



## Papua New Guinea - Civil Society Organizations

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### Education for All 2015 National Review

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PNG Education Advocacy Network

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# Education for All Goals

## 2015 Assessment Report by PNG CSOs

## **PEAN CSO EFA 2015 Assessment Report**

As member of the United Nations, Papua New Guinea is mandated by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). The right to education is universally recognised since the Declaration and has been adapted in our national constitution and development plans. Papua New Guinea is signatory to the international treaties and policies such as the Education for All goals (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). The Government also signed the Paris Declaration for AID Effectiveness<sup>i</sup>. According to these international agreements, Civil Societies can no longer be regarded as beneficiaries, but are equally service providers alongside development partners/donors and governments “to mobilize strong civil society in political commitments to education”<sup>ii</sup>

Papua New Guinea Education Advocacy Network (PEAN) is a national coalition of civil society organisations and individuals formed in 2003 with the support of Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) to encourage the involvement of civil society in education policy debates.

The aim of the organisation is to ensure that by 2015, the National Government through the Department of Education implements the Education for All (EFA) Goals under Papua New Guinea’s Universal Basic Education (UBE) Plan. Furthermore, where the policy is unclear on how to address areas such as the non-formal education (which include adult literacy, early learning and life skills), PEAN with members of its coalition play advocacy/advisory role to implement strategies. These may include, information sharing and networking with like-minded organisations to remind the Government and the Development Partners about the importance of educating the poor, vulnerable, marginalised and the people with special needs in the community through the rights-based approach articulated in the signed declarations of the UN.

At the National level, the Education Act and the Organic Law on Provincial and Local Level Governments (1995) mandates the responsibility for education across sub-national levels of governance and in partnership with civil society. Consistent with these acts PEAN’s goals and objectives are fundamentally focused on advocacy for policy and education financing to enhance the achievement of EFA Goals, as well as the targets set in PNG’s Vision 2050, Medium Term Development Plan (2012 to 2015) and the National Education Plan (2004-2015).

In particular, PEAN’s goals and objectives address the EFA Goals that focus on enhancing both formal and non-formal education needs for adults and young people and include those who drop-out or have missed out on formal school opportunities. Overall, the main activities supported by PEAN include research, advocacy, and capacity building of member associations and mobilisation of civil society on policy issues and their impact on education for all people in Papua New Guinea.

## **Summary of ASPBAE and PEAN Engagement in EFA Processes since Dakar**

In 1990, Papua New Guinea was represented in the World Education Conference in Thailand hence the ratification of the Education for All Declaration. The Government had conducted a number of education reforms over the years and the EFA Declaration was an affirmation to the policy and reform initiatives that took place during the time of ratification. It was perceived thereon that PNG Government was on the right track in reforming the education system with a mind to educate all of its citizens. With the World Governments agreement to contribute to Education, PNG was one of the beneficiaries through the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) under the World Bank for the past 25 years. The civil society engaged in education service delivery did not directly benefit from the Education Grant from FTI; however, the Civil Society Education Fund (CSEF) was an opportunity to mobilized national coalitions by funding through the Global Campaign for Education (GCE).

ASPBAE coordinated national coalitions to be established in particular countries like Papua New Guinea, where illiteracy rates were high due to its geographical terrain and weak government systems. Corruption continues to date and remains endemic and systemic in government institutions and bureaucracy. The PNG Education Advocacy Network (PEAN) is a result of civil society advocacy at the regional and global levels for rights of people who were illiterate, poor, and for weak sections of societies such as women and girls, and disabled people. While discussions among the civil societies began toward the end of 1998 for the PNG organization to be established, the Office became operational in 2003. PEAN is a coalition of NGOs, CBOs, and FBOs that drive the education service delivery outside of the established Government schools and colleges.

PEAN partners and membership comes from like-minded and value-based organizations which have goals and objectives for ordinary people to become literate and skilled. Then there are those agencies of Governments which strongly argue for issues of “equity and access” for all children and adults in education, that also supports the work of the Coalition. These partnership made up of Government-owned agencies have been particularly effective. Example, PEAN is supported by National Research Institute, an agency of government, had enabled the effectiveness of our campaign for ‘right to education’ as the State’s sole responsibility where rights of citizens is concerned.

PEAN advocacy in advancing EFA in the country was further enhanced by the combined work of civil societies around the world and in the different regions of Africa and Latin America. The Global Campaign for Education had solicited funding and global policy advocacy support had given credibility to national coalitions such as PEAN.

At the global level CCNGO-EFA is a case in point. With publications contributed by regional civil society network, the advocacy and networking in EFA is a huge undertaking.

Since PEAN’s establishment, the Coalition has mobilized and networked with national and sub-national level civil society organizations to bring in the agenda of the EFA Campaigns during the Global Action Week, International Literacy Day, National Literacy Week, International Teachers Day, and International Mother-Tongue Day.

