Awards on 10 December 2007.
- Inclusion of sign language as part of the curriculum of the Vanuatu Teachers College in 2008.

3. FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

3.1 VALUE OF LIFE

We believe that:

The life of a person with a disability has equal value to, and shall be accorded the same rights, dignity and respect as that of a person without a disability. In order to put this belief into action, we acknowledge our inherent rights enshrined in our Constitution under Chapter 2, Part 1, Article 5(1) and will work to:

- Ensure that these rights are protected and promoted.
- Support for the National Disability Committee to be appropriated adequate human, material and financial resources so that it can promote these rights and values and uphold our fundamental rights and dignity as citizens of Vanuatu.
- Uphold the inherent rights of infants with disabilities.
- Advocate for support programmes for mothers who bear children with disabilities.
- Advocate for policies and plans to ensure that disabilities are prevented, detected early and counselling is provided to prevent deaths of children with disabilities.

Ongoing

3.2 HUMAN RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

We believe that:

We have equal rights as any other citizens of Vanuatu including the right to participate in all aspects of spiritual, cultural, social, economic and political life and that these rights must be protected and promoted.

In order to achieve this, we will continue to work with Government to:

- Include *disability* as a ground for non-discrimination under Chapter 2 Part 1 Section 5(1) of the amended Constitution.
- Include *persons with disabilities* along with women and children as a disadvantaged group under section 5(1)(k) of the amended Constitution.
- Raise the awareness that any programmes developed under section 5(1)(k) of the Constitution is not discriminatory but are special measures.

Ongoing

- Ratify and monitor the implementation of the UN Disability Convention, the BMF Plus 5 & other international and regional commitments.

Ongoing

- Work with national, regional and international campaigns to promote peace and security of persons with disabilities.

On going

3.3 PARTNERSHIP

We believe in the inspirational words of Helen Keller that "*Alone we can do so little, but together we can do so much*".

In this regard we applaud the initiatives taken by Government, in consultation with persons with disabilities and their organizations, to establish the National

Disability Committee in 2006 and including persons with disabilities and disability organizations on the Committee. We further acknowledge the huge stride taken by the Committee and the Department of Justice & Social Welfare to consult with persons with disabilities and their representatives in developing the National Disability Policy and Plan of Action 2008-2015.

We will continue to work with various agencies of the Government of Vanuatu:

- To establish the Disability Desk.
- To ensure that the policies and plans of actions outlined in the National Disability Policy and Plan of Action 2007-2015 are implemented;
- To continue to provide advice to Government as and when needed on a fee basis;
- To continue advocating for inclusion of persons with disabilities in national bodies to effect our slogan "Nothing about us without us"

On going

We will further work toward strengthening and extending our relationship with donor partners, Provincial Governments, national and international NGOs and civil society organizations to further our aims.

On going

4. LEGISLATION

We congratulate the Government of Vanuatu on becoming the first Pacific Island Country to sign the UN *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities* on 17 May 2007. We will continue:

- To advocate for the ratification of the Convention by March 2008.
- Raise awareness of the Disability Convention among persons with disabilities, Government agencies, non government organizations, donors, media and the community at large.
- Ensure that the Disability Convention is translated into Bislama and ensure that an easy-to-read version is developed.

Immediately

Ongoing

2009

We will further work toward the domestication of the Convention by:

- Working with the National Disability Committee, State Law Office, Judiciary, Ombudsman, line ministries and development partners to draft the Disability Act that will establish a National Disability Council plus other legislation required to effect the Disability Convention to promote and protect the human rights of persons with disabilities.

Ongoing

We will further work with other agencies such as the Department of Women's Affairs, Vanuatu National Council of Women and VANGO to ensure that women with disabilities are not discriminated against but are included in their programmes. To realize this goal:

- We will work to ensure that the 12 recommendations contained in the National Plan of Action for Women 2007 – 2011 are implemented.

Immediately

- We will advocate for and support any organization to pass legislation to end discrimination against women and girls with disabilities and to promote their rights.

Ongoing

5. NATIONAL COORDINATION

Recognizing the invaluable work carried out by the Secretariat with minimal funds but through the voluntary contribution provided by volunteers and members, we will:

- Work with Government, donor agencies and other partners toward strengthening the capacity of the DPA Secretariat.

