

Flashplayer ab Version 8 wird zum Anzeigen dieses Elements benötigt.



EDUCATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT AND WELFARE OF THE COMMUNITY

A PROGRAM SUPPORTS THE DEVELOPMENT IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA AND THE SOLOMON ISLANDS

Rays of Light Foundation is working to address the educational needs of young people in the sparsely inhabited, remote regions of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. The shortage of school places for those entering the high school system leaves many Year 8 students (the last grade in primary school) without an option to continue their education. Lack of high school facilities, insufficient funds, and previous poor academic performance can prevent some students in rural areas from continuing their education. Such circumstances limit the future of young people in rural areas and bring a premature end to their education at a stage so vital in their intellectual and spiritual development.

Preparation for Social Action (PSA) is divided into three levels of study. Those who complete the first level earn the designation Promoters of Community Well-Being. This corresponds to the first two years of secondary school, regarded as the last stage of basic education in some systems. The program is open to both those who do not have access to any other form of secondary education, as well as those who are already pursuing a high school education in another context. The principal motive for enrolling in the program should be the desire to become an effective agent of change. It is expected that, upon completion of this entry-level course of study, participants will have developed a strong sense of purpose to take charge of their own intellectual and spiritual growth and to contribute to the transformation of society.

The curriculum of the Preparation for Social Action program is academically rigorous, and, according to many evaluations carried, matches the finest programs in the world. What distinguishes PSA from most other educational programs is the emphasis on both intellectual and moral empowerment. Through a research-action-learning approach the participants apply their newly found knowledge in the fields of service relevant to their community's needs and are actively involved in individual and collective transformation, working for the material and spiritual improvement of the community and becoming true protagonists of their own development.

Service to the community

is a central feature of the PSA curriculum. The Promoters of Community Well-Being level of the PSA program contains 26 units of instruction. Rather than divide knowledge into the traditional subject areas, the program focuses on teaching different capabilities which integrate relevant elements from the universe of knowledge in order to create educational materials that prepare students to work for the transformation of present-day society. For practical purposes the 26 units are broadly grouped into five areas including mathematics, language, science, technology and service to the community; however each unit incorporates knowledge from different disciplines, integrating relevant concepts, information and skills to form capabilities in the students which empower them in a

path of service

to the community. As a tutorial course, the PSA program is carried out in small groups in a local setting with the assistance of a tutor. The tutor is a trained teacher who knows more than the student. Yet, the teacher is also a learner. Tutors guide the students through the textbooks, raise questions and help find answers, clarify obscure matters, encourage reflection on real-life experience, and supervise experiments and social action. They do not lecture or dictate, but nor are they mere facilitators of group discussion. Participants benefit from being true protagonists of their own development, learning from their own reflections and consultation with others. In the next years, the Rays of Light Foundation will assist hundreds of students to complete the PSA Program and thus to enable a future through education. The PSA program was developed by FUNDAEC, a Columbian development organization.

FUNDAEC has thirty years of experience concerning the education of young people in village surroundings. More than 30.000 youth were able to complete their education this way. The PSA Program developed by FUNDAEC is not only being successfully applied already in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands but also in Zambia, Kenya, Uganda and Cameroon. It is being adapted to the respective cultural and social conditions with much tact and intuition.