

“NALU Striving for Youth Education”

By Peter LARRY
Freelance Journalist

GIVING a child a second chance in life through education is something that will have a lasting impact upon that particular child in his or her future.

Year in and year out we see a lot of school dropouts from grades 10 & 12, but yet the government of Papua New Guinea doesn't really know what to do with these vital human resource.

Surely, the government has put more money into the Education Sector, as we see new classrooms being built in schools throughout the country, upgrading of school facilities and introduction of computer labs and Information Technology (IT) into schools but yet the number of dropouts are still very consistent.

As always, where the government cannot provide or finds it difficult to step in to assist, Churches and NGO have a vital role to play. In terms of health and education, Churches and NGOs are seen as the front runners in providing these two services to the people, more particularly in remote villages and districts throughout the country.

The Catholic Church has done a lot of humanitarian work for small districts and LLGs in PNG and it is very important that the government and church partnership needs to be strengthened to bring development that can bring change to our people, our districts and the country as a whole in all of our country's priority development areas.

In the education sector, a very high demand exists in rural districts amongst our young people but few government funded institutions is there to give them a second chance in getting a better education.

Only a few of these Centre of Distance Education (CODE) or now known as FODE institutions are set up and run by churches and NGO and funding is always a

A Feature Article about a Distance Education Centre and Learning institution which gives second chances to school dropouts from Nuku and Aitape-Lumi Districts, Sundaun Province. The NALU College of Advanced Education, where “Learning is for Life”.



School's admin block.

major problem but changes is the only positive outcomes which leads to development.

One such institution which really needs government support and funding for its operation is the NALU College of Advanced Education, which is an FODE affiliated institution that provides matriculation study for grades 10s and 12s dropout.

The centre is located in Aitape, Sundaun Province. The name 'NALU' stands for Nuku and Aitape-Lumi Districts, which takes in students from these areas.

Since the establishment of the college in 2001, it has functioned as a reliable and accredited institution for the purpose of helping

non-school leavers who had to leave the formal education system and now wanted to complete their secondary schooling.

The college runs on funding and backing from the Catholic Church, as its initial funder was Bishop Austin Crapp, head of Catholic Diocese of Aitape.

Donors and funds followed through with the right connections and in October 9th 2002 Nalu opened its doors for study for the first batch of twenty (20) C.O.D.E now known as F.O.D.E students.

According to the Director of Nalu College, Brother Thomas Rice, there were many challenges faced in getting the institution off the ground but with determination and the right sup-

port, a unique educational center that would benefit the future generation of Aitape was born.

“The College has come a long way, there has been mismanagement, delays in funds coming to us from the district administration, but we do with whatever resources we have to cater for our students who are eager to learn and have shown willingness and drive to be educated,” said Br Rice.

He said that after the first batch of students from Nalu completed their studies and received their certificates, news spread throughout the villages and LLGs as the number of intakes increased.

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Stop the filthy habit tips...

How to avoid spitting buai around public areas and at your home



Carry a plastic bag when strolling out for a buai break...



Skin the buai and drop skin in plastic bag...



Chew buai...



and spit into plastic...



Tie the plastic tightly..

Throw away plastic at the rubbish tip near you...



Rubbish Drum



Classroom and Library

“NALU Striving for Youth Education”

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“Once the numbers of students began to go up, it was evident that we needed learning materials, books, as well as that we had to build new classrooms.”

“I asked the local member and the district administration for their assistance in supporting the operation for the college but after three years now there has been no response coming back to me,” said Br Rice.

He said that that the college is one success story here in Aitape but the district administration has been turning a blind eye in supporting it.

“Nalu college is a positive development for the district and it should be taken seriously by the district administration since alot of youths out in the villages have dropped out of the education system and are wondering the streets of Aitape, but giving

ing them a second chance in such institution like this, makes them contribute more to the development of the district when they find employment after completing their studies.”

Br Rice also mentioned that the only government assistance that the college receive was back in 2013, a cheque donation of K60,000.00 by the district administration back then.

“Since then, all our requests to the current district administration seem to have fallen on deaf ears,” said Br Rice.