Immediately

- Work with affiliates toward establishing systems of support to strengthen their capacity to advocate in a systematic fashion.

Immediately

- Work toward developing programmes and policies that are comprehensive, systematic and coordinated so that our voices are heard as one throughout the nation.

By 2009

- Ensure that the Secretariat, Coordinating Committee and affiliate members are provided board management training and other skills development training to increase their capacity as advocates.

Immediately

6. NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US

We believe strongly that the slogan “Nothing about us, without us” has given us great strength in our abilities to advocate for our rights. This has led to the beginning of us being included in national and regional bodies and plans where decisions about persons with disabilities are made. In this regard we will:

- Continue to make sure that persons with disabilities are included in local, provincial and national bodies to advocate for their rights.

Ongoing

- Provide sign language training to affiliate member so that they can involve deaf people in the organization as well as in other walks of life.

Immediately

- Provide sign language training to parents and caregiver, members and other agencies and that sign language is recognized.

Ongoing

- Ensure that parents and caregivers are represented on the National Disability Committee, Education for All and other national committees whose mandate are to promote and protect all children.

Ongoing

7. ADVOCACY & AWARENESS

We believe that:

Self-advocacy is the strongest and most effective form of advocacy. As an organization, DPA supports efforts by people with disabilities, parents and caregivers and volunteers to be trained to be effective advocates. As people with disabilities are now beginning to be aware of their rights, we will work with provincial and national governments and donor agencies to:

- Provide human, material and financial support for raising awareness on disability issues.

Immediately

- Seek human, material and financial support to increase our capacity to include people who are deaf and blind in our organization as part of our policy of inclusion through training in sign language and braille.

Immediately

- Support plans and programmes of affiliates and other NGOs and civil societies which have advancement of persons with disabilities as part of their programmes.

Ongoing

- Utilize national and international days to advocate for rights of persons with disabilities through various forms of media including theatre, music, documentaries, research, publication and other civic actions.

Ongoing

- Prepare for the 10th anniversary of DPA in 2009.

Immediately

8. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

We believe that men and women were created equally and that the only difference stopping their capacity to progress is education. In this regard, we consider equal access to education by women and men as a fundamental right. As mothers are the first teachers, we will promote the education of girls as a priority.

For persons with disabilities, they have been sidelined in this aspect of developing our human resources for too long. We believe that every person with a disability regardless of type or degree of disability has the right to quality education at every level of the education system. Education must therefore begin with early identification and intervention programmes and culminate with training for life-long learning. We also recognize that where educational opportunities have been delayed or disrupted, measures to ensure that our people are given other opportunities must be found.

We acknowledge the work already undertaken by Government through the Department of Education in collecting data on children with disabilities and in their work toward developing the Inclusive Education Policy. We are therefore pleased that one of our goals identified in our first strategic plan of 2005-2007 for Government to look into including children with disability in the education system by providing a curriculum to include training in special education has been achieved. In this regard we acknowledge the efforts of the Ministry of

Education and the Vanuatu Teachers College in introducing special education in its curriculum in 2008.

We will continue to work with Government agencies to:

- Ensure that **inclusive education** as outlined in the Disability Convention, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the BMF and the Education for All is a priority of Government.
- Promote that education is not only provided in the formal classroom setting or in vocational or technical colleges but should also be provided at other times such as night classes so those whose education were disrupted can further their education.
- That children who are deaf are provided the opportunity to access education through development of sign language programmes from kindergarten level to the Vanuatu Teachers College.
- That children who are blind are given opportunity to access education through development and teaching of Braille as part of the curriculum of the Vanuatu Teachers College.
- That children with disabilities are given special consideration and their school fees are waived or at least halved.
- That parents and caregivers who have a disability and have children who go to school are also given this special consideration by waiving of school fees or halving of the school fees.
- That access to education as outlined in the Convention on the Rights of Children, the Disability Convention, the BMF, Education for All and the Millennium Development Goals are implemented.
- That a specific percentage of teachers are encouraged to pursue special education training.
- That a specific percentage of tertiary scholarships are made available to assist students toward creating competencies in the area of disability.