PEAN's Campaign to advance EFA began with research, community feedback, budget tracking, and mobilizing stakeholders of respective EFA Goals, Advocacy and Campaign. The continuous policy advocacies have resulted in major policy shifts and education financing in Papua New Guinea.

PEAN staff in collaboration with ASPBAE conducted adult literacy assessment surveys in five provinces (New Ireland, National Capital District, Chimbu, Sandaun, and Gulf) through funding from Myer Foundation Australia<sup>iii</sup>. The first two surveys in NCD and New Ireland were conducted in 2006-2007, while the latest surveys in Chimbu, Sandaun and Gulf provinces were conducted between 2009 and 2011. UNESCO Apia, Japanese Funds-in-Trust (JFIT) project funding enabled ASPBAE and PEAN to deliver the Household and Literacy Survey of Madang Province in 2012.

The combined results of the surveys published in a report entitled: *PNG Education Experience Survey and Literacy Assessment (2011)* highlight a number of issues with regards to literacy in Papua New Guinea. Overall, provincial synthesis showed very low literacy rates, a crisis in school education quality and significant gender disparity in education. With regards to literacy; the survey found that more than 70% of respondents self-declared confidence in their ability to read and write however, the actual literacy rates<sup>iv</sup> were found to be lower than the 56%<sup>v</sup> PEAN's survey experience had reached the rural remote areas with unpredictable geographical and linguistics barriers. ASPBAE provided advisory role in developing the Community Feedback Concept Note that has been used in three provinces of PNG. Information gauged from the community through the feedback have greatly enhanced PEAN's Policy advocacy and resulted in major policy shifts such as free fee and compulsory education policies

Importantly PEAN had mobilized civil society organizations and stakeholders from early childhood care and education, gender equality, and open day for lifeskills, whilst representing these 'voices' in Committees and TWGs such as the Finance - and Education Sectoral Committees to raise equity issues for education financing. PEAN also promotes the work of civil society partners to Government stakeholders to involve them in policy implementations and financial priorities.

### **Civil Society Organization's Role and Contribution in advancing EFA**

There are several highlights in terms of the impact ASPBAE and PEAN have had on advancing EFA. Firstly, in terms of policy, this is hindered by the lack of data, which is a national concern in Papua New Guinea. This is evident in the regional presentations of UNESCO or ASPBAE on Country situations. On several occasions it was noted through regional meetings that information on PNG did not show on the presentations. This showed that information from the Government were not readily available to do proper country assessment. However, while the Department of Education (NDoE) has begun to improve their data on schools, PEAN also complemented the NDoE effort by carrying out surveys in six provinces.

With ASPBAE's assistance, the findings from Education Experience surveys were documented and published for advocacy to increase education financing in PNG.

The findings articulated the situation and called in many instances for increase in the education budget. The findings showed that more people in PNG were illiterate than was revealed during the National Census 2000. The findings revealed that literacy was at crisis point with gaps on gender disparity much wider than expected, and this has resulted in low quality of education. PEAN used the figures in the findings to demonstrate why PNG had reached crisis point in literacy. Furthermore the findings revealed that 1 in 5 females will go to secondary school compared to 5 males.

PEAN's advocacy for policy shifts was strategically timed to capitalize on the Political environment and to coincide with the national Parliamentary Elections, influencing the majority of the Political Parties to make Education as an important policy priority.

Secondly, in terms of the participation in the national EFA processes, the Coalition performed the Leadership role in coordinating EFA through the Global Action Week (GAW) Campaigns. Since 2009, and with evidence-based findings, 4 campaigns were targeted for policy shifts;

1. Education financing,
2. Women and girls' education,
3. Lifelong learning skills, and
4. Early childcare development

Due to funding delay from CSEF, 2013 did not see a GAW campaign targeted at *"Every Child needs a Teacher"*.

PEAN localized the Global Action Week to involve as many stakeholders as possible to undertake the campaign, while PEAN facilitated the process. This is an indirect capacity building for the stakeholders in particular mobilizing themselves, coordinating human resources, finances, logistics and media publicity. The Coalition united the voices of the stakeholders that are not in the formal education system, and provided a detailed evaluation feedback on each event. A case in point is the National Campaign on Early Childcare Education. It was observed that the parents and their children united with their schools to show solidarity and to support the importance of early learning.

The ECCE Providers have operated such schools outside of the Government education plans, and policies, hence these schools are privately-owned and without support from the Government. The aim of the Campaign was to gain Government recognition of the issues of ECCE and to gauge policy and funding support as the so-called private operators are managing without national standards for good early learning schools.

