ST PIUS X COLLEGE, CHATSWOOD AND EDMUND RICE FOUNDATION

Visit to PAPUA NEW GUINEA - 26-31 October 2014

Desired Outcomes:
1. The ERFA visitors experience a basic introduction to the social, educational, health services and geographical situation in Papua New Guinea (PNG).
2. The ERFA visitors develop an introductory understanding of the work of a Special Education Resource Centre and the implementation of that within the Network of Callan Services for Persons with Disabilities.
3. ERFA visitors gain an insight as to how ERFA and/or EREA schools and/or others in the Edmund Rice Network could assist the work of the Network of Callan Services.
4. Personal relationships between people within ERFA and EREA and the Network of Callan Services have been commenced.
5. St Pius X College, Chatswood Leaders strengthen the College’s partnership with Callan Services through The Edmund Rice Foundation Australia.

Travelling Personnel:
Br Bill Wilding – Edmund Rice Foundation (Australia) – ERFA
Mr John Couani - St Pius X College Chatswood (Principal) (Sydney, Australia)
Mr Mark Casey – St Pius X College, Chatswood (Assistant Principal – Mission and Identity) (Sydney, Australia)
Mr Mark McIglaughlin – Christian Brothers Oceania Province (Adelaide)

Host: Br Kevin Ryan – Director Callan Services PNG

INTRODUCTION TO CALLAN SERVICES PNG

Statement of Purpose: “We, the Network of Callan Services for Persons with Disabilities, inspired by the life of Jesus and the work of Edmund Rice, express the liberating heart of God, so that persons with disabilities in Papua New Guinea participate and contribute meaningfully in an inclusive society.”

Core values: The core values of Callan Services are Respect, Justice, Presence and Compassion

Callan Services Centres: Throughout PNG there are 23 Service Centres for persons with Disabilities. Of these 19 are conducted by Callan Services making it the largest provider for the country. The locations of these centres is shown below. We visited the Vanimo, Wewak and Goroka.
OUR ARRIVAL

Meeting first in Cairns we (Br Bill Wilding, Mark McGlaughlin, Mark Casey and John Couani) flew to Port Moresby in the deepening afternoon of Sunday 26 October 2014 where we were warmly welcomed by Br Kevin Ryan (Director Callan Services) and Michael Lulu (Project Coordinator for Support Services for Inclusive Community for Callan Services across PNG). Port Moresby is a busy city with much going on in preparation for the Pacific Games in 2015. The people are hospitable and inquisitive.

As the afternoon drew quickly to its close we took a short trip from our accommodation in the Archdiocesan Office of Port Moresby and headed to the Port to take in the sites. A glorious sunset and strong winds with the warm climate combined to make a memorable close to our first day. Day 2 would see us travel to one of the North Western areas near the border of West Papua. The coastal town of Vanimo.

Day 2

An early start and the busy morning Port Moresby traffic leads us to the bustling airport for our flight via Madang to Vanimo. After a brief stop at our accommodation in the Diocesan hostel, our Host, Valentine took us to our first school visit, the beautiful Holy Trinity Catholic School. This school is located directly on the coast and along the beach at Bora. It is a school of approximately 260 students and included within the school is Callan Services Vanimo.
Holy Trinity school gathered and welcomed each of us with a handmade traditional necklace finely crafted from seashells gathered from their beach at Baro. They sang a welcome to us and we spoke briefly to the school before the students were cheerfully dismissed for the afternoon. We then gathered with the staff of Holy Trinity School and Callan Services for a “talk-talk” to hear about their inclusive educational model and provision for all the students. Their approach is based on inclusion where the students integrate into mainstream classes and are assisted by Callan Services staff. All of the students at Holy Trinity whether they are from Callan Services or not, try to learn sign language to assist the hearing impaired students. There are also withdrawal programs. Resources are sparse and the Callan Services staff are developing a handbook for their sign language to assist in the teaching of hearing impaired students. The Principal of Holy Trinity explained that there is pressure for classroom space and that if mainstream enrolments were to grow, it could make it difficult to give space over to Callan Services into the future.
Logging

There is a major logging industry in the areas surrounding Vanimo and while it brings employment and some wealth to the district it is a concern to the environment. Many in the local community fear that there is too much and there should be greater attention to selective logging. There is not sufficient recompense to the original landowners.

Day 3 – Tuesday October 28

A brilliant day of sunshine but it is very hot and humid from early hours. We travel to Waromo Village where we meet a newly established pre-school only 6 months into operations. It is called Edmund Rice Play School and it caters for students aged 4, 5 and 6. These children have difficulties ranging from hearing and sight impairment to some mobility, language and speech difficulties. The parents are active and greatly appreciative of this early identification and assistance. The children are taught Bible stories, songs and various activities. This operates on a Monday only at present.

They came today to speak with us of the importance of this new school to their community. Students then progress to Callan Services and on to Holy Trinity School.

Adjacent is the area for the pre-school. One of the villagers has given over the underneath area of his house for the pre-school to operate for two mornings per week. The parents have put down gravel and plastic matting so that the children can sit and do their lessons. The parents highly value this service and it enables early identification of students with disabilities.
as well as the valuable opportunity for early childhood education for all these children. There are approximately 60 children in total.

