

# Transforming the education systems for children with disability in Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste

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# Overview

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- Background and impetus of the study
- Research methods
- Results of PNG study
  - Priorities for future education system growth
  - Family issues to be addressed by the education system
- Research conclusions and recommendations

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Papua New Guinea & Timor-Leste systems of education for  
children with disability

# **BACKGROUND AND IMPETUS OF THE STUDY**

# Origins of the study

## ■ Papua New Guinea

- Christian Brothers review of Mt Sion Centre, Goroka EHP (2003)
- Train-the-trainer & bachelor degree programs (VI) (2003-present)



## ■ Timor-Leste

- ICEVI needs analysis (2002)
- Train-the-trainer education programs (VI) (2002-2012)
- Establishment of braille production centre



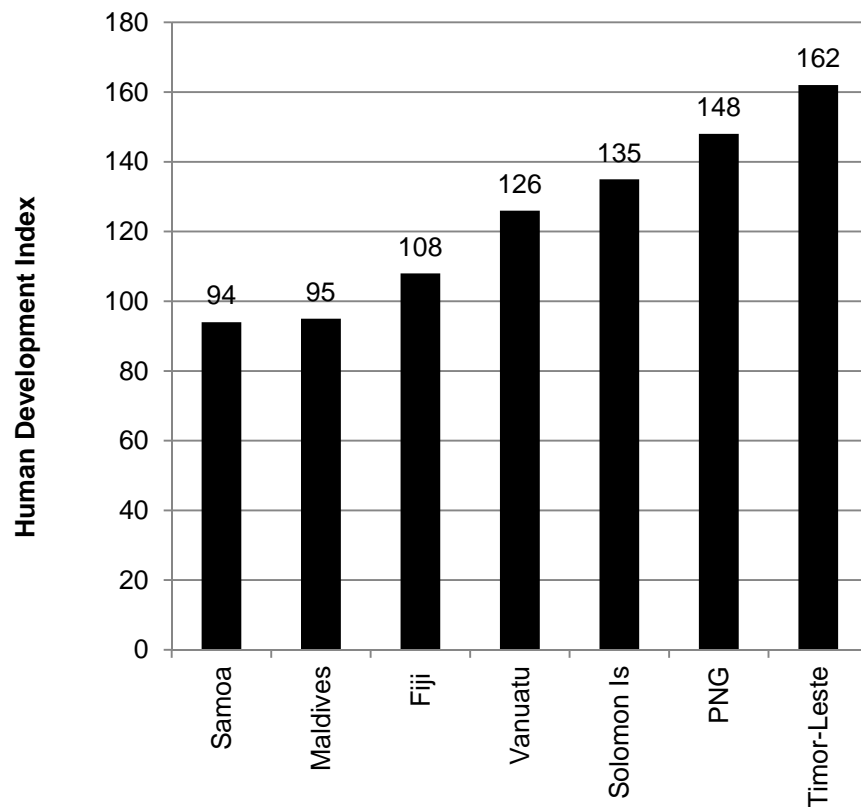
# Impetus ...

- Gentle & Leach (2004) Forward Strategy for education of children with disabilities in Timor-Leste
- Request (early 2007) from Kirsty Sword Gusmao, wife of the former President of Timor-Leste to support the government's education reform process in the area of disability



# Issues of human development in PNG & Timor-Leste

## Human Development Index, 2009



**7 Small Island Developing States in the Asia-Pacific region included in the HDI rankings**

■ **Quality of Life indicators:**

- Long & healthy life
- Decent standard of living
- Knowledge/education

(United Nations Development Programme, 2009).