During our chat, i could see that he had the heart for the youths of Aitape and wants to change the district through educating the youths, and Nalu College is the key in doing that.

Br Thomas told me that the college has also become as a rehabilitation centre for many

of the youths.

“Some of the students here, especially males, have been to prisons, involved in criminal activities and known to their communities as big-heads or failures, but once they enrol here they have become a completely different person,” he said.

There are some current developments happening in the college, which is the construction of new building for Open Plan Learning, Computer Lab, Ablution blocks and Extension of the Library.

Brother Rice says little has been known about exposing the positive development that Nalu College brings to remote Aitape –Lumi Distric and the local member Patrick Pruaitch needs to be proactive in ensuring that developments with results are funded as priority in the district.



Construction of Open Plan Learning Centre and Computer Centre.



New Ablution Block.



Library Extension work ongoing.



Sports & Recreational Area.

HIV/AIDS kills! Stick to one partner...

Students urged to take up study in China

By Mathew Yakai

STUDENTS from Tusbab Secondary School in Madang province are urged to do well in their studies and plan ahead to take up further studies in China.

Mr. Jeffers Teargun Heptol, Founder and Director of Education Pacific Agency (EPA), urged more than 50 students doing Grade 12 at Tusbab Secondary and staff on Thursday August 25 to consider China as a destination for study excellence and further education.

Mr. Heptol who has been recommending students for Chinese scholarship in the past till today encourages students for study opportunities said PNG's academic system turns away many students but he is recommending students through EPA providing second chances to obtain masters and PhD at an early age.

"EPA has recommended 15 post graduates and 55 undergraduate currently studying in China under various programs. Five of them have graduated and return to PNG,

now working in various areas,"

"Fifty percent of the scholarship recipients are females and 50% are males. We ensure they not only study hard but study smart to make tangible changes in the country," Mr. Teargun said.

Mr. Teargun said China has 83 universities amongst the top 1000 universities in the world and has some of the top universities with credible research base where PNG can learn from.

"China invented gunpowder, Great Wall and many inventions and has the research base. In any universities in the world you go, there are Chinese professors and China is considered as one of the top destinations for study," Mr. Teargun said.

When talking to students, Mr. Heptol urged them to obtain C Grade or above so they are eligible candidates for scholarship under EPA recommendation.

Mr. Heptol has approval from various universities in China and recommends students directly to be admitted to the recommended



Jeffers Heptol doing awareness at Tusbab Secondary in Madang encouraging students to take up further studies in China.

universities under their scholarship.

EPA has been recommending students in the past five years and to date, more than 70 students are currently studying in China.

"EPA's vision is to have educated majority living a quality life through education and are able to help others live an improved life in order to alleviate poverty,"

"Our mission is to provide peo-

ple their dreams realised through education by means of empowering, encouraging, motivating and education accessibility for all including disadvantaged and the women/girls," Mr Heptol said.

Surge in interest for Bougainville cocoa grants

Bougainville's new Commodity Support Facility is generating a high level of interest among cocoa farmers from across the autonomous region.

Grants of K300,000 to K600,000 are available for genuine proposals to lift cocoa production and improve the quality of exports.

Hundreds of application forms have been distributed to farmers and farmer associations seeking to access grants in the CSF's first call for proposals, which closes on September 17.

The K7 million-a-year grants scheme is an initiative of the Autonomous Bougainville Government and the Governments of Papua New Guinea, Australia and New Zealand.

Recent outreach sessions in Buin, Arawa and Buka informed farmers and agricultural officers how the CSF grants process works.

The sessions were conducted by the CSF Secretariat and the ABG Department of Primary Industries and Marine Resources.

ABG Primary Industries Minister



Dr Thomas Webster attended CSF information session.

Nicholas Darku urged DPI officers to be vigilant in supporting the CSF rollout.

"You have to work with the CSF secretariat to identify those genuine farmers who will use this assistance to build better livelihoods

for themselves and their communities," the Minister said.

He said DPI officers' local knowledge meant they had an important role to play in ensuring the program's full potential was realised.