The Government of Papua New Guinea had introduced the Free Education Policy in 2010 for trial in the elementary schools, but this has been extended to primary and secondary schools, while tertiary level is subsidized for parents to meet 25% since 2012. In that context, parents have become more involved in education. PEAN led an advocacy campaign focused on the 'right to education' and due to wider consciousness of the importance of education, the public media carries education news daily, whether it be subsidy, quality, access, early learning, primary or tertiary- there is wider public acceptance of education as means to alleviating poverty, improving livelihood, changing the face of inequality, and more over, decision making for natural resources.

The general public have become education conscious. The public involvement is ensuring that the Government is held accountable for their priority projects and ensures that they deliver what they say on education. This social sector priority in the last five years has progressed under the current government development priority spurred on by the civil society and the academic community for literate and competent students in order to achieve the PNG Vision which states that in 40 years PNG will have safe, smart, wealthy, wise and healthy population living in peace.

PEAN and ASPBAE have carried out campaigns and lobbied effectively for EFA, including under the EU Funding producing the literature on **Power of Literacy** that had a section focused on "*Barriers hindering Women and Girl's Education in PNG*", which was widely distributed alongside the "*PEAN School Budget Tracking Report*, PEAN Annual Reports 2010-2012 and including presentations at workshops. In addition, PEAN had released media statements on important Calendar dates that linked Literacy and its benefits to development in Papua New Guinea; the result of which had profiled the organization as the mouthpiece for the silent majority.

Mobilizing civil society in Education Service Delivery showed gaps in the current global and national policies. There were evidence of school-age children in the sub-sectors that were not under the Government schools, as well as evidence<sup>vi</sup> of women and men whose lives have been transformed through adult education programs and who lead communities in implementing government targets and yet their certificates to date are not accredited.

PEAN's campaign called "Pathways for Literacy" is proving to be effective. The adult literacy program's students are assessed for competency before they attend Further Open Distance Education (FODE). Once they are tested according to the Education Department curriculum, they gain entry into the Education System to continue secondary education. This had motivated the out-of-school youth to enrol in adult literacy program and has motivated many students both boys and girls and parents. However, the burden on adult literacy teachers is the need to take on regular classes which was not the case, as many teachers are unpaid volunteers. These are the issues that PEAN represents in many capacities of policy decision-making.

## **Critical assessment of EFA in addressing Equity in access to quality education**

Basic education in Papua New Guinea is defined as 9 years of primary education. The specific target is 7-14 year olds. However, the practice of enrolment so far has embraced students within the age ranges of 7-19 years old who graduate from primary schools. Yet, not all students remain in school for 9 full years because of various reasons. Some reasons why students do not complete their education are death of parents, abandonment, HIV/AIDS or abuse which the education policies may have considered to be outside of the reach of their mandates. Furthermore, learning disabilities is common but the policies and institutional structures are less likely to assist students with learning disabilities. The debate for 'right to education' is hindered in such cases as the impact remains obscured.

In PNG cases of adult students in elementary schools and 3-6 year olds in adult literacy programs are common. This means that there are fewer opportunities for people who desire to become literate. Having said this, the essence of 9 years of education lies in producing academic excellence hence students are focused at test questions more than they absorbing the learning. These are forms inequities reinforced through the policies and educational structures.

While adult literacy is considered an important human resource development strategy, the program lacks male involvement in most areas in PNG. The perception that adult literacy is for 'women only' can be mistakenly portrayed as a 'soft' program that lacks masculinity hence male policy makers will always overlooked its benefits. Moreover, in situations were policy makers are in 'it' for personal motive, we can expect them to lack effective dialogue and not pay particular attention to the intent of policy aspects that may benefit all people including men.

The Civil Society Organizations want to see more funds made available to seriously promote adult literacy and skills in the non-formal sector. The sub-sector continuously play the role of second chance education for out of school youth who could possibly reconnect to the formal tertiary system. In assessing the high impacts and best practises of adult education, it is shown that the desire to learn is high among the people, including youth; however, the opportunity is non-existent. While community ownership and interest in literacy and skills are ongoing, the lack of financial sustainability is a persistent issue. Education does not necessarily have to be employment oriented, but it must ensure that all people regardless of age or origin must be literate; hence there is a huge unmet need.

Issues of lack of governance between government and civil society include funding of venues, training materials, & various genres of literature for youth and adults are often missing

- development of Community Libraries, Resource and Learning Centers are lacking
- lack of CSO's and Government Departments working and communicating well together on important issues.

## **Shortfall and Challenges in Financing EFA**

Financial resources are definitely an issue as funding from previous sources - are spiralling downhill at the global level. Since the EFA Declaration to date, CSOs have been partners in delivery of education services without support from government grants. Though sector wide approaches (SWAp) have been initiated, civil society presence is merely a rubber stamp. The clarity between SWAp and public private partnership (PPP) to date remains to be defined and understood amongst those responsible for mobilizing stakeholders within the Ministry of Education or the National Department of Education. A Government-Church Partnership exists for education service delivery; however, no real tangible translation of this partnership is seen at the district and local level. Civil Society is adamant that bad leadership even within the Churches and lack of monitoring has marred the efforts of the government.