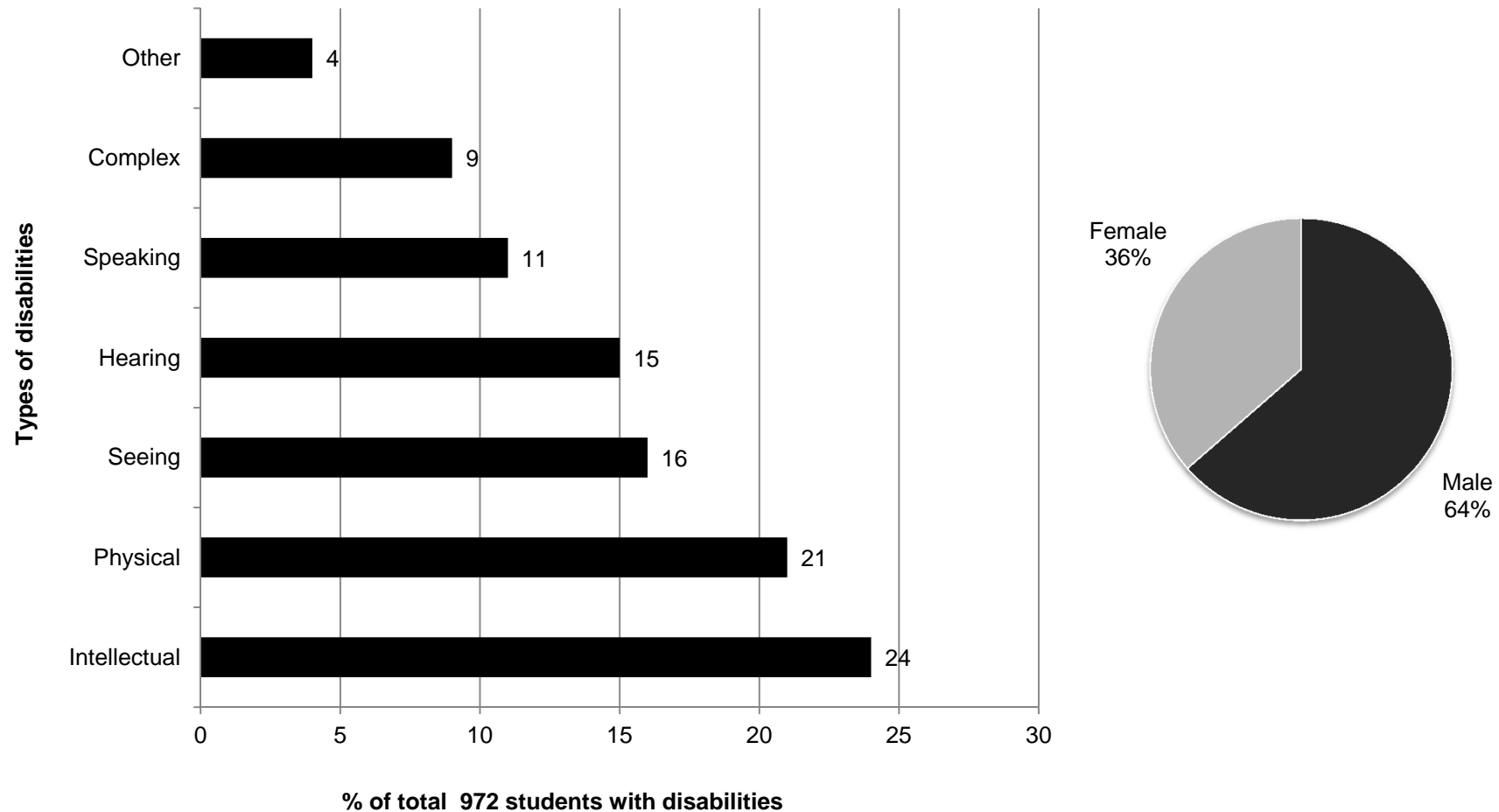
HDI ranking 1 = Iceland; HDI 177 = Sierra Leone

# Current education provision for children with disability in Timor-Leste

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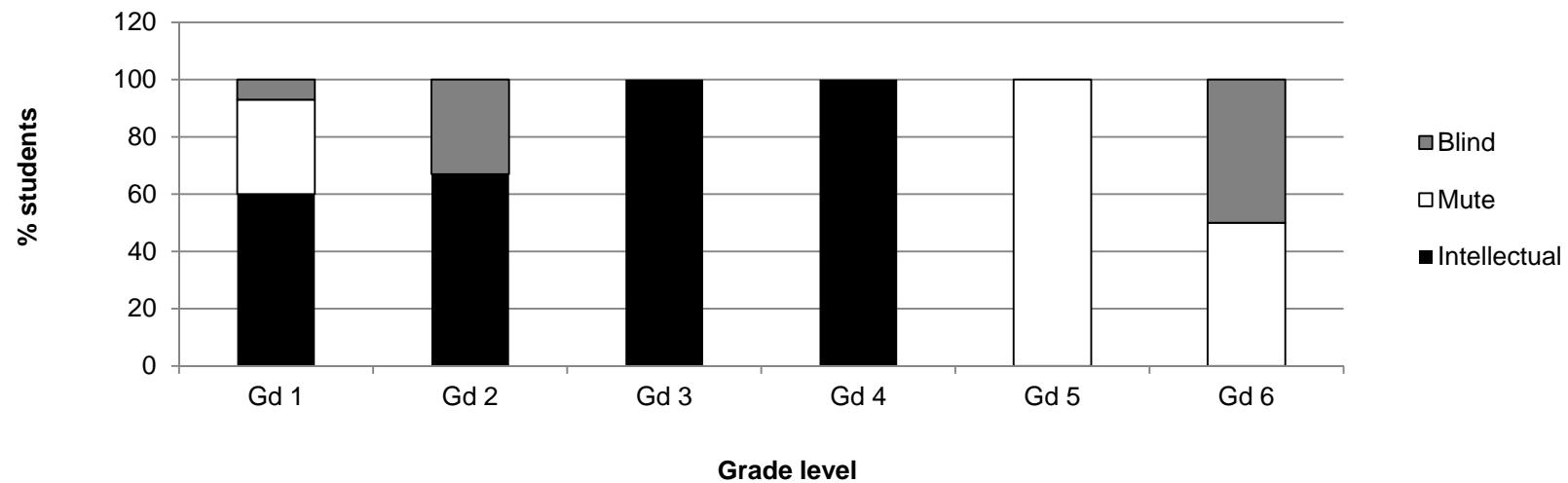
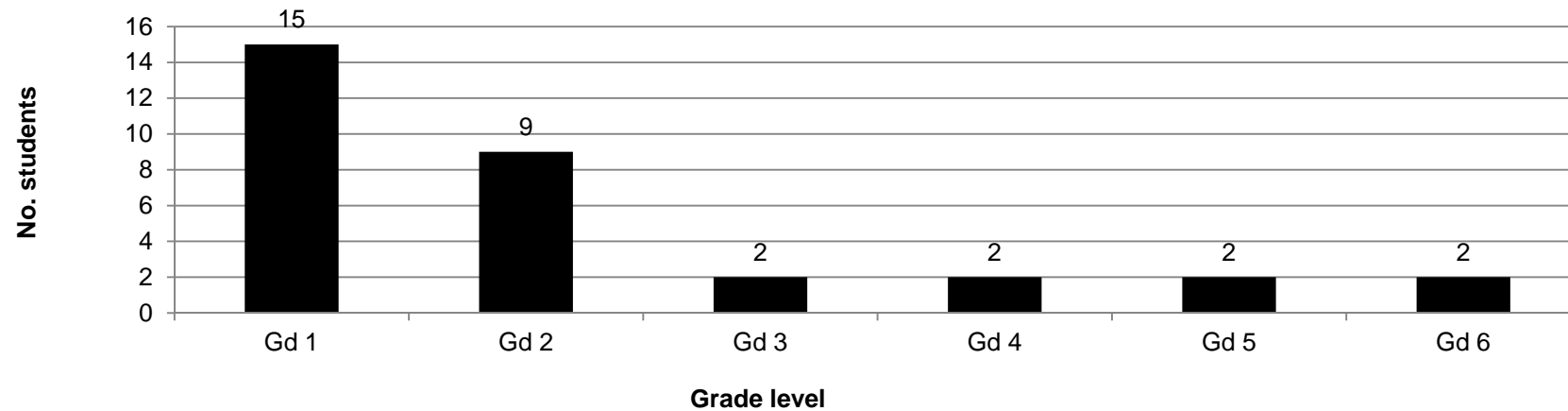
- 1.02% of Timor-Leste's primary school population of 196,000 has a disability (2008)
  - Major types of disabilities of 972 school-age children surveyed in 2007/8: Intellectual (24%), physical (21%), vision (16%), hearing (15%), multiple/complex (9%)
- 1 special day school situated in Dili, the nation's capital, with 32 enrolments in 2010

