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Disability Inclusive

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New Minister visits Disability Division

The Ministry of Internal Affairs new Minister, Hon. Albert Nicholas visited the Disability Division during his ministerial welcome at the Ministry.

The Minister was able to meet the Director for Disability Issues, Mrs. Nooroa Numanga and Program, Research & Communications Officer, Ms. Lanieta Matanatabu.

Hon. Minister Nicholas was introduced to the role of the Division by the Secretary of the Ministry, Ms. Bredina Drollet and further introduced to the programs including the Disability Inclusive Development project by Mrs. Numanga.

The Minister was accompanied by his Personal Assistant, Ms. Tapaeru Napara during his visit.



From L-R: Mrs. Nooroa Numanga, Ms. Lanieta Matanatabu, Hon. Minister Albert Nicholas, Ms. Bredina Drollet, Ms. Tapaeru Napara

Cook Islands first to report to UNCRPD Committee

The Cook Islands was the first Pacific Island government to report to the UNCRPD Committee earlier in April this year.

The delegation was led by Minister for Health, Hon. Nandi Glassie and accompanied by Director of Disability Issues, Mrs. Nooroa Numanga & Crown Law Lawyer, Ms. Martha Henry.

The Committee commended the Cook Islands on a number of national achievements and was pleased with the progress towards an improved disability database framework that will serve as a basis for policies and programs across all government ministries.

In the spirit of the Convention, the Committee also expressed concerns and identified recommendations to address areas

of human rights of persons with disabilities. This included encouragement to review existing laws and regulations, policies, programs and services to ensure that they are not discriminatory and are disability inclusive. The Cook Islands is expected to submit next report to the Committee no later than June 2019.



Government Delegation reporting to the UNCRPD Committee in Geneva, Switzerland.

Mangaia disability stakeholders trained



During a group discussion during the CRPD training in Mangaia

“The articles of the Convention was well articulated during the training and translating it into the Mangaian language made it simple for us to understand”



Mrs. Tetangi Matapo

Disability stakeholders on Mangaia went through a three day training session on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

The training was welcomed by the Island Mayor & his Executive Officer, saying that the needs of persons with disabilities on the island have always been looked after by their own families as well as the Island's Disability Centre.

The three days further enhanced the participants knowledge of how they could better implement the CRPD on the Island.

Ms. Lanieta Matanatabu, conducted the session on the CRPD and the Disability Inclusive Development Project.

The participants were made aware of the key result areas of the project and how they can relate to their own examples on the Island.

This brought about a lot of discussions as participants begin to realize the attitudinal & environmental barriers that still exists on the Island.

One of the issues identified was the accessibility of persons with disabilities into public buildings around the

island, mainly in churches.

Other sessions included the role of the CINDC, conducted by Ms. Pat Farr and also the role of the Ombudsman's Office and introduction of the Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) approach believed to complement the existing development support approaches for persons with disabilities, which was conducted by Mrs. Nooroa Numanga.

Participants included public servants, Care-givers, Elderly Committee, health workers and persons with disabilities.

Disability Database development in progress

The development of a web-based disability database is currently in progress.

Its overall goal is to modify and populate the current Cook Islands Disability Database in collaboration with line ministries and non government partners in accordance to the World Health Organiza-

tion (WHO) International Classification of Functioning (ICF) Health and Disability framework.

The Database will be on the web system to enable disability related stakeholders to update information on persons with disability.

Mr. Moe Taruia had been recruited as the Disability IT Consultant taking the leading role in this with the inputs of the Disability stakeholders.



During one of the Disability Database stakeholders meeting at USP.

CRPD training opened eyes

“The CRPD training on Mangaia was an eye opener”, this was the reflections of Mangaia's female Member of Parliament, Mrs. Tetangi Matapo.

In light of the training, she identified that there were several attitudinal & environmental barriers still existed on Mangaia that hinders the full & effective participation of persons with disabilities.

“The articles of the Convention was well articulated during the training and translating it into the Mangaian language made it simple for us to understand” she said.

“Now the onus is on us to be able to enhance what we're already doing for persons with disabilities on the Island to be able to elevate them to the same level of participation

in our community”, she added.

Sharing of information from this training is important, so we can inform others about this important issue.

According to her, future training as such should be made aware well in advance so more people can attend and be part of it.

Aitutaki participants grateful for training

Participants in Aitutaki were grateful for the training on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and Disability Inclusive Development.

“It was a worthwhile training, really boosted my role and helped me to understand in depth issues that affect persons with disabilities and the support that’s available for them,” said Tupuariki Puna, Chairman of the Disability Committee for Aitutaki.

It was the first time for most of the participants to go through the Convention and helped them identify some of the barriers that still affect persons with disabilities on the island.

This generated a lot of discus-

sions in identifying environmental barriers such as ramps into public places, including the community hall, the bank and churches on the island.

Our Island leaders need to be aware of such barriers that limit the full and effective participation of a person with disability” said Tupuariki.

“The knowledge gained from this training will help me to support the committee, persons with disabilities as well as their families”, he added.

Also, the knowledge will be shared with churches and community groups alike, in order to promote inclusiveness of persons with disabilities on the island.

Participants included disability stakeholders on the island, namely from the island council, the different government agencies, community groups, including the Disability Centre on the island.

The team from the Disability Division and the Cook Islands National Disability Council were able to go on air during the Araura community radio program.

They also spoke about the importance of accepting persons with disabilities, providing the right environment for them & including them at all levels, which will encourage their full & effective participation in society.