Overall, financing has been affected by lack of good infrastructure and accountability systems for allocated funds. Furthermore, there are no tracking measures to ensure funds are allocated as well as managed well.

It is recommended in adult literacy that high quality and comprehensive training must be conducted and those in the sub-sector both in leadership and staff positions must be appointed on the basis of their proven character and history of service to their communities' for accountability and transparency, particularly when donor or government funds are used to provide programs. CSOs in particular have been without much needed Government support, however, with corruption rife in Government, how - can it be any different for civil society organizations unless regulatory framework are in place.

### **I. What went wrong, how these were addressed, and the way forward**

The lessons of Jomtien and Dakar

The key lessons of Jomtien and Dakar is that every country context is different; many have English as second or third language, even for the Language of Instructions, the local language contexts and interpretations are different. Each Country had different national priorities despite the global agreement on education for all.

Based on this assumption, it is safe to argue that perceptions of decision makers were quite the contrary to what global agreements set out to achieve in the given timeframe. That said, PNG started to fully implement EFA through a 'tunnel vision' in the last 10 years, prior to that the implementation was based on internal reforms in education.. However, the past 10 years also raised the consciousness of education as the right for citizens and the State's role to provide quality education has since become a constant reminder to the Government of their priority.

## The key education agenda in the Post 2015 period

Post 2015 Agenda is vital as integration of this sub-sector is fundamental to achieving the 5 Shifts that the High Level Panel has articulated to be the Framework in the Post 2015 debate. It is important to note that - primary, secondary tertiary and vocational schools have been actively pursued in the past three years.,. However, adult literacy is fundamental if no one is to be left out, because adult literacy is vital for achieving sustainable development, and to transform economies and pave the way for peace building.

With the current Government support in education, if given particular attention adult literacy is the strategic direction for poverty alleviation, achieving gender equality, healthy lifestyle and safe motherhood, increase food security and to improve livelihoods in PNG.

Adult Literacy complements the Universal Primary Education through enrollment, access and retention when parents are literate and have known the benefits of education. Although the desire to learn have been documented, lack of funding had always seen this sub-sector neglected, hence promoting education for classroom only which focus on academic learning more than functional literacy - and it has already been proven that students have found it difficult to make a living after learning basic literacy and numeracy in primary and secondary schools.

In the way ahead, PEAN will continue to propose strategies to build on the work so far, but with focus on inclusive education. CSOs should also play a monitoring role to evaluate the lessons learnt and use the learning to address Post 2015.

Foremost is the fact that Government recognition of the informal sector can only be realized through integrating non-formal education into mainstream education for citizens to further their academic and specialized trade skills knowledge in Papua New Guinea.

CSOs will continue to play the advocacy role to ensure the implementation of Post 2015.

## **Summary and conclusion**

Papua New Guinea has become education conscious in the past three years since the new Government was elected in the last National Election 2012. The Government's Medium Term Development Plan 2011-2015 has picked up the momentum in the past two years in ensuring Education is the focus for PNG to achieve its Vision 2050 in which PNG will be a country, with literate, prosperous, healthy, wealthy, wise and smart people living in peace".

Education financing has increased drastically and by 2014 the education budget rose to K1.5billion. However, corruption is still endemic and governance and transparency has been singled out as the hindering factor for effective education service delivery. While the current focus is on improving primary education to tertiary, adults, youth and lifelong learning skills have taken the back stage. Civil society Organizations provide informal schooling for adults to read and write as well as enhancing lifeskills that have not been supported through policies and financing.

It is therefore imperative that the current Government efforts be allowed to progress and that global policies and frameworks should not derail the good work begun by the current Government. PEAN and CSOs may have not been supported, but it is true that the Government intend to ensure that all Papua New Guinean will be given the opportunity to read and write and to become skillful if given the opportunity.

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<sup>i</sup> Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness

<sup>ii</sup> Governments, development agencies, civil society, non-government organizations and the media are but some of the partners working toward reaching these goals. World Conference on Education, Jomtien, Thailand 1990

<sup>iii</sup> Education Experience and Literacy Assessment Survey 2007-2011

<sup>iv</sup> The 2000 census places the country's self-declared national literacy status at 56.4 percent.

<sup>v</sup> PEAN and ASPBAE jointly undertook a detailed literacy assessment focusing on component skills of functional literacy such as reading, writing and numeracy as well as comprehension evidenced by the ability to apply these skills in familiar contexts to everyday life.

<sup>vi</sup> PEAN and NDoE Study on Best Practices and High Impact in Adult Literacy Program 2012