

HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRAMME (RRRT)

Disability Advocacy Project



A consultation on the rights of persons with disabilities by SPC RRRT in Tarawa, Kiribati, 2013

Location:

Fiji, Kiribati, Tonga, Nauru, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu

Duration:

2012 - 2015

Goal:

To empower persons with disabilities throughout the Pacific to use human rights advocacy as a basis to seek a more inclusive environment and better access to essential services.

Partners:

Pacific Disability Forum (PDF)
Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS)

Project details:

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), adopted by the United Nations in 2006, has been the catalyst for a paradigm shift in how persons with disabilities are appreciated. It has changed the advocacy approach of disability organisations in the Pacific where there has been a shift from asking and expecting charity to negotiating with the state and others for the promotion, protection and fulfilment of the rights of persons with disabilities.

The support from SPC RRRT in disability rights in the region is provided through:

- skills focused lobbying and advocacy training for disabled persons organisations (DPOs) in Fiji, Kiribati, Tonga, Nauru, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu as well as countries upon request;
- technical assistance to SPC member governments to assist the development of disability inclusive programmes, policies and increased legislative protection for persons with disabilities;
- support to Pacific Island governments to ratify and report on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD);
- partnerships with the key stakeholders in disability rights in the region and being active members of the Regional Disability Informal Working Group of PIFS.

Success in numbers:

2 Pacific Island countries received support from SPC RRRT that contributed to their ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (Kiribati ratified CRPD in 2013 and Tuvalu in 2014).

SPC RRRT also supported the development of Tonga's National Disability Policy that has been endorsed by Government and Solomon Island's National Disability Policy that is waiting to be endorsed by the Government.

Success in words:

'This consultation is timely and appropriate. Tonga must not continue to turn a blind eye to the many challenges faced by persons with disabilities and their organisations, such as negative attitudes, prejudice and lack of recognition of the contribution people with disabilities make to society' **Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of Internal Affairs Lopeti Senituli speaking at a 3-day national consultation on the rights of persons with disabilities in Tonga, August 2013**

"As a person with disability, this training has given me lobbying skills to advocate for the issues that persons with disabilities face and the changes that can help them. I want to make a difference for deaf and blind children who have been left out of the education system. I want brail and sign language to be compulsory subjects at the Solomon Islands National University. I know that this campaign can make a change in the future" **Eddie Babauisi, Solomon Islands, disability advocate and participant at a legislative lobbying training by SPC RRRT, 2014**