CSF Grants Manager Belinda-

Maree Gara said proposals must be from organised farmer groups with 40-50 members and a lead applicant who would be directly accountable for the project.

Eligible activities include procurement of planting materials,

tools and equipment; fermentation and drying projects; better market information systems; and transportation services to deliver production inputs to remote villages.

Applicants were urged to consider the CSF's commitment to providing income earning opportunities for women and young people.

Ms Gara said participants in the scheme needed to be aware of the roles of implementing partners.

"In terms of community awareness and engagements, the Secretariat will take the leading role, while the DPI will continue to support CSF activities at various levels of implementation," she said.

Ms Gara wanted applicants to understand that, due to the high number of applications, not all eligible farmers would necessarily be successful in the first round. However, unsuccessful applicants would be able to apply for CSF awards in subsequent rounds.

HIV/AIDS kills! Stick to one partner...

Final Part of a Belgian Volunteer's story

By Veronica Hatutasi

Last month, Wantok Today ran the story of Guy Joris, a Belgian volunteer with the Catholic Church who lives with his family and works under the auspicious of the Bougainville Catholic Diocese in the remote rural southwest Bougainville mainland.

This final part concludes the story and tells of the family's life and work among the people they have come to know, love, live, interact among them as their own kind, and even know and speak their tokples or local languages (Banoni, Siwai, Nagovis). One of the daughters, Esther, even married a local Mariga guy and they have two children.

Read on and find out more as Mr Guy tells his story.

"When we arrived in December 1999 with the whole family, our Lord provided father Thomas Terere, the parish priest from Hantoa to bring us all the way to Mariga in Southwest Bougainville.

"Fr. Thomas knew me from my previous trip, but did not know the rest of the family. He was at Kokopau in Buka to get a broken tire for his vehicle fixed. He volunteered to bring us home without hesitation since he himself is from Mariga and knows the road. What a wonderful help we received. It was a long and difficult trip due to heavy rain and very bad road conditions. Especially around the Panguna mine area where we had to drive very carefully over bridges without timber lining.

"We arrived safe in the middle of the night and still remember the wondering faces of the local people and the frightened looks of the children.

"The next morning there was a lot of excitement meeting the local families. The children grew confident after a while seeing that these white strangers had also small children.

"So we settled in very well and in no time, our four little ones started speaking the local Banoni language. Naomi and Emmanuel were enrolled at the Murua Community School and they were surprised to see a lot of much bigger and older boys and girls sharing the same classes. It was the aftermath of the crisis. Emmanuel became shy since he could not match those big boys in the sporting



Guy Joris, a Belgian volunteer.

events.

"Growing up amongst the people, the children all became very fluent in the local language and moving to high school exposed them also to Nagovis and Siwai languages which they also managed to understand. As for me and Denise, my wife, we struggle to speak it properly, but no matter how we tried, the grace was not granted.

"Living in a community is always a challenge, no matter in what part of the world one operates. Although life in the community proved simple in the beginning, it became more stressing when time moved on.

"First there was a big landslide in the Panguna mountains which made all travel by road impossible. So the only way to get provisions and mails from Buka, I had to walk to Marau on the beach to find a boat to get to Buka and back.

"Those trips took almost a week with a lot of unexpected experiences on the way. Hot sun was as bad as heavy rain on the open sea in a dinghy. Also the walkabouts through the bush roads loaded with cargo took it out on the human body. When finally the landslide got cleared a few years later, the road was opened again. Shortly afterwards the roadblock at the Morgan junction became another obstacle.

"As foreigners, we had to seek permission from Francis Ona himself to allow us through. Father Luis Lobosi, the parish priest at Sovele then, asked me if I would like to go to Guava and ask for permission. He made an appointment and both of us drove up to Guava.

"I was interviewed for two full days on a head to head encounter with Mr. Ona, his guards standing outside the door.

"The first day the interview was on my background in education, work experience and family life. The second day the focus was shifted to my religious background. When Francis learned I was Catholic, he asked me if I had heard something about an alleged apparition of our Lady in Medjugorje (Croatia).