“It was a worthwhile training, really boosted my role and helped me to understand in depth issues that affect persons with disabilities and the support that’s available for them.”

Including young women with disabilities

“Inclusion of young women with disabilities is vital for development as they also have the stamina and passion towards art & craft,” these were the words of Aitutaki’s Amiria Davey.

Young women with disabilities have been actively involved at the Aitutaki Disability Centre.

“They have been part of the Pareu making and other crafts at the Centre,” she said.

During a Tivaevae exhibition in Aitutaki, Tapita William Teiotu, said that it was vital to teach art & craft to women, especially the young ones as this tradition is continually eroding.

“We’re trying to build the capacity of young women to help us maintain this tradition of making Tivaevae in Aitutaki,” she continued.

These women leaders in Aitutaki believe that working together is the way forward for any project implementation concerning women on the island.

There are also plans to develop the Vainetini craft shop on the island that show cases the art & crafts of the women in Aitutaki.

“Some of the challenges that women face are lack of resources such as video cameras to capture the teaching sessions, financial support to buy materials since it is very expensive.” said Teiotu.

Plans are also underway to include young women with disabilities in these Tivaevae teaching sessions in the future.



Reuela at screen printing pareu

Inclusion promoted in Schools



A recent “Just Play” program organized by Cook Islands Football Association (CIFA) with all schools in Rarotonga saw the Disability Division speaking on the importance of Inclusion.

The program included organized sporting activities and drills for the children at the Rutaki school, with social messages delivered during their water breaks.

The program is aimed at getting children to participate in activities outside of the classroom, at the same time learn about selected social themes.



The Cook Islands National Disability Council was also part of the delegation to report to the UNCRPD Committee in Geneva, Switzerland in April this year.



Representatives of the Cook Islands National Disability Council

Well done to Helen & Margret

Supporting women with disabilities to getting back into the work force or sustaining themselves in small businesses is a vital part of an Inclusive community,

As such, two women with disabilities were able to sustain their livelihoods through employment & a small business.

Helen has been working hard to produce her t-shirts & pareu for resale at the Punanga Nui market.

Similarly, Margret was able to find employment with the Cook Islands RSA for six hours per week. Her wages are subsidized by a small grant from the Cooks Foundation.

Both the women have been active members of the Creative Centre and are both doing very well.



Helen pictured here with her Pareu that she makes for resale at the Punanga Nui market.



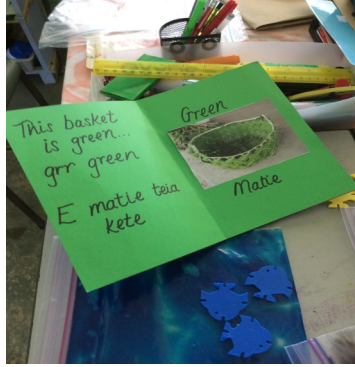
Margret receiving her pay slip from her employer Mr. Denis Dwane.

Inclusive Education

The Ministry of Education provides disability advice, expertise and support for students, families and teaching staff to promote an inclusive society. The Ministry follows an ecological approach to disability, focusing on the relationship between the person and environment. Ability is favoured over diagnosis and disability is seen as a human experience we all encounter. (source: www.education.gov.ck)



Teacher Aide training with SIT Tutor Suzy Wells.



Exemplary resources developed by Takitumu Teacher Aide Katreana



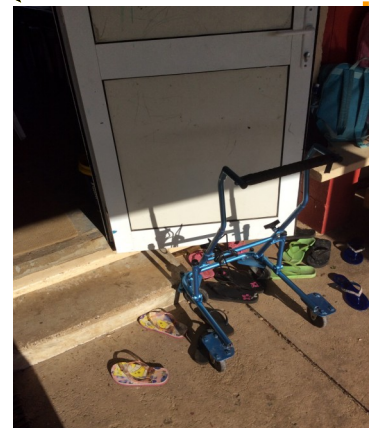
Inclusive Education Snapshots



Teacher Aides Ms. Moeroa Atariki & Ms Rangī Mariri in Apīi Nikao building Inclusive resources.



Teacher Aide working with IT unit.



Accessibility into the classrooms continues to be a barrier for students



For more information;

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This Newsletter is part of the Disability Inclusive Development (DID) Project, which is a 2 year funded project by the government of Australia to support the Cook Islands Government's development of strategies and programs to fulfil its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and more effectively empower persons with disabilities to fulfil their potential, prosper and participate in the social, economic, political and cultural life of the community.

The DID project also promotes the partnerships & collaboration of all disability stakeholders (Government, Non-government & Disabled Persons Organisations) in the Cook Islands.



Disability inclusion vital for Social Development

Disability was part of the Social Development session during the Development Partners meeting earlier this year.

The disability sector offered the opportunity for participants to learn about the partnership with the Australian government, a 2 year Disability Inclusive Development project and link in with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Cook Islands National Disability Council and its member organisations.

It was an opportunity for development partners to learn about inclusiveness in all aspects of development, particularly in areas of health, education, gender and other social sectors.

The aim of this interactive session was for participants to learn more about the policies and activities that

shape the social sector within the Cook Islands.

The meeting space was set up as a modern learning environment - the way in which Cook Islands schools are moving towards.

The environment created a great opportunity to meet representatives from donor agencies such as the New Zealand & Australian government, the UN Agencies, Regional agencies such as the Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

Other Ministries that were represented during this session included the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health.

The meeting was held from the 9th-13th of February this year.



Disability Division staff & members of the CINDC during the Social Development session.