

## **UPR REPORT SUBMITTED BY DISABILITY PROMOTION & ADVOCACY ASSOCIATION (DPA Vanuatu).**

Disability Promotion & Advocacy Association (DPA) was established in 1999. It was registered in 2002 as a non government organization under the Charitable Organization Act, Chapter 140. DPA is a self-help national umbrella organization of and for persons with disabilities & the NGO Focal Point for the Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities.

In 2007 Vanuatu signed the CRPD and on 23 April, 2008 Vanuatu ratified the CRPD. Vanuatu has yet to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Vanuatu is the first Pacific Country to ratify the UN convention on the rights of persons with disability, and has yet to submit its initial report which is currently undergoing consultation with relevant government and disability stakeholders.

Vanuatu's constitution guarantees fundamental rights and freedom for citizens however; it excludes disability as a prohibited ground for discrimination. Currently there is no specific disability legislation with some progressive changes in the Education Act which guarantees free and compulsory education for children with disabilities.

Amongst other issues the Vanuatu disability policy addresses discrimination against Women living with disabilities as a key priority. In early 2013, the Government of Vanuatu through the Department of Women's Affairs facilitated a three a year pilot project in South Santo, Sanma Province, on the implementation of the family protection act.

DPA works collaboratively with the Department of women's affairs to implement this law, as people with disabilities are being discriminated and particularly gender- based violence

### **Violence Against Women with Disabilities**

Vanuatu Women's Center Study on Violence against Women and Children 2010-2011 revealed that 60 per cent of women experience physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime by husbands/partners. The study found more than 1 in 4 women experienced physical violence by non-partners over fifteen years. It also found that 1 in 3 women experienced child sexual abuse under the age of 15, and sexual violence over the age of 15.

Although this data is not disability inclusive, its highlights the increased risk and vulnerability of all women and girls in particular women with disabilities who have much more limited access to legal, health and protection services. The

Pacific Sisters with Disabilities at the Intersection of Discrimination Report highlighted that women and girls with disabilities are at greater risk of all forms of violence: at home, in their community and in institutions. In particular, women with intellectual disabilities and mental impairment who are less likely to access support, refuge or legal redress.

Often, those perpetrating the abuse are immediate family members, carers or in a position of power, which discourages women and girls with disabilities from reporting for fear they may be further victimized. The abuse therefore remains unrecognized by the public and by policy makers.

### **Economic Opportunities for women with disabilities**

Due to structural and systemic discrimination women remain in low paying job, are subject to harassment and their safety and health often compromised in unregulated work fields. The lack of equal employment opportunity laws and protective laws remains a challenge. Women with disabilities who are less educated face an additional obstacle as a result of their disability. The options for livelihood and opportunities for income generation are very limited. DPA ran trainings on economic literacy for rural women with disabilities; there are outcomes of the training. e.g women with disability came out to sell their product in the streets, to shop owners and even in communities , DPA also established a savings scheme " Yumi save sef scheme (We can save Scheme) . A total of 175 members, 54 are women with disabilities.

### **Issue 1**

- DPA has 15 official affiliate groups in 6 Provinces in Vanuatu. One of the strength of DPA is a co-group of 15 volunteers who are doing advocacy work in different areas in Vanuatu with any pay.
- Services providers are not doing enough work to assist people with disabilities because no co-fund
- As stated Vanuatu is consist of 83 islands and a scattered, Geographical location is one big issue Transport is very costly, DPA cannot reach every islands to implement it's activities
- Not enough disability work being done at the Department of Women's affairs as they concentrate more on women than disability
- Government grant is vt4, 000,000 per annum; Disability NGOs received 10% of this grant to do our activities.

- No specific data for persons with disabilities.
- Vanuatu has an inclusive education policy which was launched in 2011, no implementation has been done

## **Recommendation**

- Recommendation that the Disability Desk Office to be housed under the Prime Minister's office or Ministry of Home affairs;
- Government should co-fund DPO's and Service Providers;
- Government to increase disability budget;
- Government to implement inclusive education policy as soon as practicable;
- Government to facilitate a national survey on disability;
- Government to include disability in census, statistics and data gathering;
- recommendation to ratify the Optional Protocol;
- strengthen its efforts to implement the convention on the rights of persons with disabilities by amending the constitution prohibit discrimination against persons with disabilities and support the role of disabled persons' organizations;
- enact and implement legislation promote equal rights for persons with disabilities including special measures;
- Commission a research on discrimination faced by women with disabilities in employment, violence, health, education, decision making and political life;
- Vanuatu is currently implementing its Family Protection Act which makes provision for protection orders, counseling services and education to prevent violence against women and girls. There is a need to ensure that women with disabilities are informed on the new law and protection orders and services target women with disabilities;
- Audit of police stations, courts and safe houses and urgent action to

ensure that these services are accessible and accommodates all disabilities;

- Employment legislation to promote non discrimination on the basis of sex and disability;
- Provision of equal employment opportunity and quota for women with disabilities;
- Income generating projects to target women with disabilities;
- Support to increase opportunities for entrepreneurship and access to loans, credits and saving schemes for women with disabilities.