# Timor-Leste survey of primary school enrolments of students with disability, 2008





# Enrolments Taibessi Special School, Dili, 2010



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# RESEARCH METHODS

# Core components of the study (2006-12)

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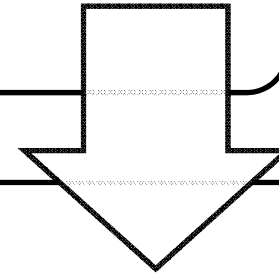
- Theoretical foundation: Systems & transformational human rights perspectives
- Data collection methods
  - Input from leaders, practitioners & people with disabilities in fields of education, health & rehabilitation
    - PNG case study – 19 participants
    - Timor-Leste Research Reference Group – 13 members
  - Published & unpublished documentary data
- Data analysis methods:
  - Qualitative, case-oriented & variable-oriented analysis, document analysis, conceptual framework

# Linking the research problem & purpose

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## Research problem

- To develop a way forward in providing high quality, affordable, & relevant educational services for children with disability in Timor-Leste that overcome the national human development constraints limiting educational system growth & reform.



## Research purpose

- To offer recommendations for national educational planning & priority setting in Timor-Leste that are drawn from the study of Papua New Guinea & Timor-Leste's educational systems for children with disability & their families.

# Research phases

Research formulation & ethics approval

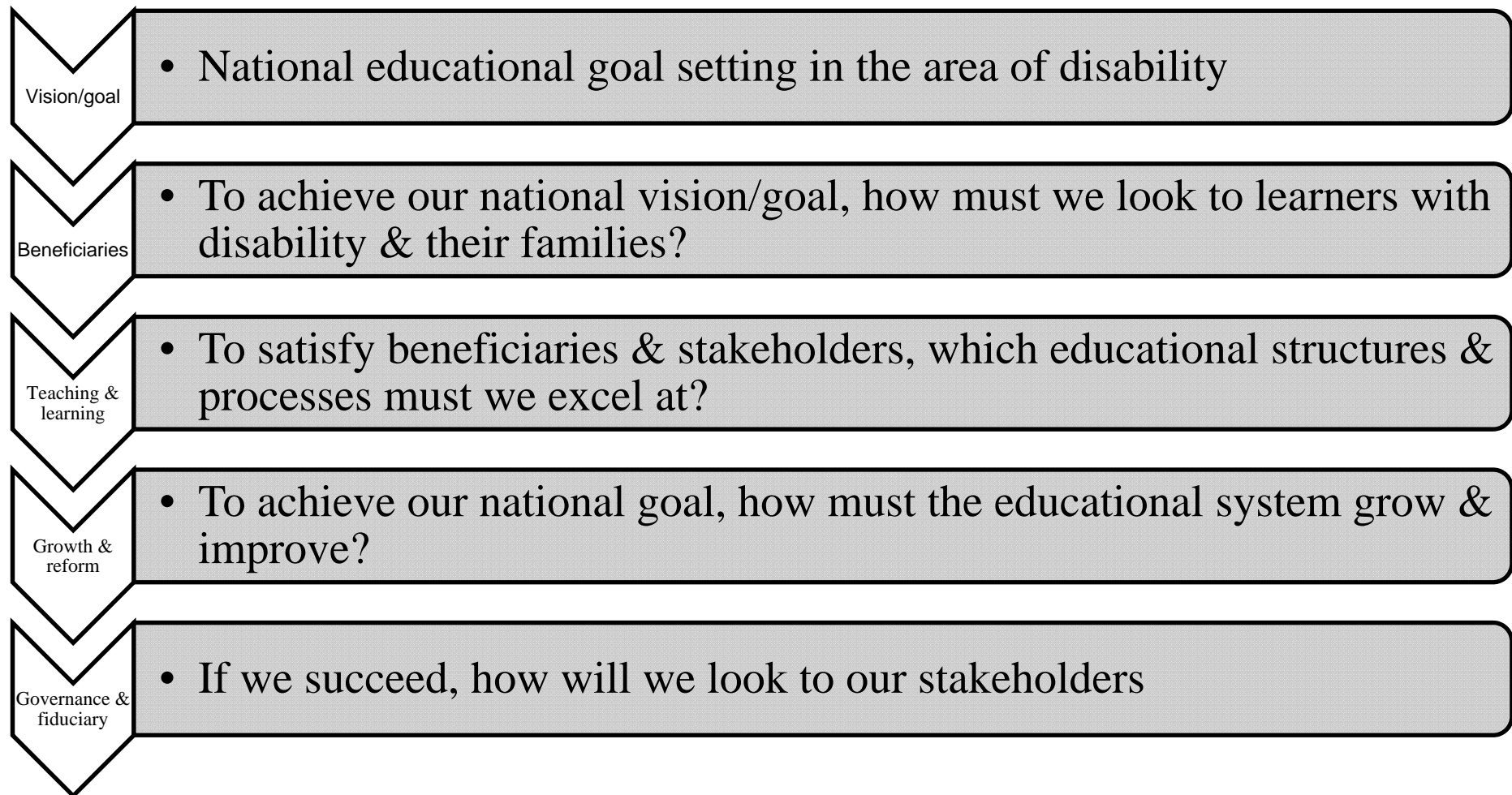
Literature review & research methods  
(participants, interview schedule, data methods)

Case study (PNG) & documentary (PNG & T-L)  
research - systems analysis

Timor-Leste model & reference group review

Current & future components of education system  
promoting enrolments – transformational analysis

# Conceptual model to support data analysis



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Educational system for children with disability

# RESULTS OF PNG STUDY

# Inclusive education policy & reforms implemented since mid-1990s

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- Inclusive education policy
- Inclusive Education Unit in Department of Education, with IE superintendent & inspectors
- Range of education options
  - Enrolment in local schools
  - Small number of school support units for students with severe hearing impairment
  - Non-formal & informal education programs (home, community & hospitals/clinic-based) for children not attending school
  - Support from special education resource centres (SERC)



# Learning support staff

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- Employment of PNG nationals, including people with disability (850 wantoks)
- Government pays salary of education support staff in public & private schools & SERCs
- Mainstream schools: Internal resource officers & teacher assistants
- School support units: Teachers with training in deafness & sign language
- SERCs: Education & rehabilitation personnel with disability-specific training

# Student diversity, SERC program diversity

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- School-based programs (formal education)
  - Disability-awareness programs for staff & students
  - Teacher consultation & professional support – workshops based upon staff needs
  - Direct learning support for students
  - IEP development & implementation
  - Vision & hearing screening & referral programs

# Student diversity, SERC program diversity

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- Home, community & hospital/clinic-based programs (non-formal & informal education)
  - Involvement of families & community leaders
  - Disability & education awareness activities (e.g. role plays)
  - Disability screening, assessment & referral
  - Early intervention and ECCE programs to prevent developmental delays & promote health & survival of children with disability
  - Storytelling, playtime and home-to school bridging programs
  - Activities of daily living (ADL) & income generation programs for adolescents & adults with disability (e.g. training in produce and livestock farming)

# Student diversity, SERC program diversity

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- Home, community & hospital/clinic programs (cont)
  - Community volunteer program in non-urban communities – recruitment, training
  - Outreach patrols to remote communities
  - Mentor programs provided by people with disability
  - Advocacy and counseling programs for parents/carers & people with disabilities
  - Networking & partnership-building programs with local service providers – local businesses, churches & local schools
  - Resource provision, including books, stimulating toys, crutches, wheelchairs