Ongoing

9. WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

We believe in the equality between women and men but recognize that women, and particularly women with disabilities are discriminated against. We further believe that women, most of whom are the primary caregivers of persons with disabilities, are also often disadvantaged and discriminated against and must be supported. We will therefore continue to advocate to:

- Ensure that national policies and plans on women with disabilities are implemented.

By 2011

- Ensure that parents and caregivers committees are established within the DPA membership.

By 2009

- Ensure that anti-discrimination measures which safeguard rights of women with disabilities are introduced.

Ongoing

- Ensure that women with disabilities are included in the membership of national women's organizations.

Ongoing

- Ensure that women with disabilities and caregivers are provided training that will increase their capacity and skill to advocate for their rights.

Ongoing

10. EMPLOYMENT

We believe that:

It is our right to have access to opportunities to be engaged in productive and meaningful employment which provides flexibility, equal opportunity and career path development.

As a member of the International Labour Organization, we will encourage Government to recognize its responsibilities by:

- Ratifying the International Labour Organization *Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled persons) Convention No. 159* of 1983.

By 2009

- Conduct research on employment of persons with disabilities.

By 2010

- Support educational and training institutions to provide training for persons with disabilities.

By 2012

- Encourage employers to employ persons with disabilities.

Ongoing

11. ACCESS TO BUILT ENVIRONMENT

We believe that:

Everyone benefits from our right to participate with dignity in the ordinary activities and process of daily life in the community. To achieve this end we must have access to the physical environment that is barrier-free.

We will continue to work with Government:

- To ensure that the Building Code Act incorporates provisions for universal access.

By 2010

- To ensure that barriers caused by unsound structures which creates barriers to public building for people with disabilities, elderly people, pregnant women, whether they are international tourists or local residents are recognized as denial of the right to move freely and will work towards removing these barriers.

Ongoing

12. ACCESS TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT

We believe that:

Access to transport is a basic right of all people. Recognizing this, we believe that all forms of transport and their infrastructure in local communities and

nationally must be made accessible not only to people with disabilities but all citizens.

We will continue to work with Government to:

- Adopt legislation and enforce existing accessibility standards in their planning of public facilities, infrastructure and transport, including those in rural areas.
2010
- Ensure that existing public land, water and air transport systems be made accessible and usable for persons with disabilities.
Ongoing
- Ensure that Government leads by example to provide accessible transport through the importation of accessible buses and taxis.
By 2009
- Introduce facilities at airports and car parks which will assist those with mobility and other impairments.
By 2010

13. ACCESS TO INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION

We believe that up-to-date and timely information on the situation of persons with disability must be readily available in order that policy makers can make informed decision at the national level. We will work with Government to:

- Ensure that information on the situation of persons with disability is generated, collated and disseminated.
Immediately
- Ensure that data is collected from relevant departments on the situation of persons with disabilities.
Immediately
- Ensure that the National Statistics Office includes specific questions on persons with disabilities in the 2009 national census.
Immediately
- Ensure that representatives of DPA continue to collect data and participate as census officers in the 2009 national census.
By 2009
- Ensure that alternative forms of communication such as Sign Language and Braille are taught in formal and informal educational and training institutions.
Ongoing
- Ensure that sign language is accorded special recognition as a language.
By 2012
- Ensure that media is sensitized to disability issues and create further awareness on the BMF, Disability Convention and other national, regional and international programmes for persons with disabilities.
Ongoing
- Provide awareness on disability issues through programmes on radio, television and newspapers and other modes of communication.
Ongoing

- Work with telecommunication providers for access to communication for persons with disabilities.

By 2012

- Develop a website.

By 2009

14. MONITORING, EVALUATION & REVIEW OF "OUR VISION 2008-2012"

At every Annual General Meeting the Secretariat will present a report on the progress of "**Our Vision 2008-2012**".

A mid-term review will be conducted in 2010 and a final review will be undertaken in the first quarter of 2013.

15. RESPONSIBILITY HOLDERS OF "OUR VISION 2008-2012"

This strategic plan calls for the active participation of members of the Coordinating Committee, individual members, affiliates and staff of DPA and Government agencies, civil society and donor partners. While all are encouraged to be actively engaged to advocate for and endeavour to implementation the provisions of the plan, the ultimate responsibility of "**Our Vision 2008-2012**" rests with the Coordinating Committee of DPA.