The Worrimo village community live right on the beach in an idyllic setting. The district is rich in foods such as bananas, pawpaw, cucumber, coconuts and other tropical fruits. Br Bill is seen here enjoying the juice of his first coconut.

Sometimes logs falling from the ships are washed onto the shoreline where villagers pull them ashore and make them into canoes.

Worriigo village is building a new Church “from their own pockets” called St Luke’s Church. The Catholic faith is deep within this community and throughout PNG. It is a Christian country and this is named in their parliament. Catholic education is highly valued and 50% of students are enrolled in Catholic schools and staff salaries are paid by the government.

From Worriigo village in Lodii we travelled to within 15 km of the West Papua border to meet with the community in Mushi village where there are 4 children in need of Callan Services. One with speech difficulties, 2 with hearing impairment another with profound sight problems. We were warmly greeted with Lais and then talked about the needs of this small community in overcoming the learning problems of the children and their strong desire for assistance.

The village leader, Ramon, spoke passionately and emotionally of his daughter who had been assisted by the visiting teachers from Callan Services. His daughter had shown dramatic improvement in her speech impediment and learning. We shared a special time with the parents and these children. We enjoyed bananas and beautiful coconuts before heading back to Vanimo and onto our visit to Don Bosco High School.
Don Bosco High School has approximately 600 students and the day was a very happy one as it was Year 10 Graduation Day and a girl who had transitioned from Callan Services had been acclaimed as College Dux. This was truly celebrated and promoted as an example of the way in which the education of students with disabilities can successfully transition students into mainstream education. This has increased the awareness of Callan Services and assists in decreasing the stigma sometimes associated with students with disabilities.

Later in the evening we were blessed to formally meet with Bishop Ceasare Bonivento who has been Bishop in Vanimo for 40 years and is of Italian background. He has an extraordinary vision and drive. He has a passion for Catholic education, health and welfare. He praised the work of Callan Services and congratulated Br Ryan for the achievements of the students at Don Bosco High School and highlighted the wonderful Dux of the Year 10 Graduating class.

Bishop Bonivento shared his vision of a hospital, Primary school and most importantly Teachers College on the site adjacent to Don Bosco High School which is owned by the Diocese. The Bishop also shared his dream that Callan Services would also have a permanent Centre there.

**Day 4 – Wednesday 29 October Wewak**

Rain and the cooler morning was most welcome as we prepared for our flight to Wewak. Br Kevin Ryan (Director Callan Services) is based in Wewak and we stayed with the brothers community. The National Office for Callan Services is located here in Wewak and is part of a large educational community including the Divine Word University, Wewak Teachers’ College, Callan Services National Institute, Callan Services Special Education Resource Centre and a Catholic Primary and Secondary School. There are Boarding facilities for Males and Females. It is a mini city.
In the centre of the complex is the Chapel and as it was near the end of October, the month of Our Lady, there was a major procession throughout the streets of Wewak and into this education centre of the statue of Our Lady of Fatima as there is a huge devotion to her. The Chapel as you can see is specially adorned in Mary’s honour.

We had meetings with the various senior Callan Services staff including Mr John Kaisek, the Principal of Callan Studies National Institute at Wewak Teachers’ College, Mr Charles Kondo who is one of the community Based Rehabilitation Facilitators and Br Kevin Ryan and Mr Allan Palilli who is Callan Services Business Manager. It was here that we presented on behalf of St Pius X College to Callan Services a $12,000 donation through the Edmund Rice Foundation. These funds were raised by our students through the Junior School Walkathon and the College’s Social Justice Day.

**Day 5 – Thursday 30 October Port Moresby and Gerahu Centre**

An early start! We rose at 3.45am to travel to the airport for an early check in and flight for Port Moresby. We left at 5.50am and touched down just after 7.00am.

We joined the Brothers’ community at Erima for breakfast and were reunited with Br Phil Grandy, ex-student of St Pius X College. We met Br Adrian who is the Project Manager of the Christian Blind Mission (CBM) and the Callan Services Coordinator of all Training Services including Community Rehabilitation such as Visual Impairment, Hearing Impairment, Community Awareness, Prevention Education and Child Protection.

Following breakfast we visited O’Connor Community School, near the Callan Services Centre in Gerehu, to observe the Mobile Screening of young children for hearing and visual Impairment. This mobile unit is conducted by Callan Services through their regional services and they have visited all Elementary and primary schools in Port Moresby. The aim is for early detection and intervention as well as education and parental guidance. This was most impressive and a key to improvement is early detection.
The highlight of the day was our extensive visit to Callan Services – Gerehu where we observed classes in action. These lessons were broken into groupwork concentrating on the specific disabilities of its students. Some were hearing impaired, learning sign language. Others had multiple difficulties including mobility, language difficulties and hearing problems.

This community welcomed us with great generosity and following our classroom visits and interviews with staff we shared a luncheon with the children, volunteers and staff.

**Callan Services PNG – A mission to celebrate**

The visit to Callan Services PNG clearly reflected the extraordinary efforts of all involved throughout the 19 Centres and it is with deep admiration and appreciation that we offer our sincere congratulations and thanks to Br Kevin Ryan and his team for their work serving the students and families of these wonderful communities.