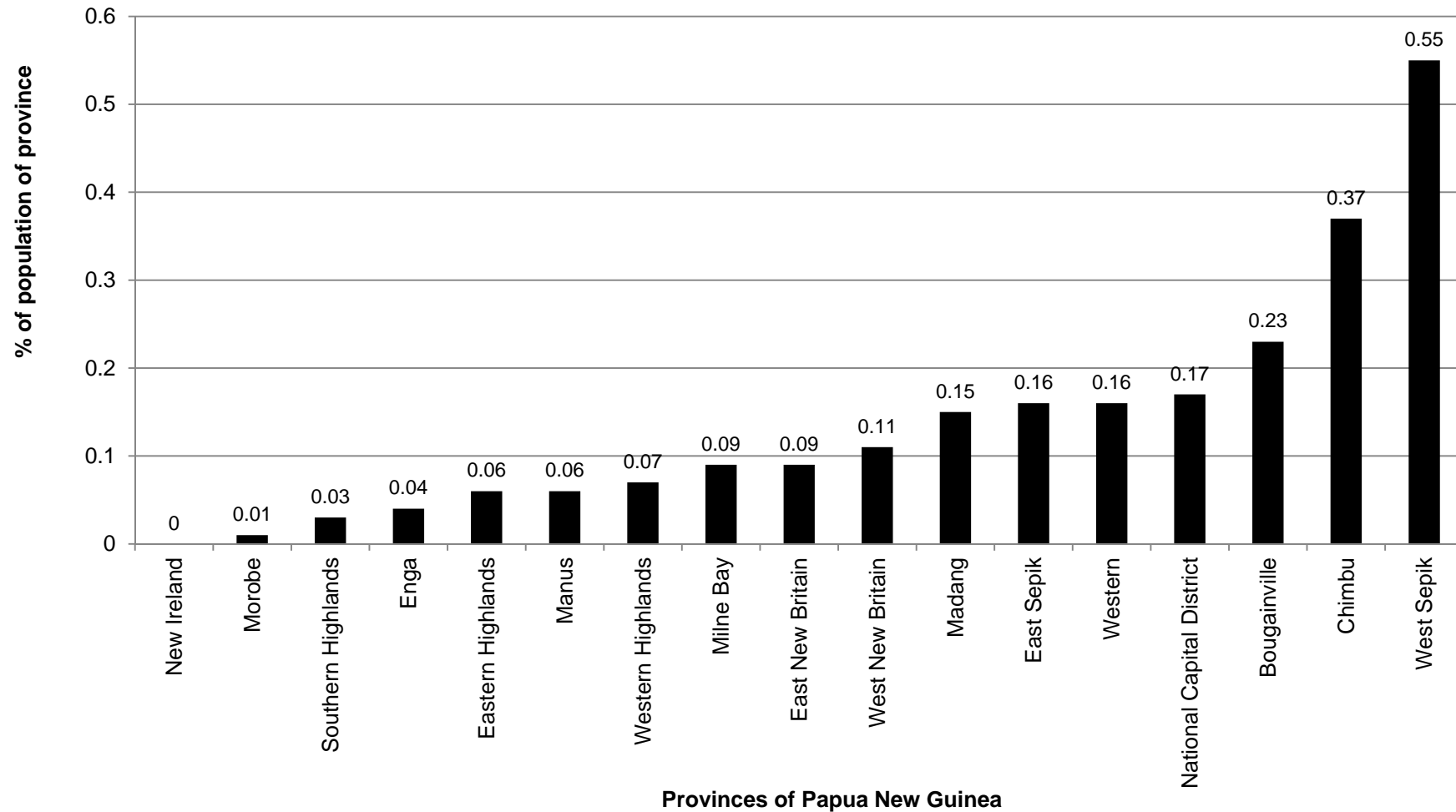
# PNG Education enrolment rates an issue