"Here I saw Gods providence at work again. When we were in Belgium in 1995, we made two visits to Medjugorje with the whole family, including my old dad.

"Since this trips had a vast influence on my own spiritual life, I had a book with me about the events of Medjugorje. I showed it to Francis Ona and explained it. He stood up suddenly, embraced me and said : Guy you are most welcome to help and assist my people. This cleared the roadblock at Morgan, but started at the same time the more difficult task to work with the people.

"As you know how it is rural communities, if one person moves somewhere, everybody knows his whereabouts.

"Certainly a white volunteer among all the "blacks" was easy to follow up on. Here, the deep division created during the crisis became apparent.

"In the villages where I operated for the work, the chiefs approved my visit to Mr. Ona, but the administration reported me to the authorities in Buka in the negative, stating I was Mr. Ona's advisor. This resulted in a strange deportation

notification. I was informed by some village chiefs that they had heard on the radio I was put on deportation. When I sought clarification in Port Moresby, I was told it was an entire Bougainville problem and I could continue my work.

"This did not make work easy, since the problems of division in the communities were not solved. Some people tried to take advantage of this situation by asking me to relocate the project to their area, but this was mostly done for reasons of personal gain.

"Since the project site was a two hours walk through the bush from the village, I used to be home with the family only in the weekends. So we shifted our location to the project site, located on the bank of the Puriaka River a few miles downstream from Boku station. We started a brickmaking school with boys from Nagovis, Kieta, Buin and Manetai.

"A few years ago we had about 50 students. Unfortunately we had to stop the school due to problems with landownership of the project site.

"Thanks to a charity group from Belguim, called "friends of Papua", mostly from relatives and friends we were able to support the local communities with a lot of things. From garden tools, to clothing, bikes, wheelbarrows to the local communities, wheelchairs, hospital beddings and medicines to local hospitals like Boku, Moratona and Buka, apart from the equipment for the brick making project.

"This made some people envious, leading to the landowners issue. It is indeed sad to see personal interests being the stumbling block for real progress.

"The situation of Bougainville after the terrible crisis is not a easy one. Most people are having great expectations about the future, but rely too heavily on the government for solving all the problems.

"In fact most of the people do not know where to go since they are forced to serve two masters. One is the ABG, the other, the PNG government. One knows it will love one and hate the other....

"There is a lot of good work done from all sides to find the best solutions, but for the simple villagers, it is not coming from one single source, and the divisions remain.

"We came here since 2000 which means, 15 years on Bougainville, and indeed the circumstances of life in the village have hardly changed. Like everywhere else, changes seem to happen first in the urban centres where the bureaucrat is.

"So you can see changes in Buka first, just like in Port Moresby, while outside these centres, hardly anything changes apart from the mobile phones now available everywhere.

"It is also frustrating for the local people to see the far away Japanese granting the building of some bridges on the road from Buka to Arawa, while the close-by neighbours can only erect signboards signalling their commitment to the upgrading of the potholes.

"Those that benefited most from the Panguna mine find it hard to reconcile with the people from Bougainville for the closure of mine. But this too seems to be the general tendency in the world at large, where the wealthy want more all the time. A millionaire, who was considered rich 20 years ago, becomes second class in the world of billionaires.

"We always felt at home where we stayed, at Yule Island, Waima, Port Moresby or now at Boku. We still feel blessed by our Lord for taking us out on this journey.

"Knowing the difference between living in the comfort of Belgium and living on Bougainville, we prefer the simple life here, closer to the beauty of creation.

"Life means so much more than comfort and riches. Our work with the brick project and a chocolate project is only partial occupying our time. After our visit to Medjugorje, our Lady guided me to the mystical writers in the church lifting my spiritual understanding of our Lord's Love to greater heights. "His providence again enabled me to share His Love with the people in PNG and Bougainville. So He used us to bring TLIG (True Life in God), the Marian Movement of Priests (MMP), the Divine Mercy (Sister Faustina) and the teachings on the Divine Will (Luisa Picaretti) to Bougainville and PNG. This Love makes our life worth living no matter what the outside circumstances look like. May God bless Bougainville and PNG," concludes Mr Guy.