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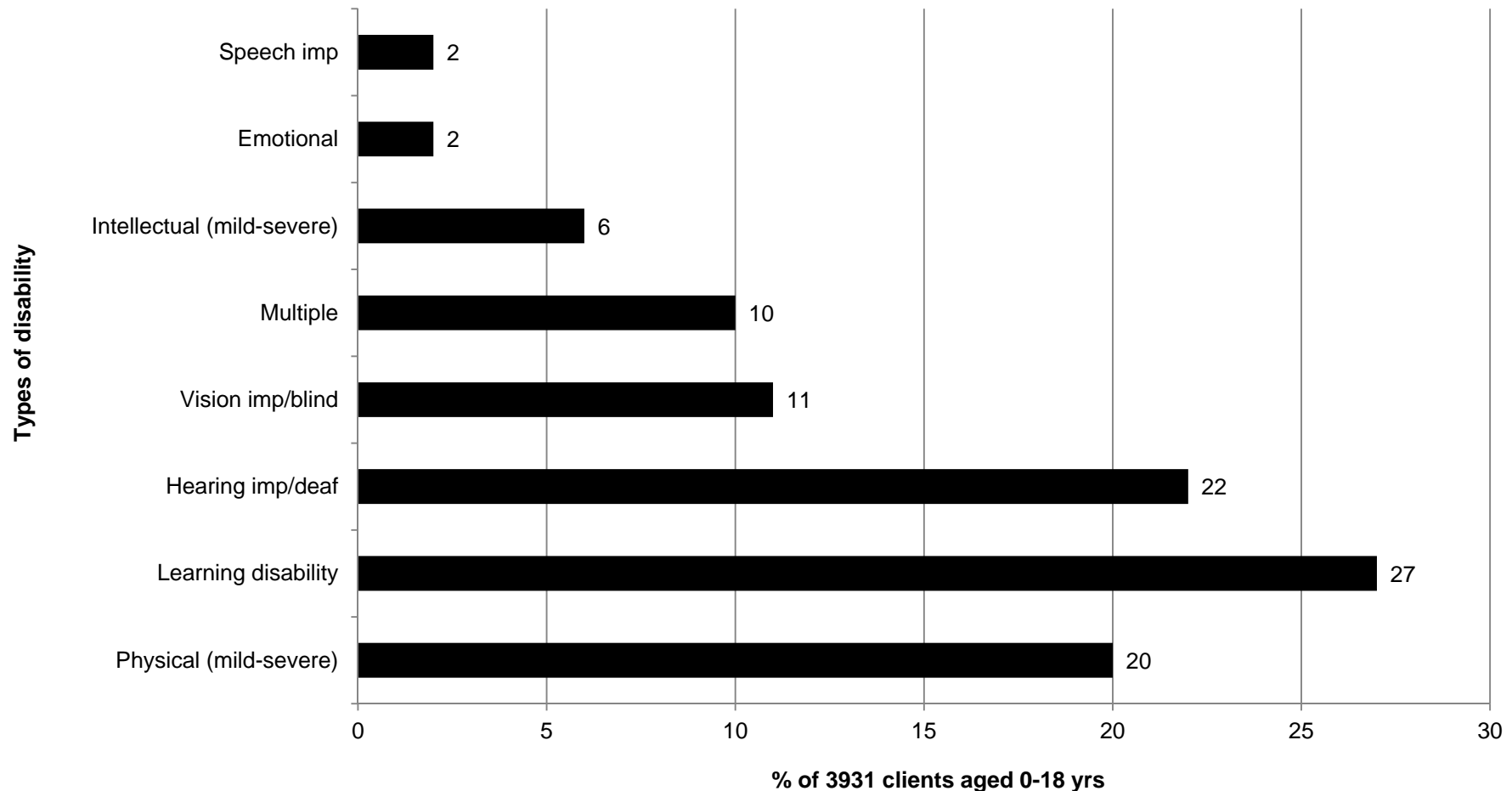
- 0.21% of primary and secondary school population of 1,098,000 has a disability (2008)
- 0.09% (n=5700) of PNG population of 6.3 million enrolled in special education resource centre (SERC) services (2009)

(Papua New Guinea Department of Education, 2009; 2010)

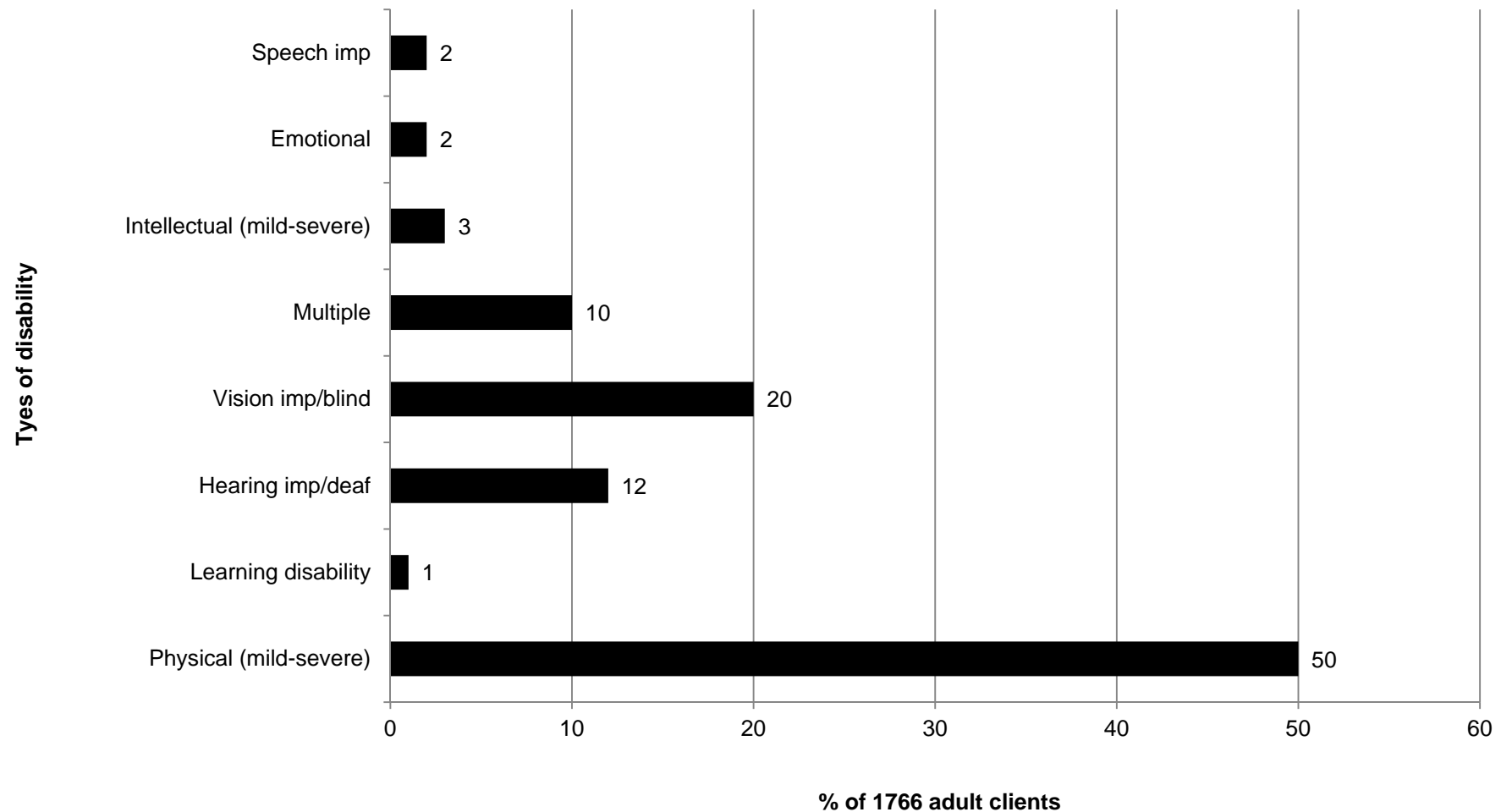
# Location of 5700 SERC clients, 2009



# Types of disabilities of 3931 children aged 0-18 years enrolled in SERC programs

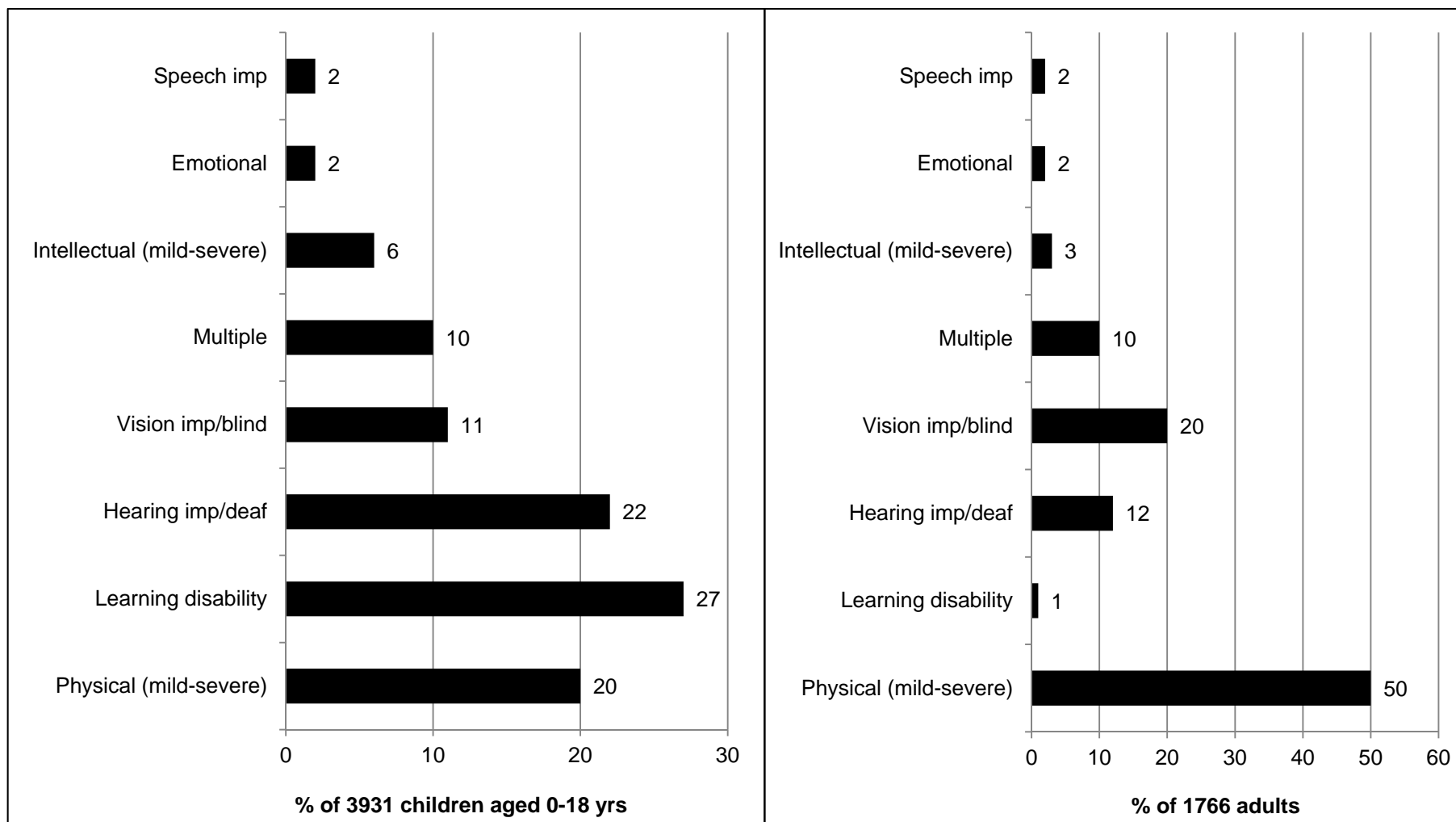


# Types of disabilities of 1766 adults aged over 18 years enrolled in SERC programs

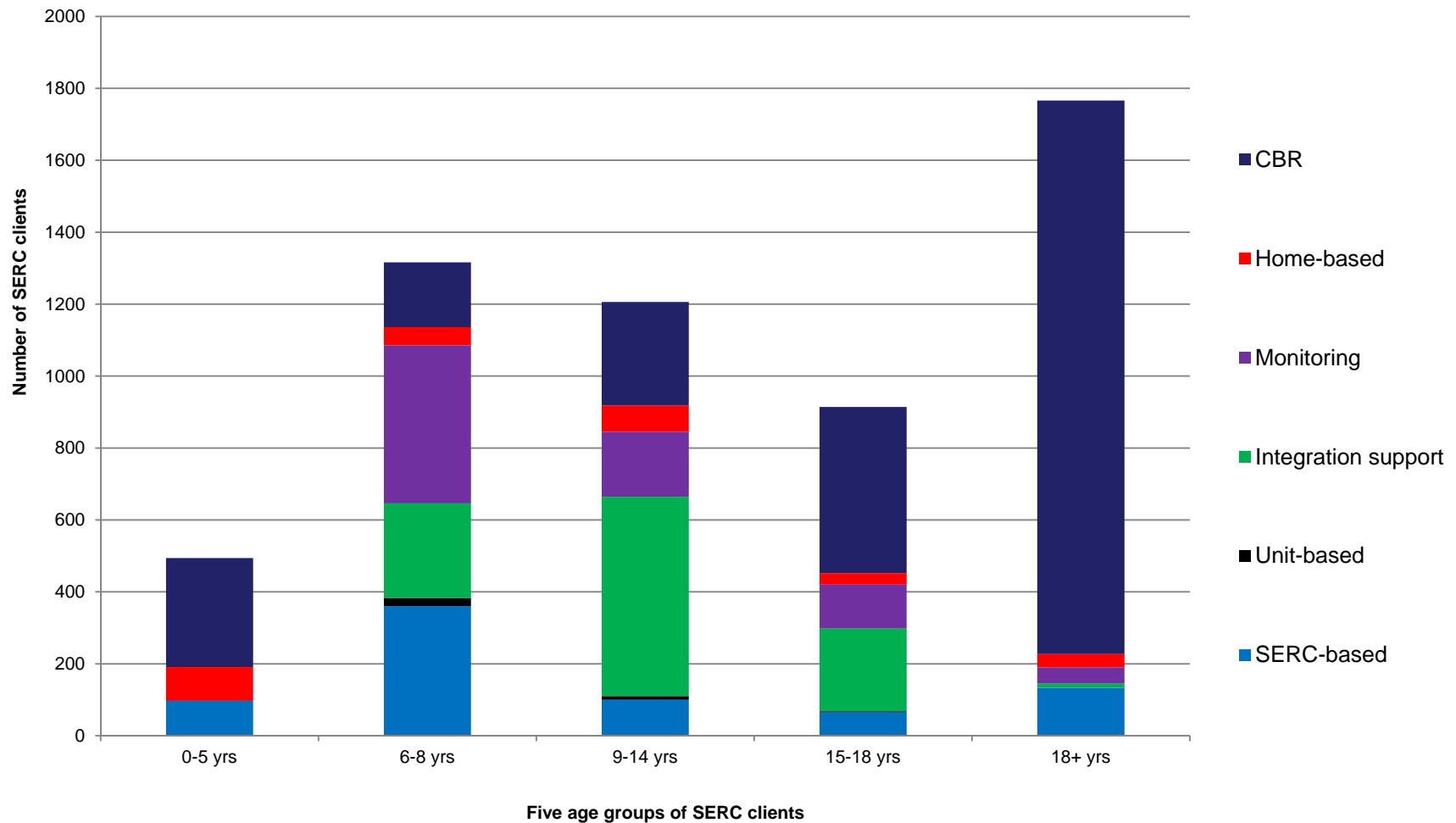




# Comparison of disabilities of children & adults enrolled in SERC programs



# Comparison of age & program enrolments



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Promoting enrolment, retention & achievement rates for children  
with disability

# **PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE PNG EDUCATION SYSTEM GROWTH**

## (a) Growth in leadership & governance

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1. Government leadership & financial commitment to growth in education system capacity
2. Stakeholder partnerships – government, civil society, organisations of people with disability (DPOs), parent groups, international development organisations,
3. Government commitment to sustainable education system growth in rural & remote regions
4. Improved data collection, management & reporting systems
5. Improved school governance through growth in school inspectorate.
6. Training in financial management & bookkeeping for SERC managers

## (b) Growth in human capital

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1. Recruitment & training of school learning support staff (resource officers)
2. Growth in professional skills of mainstream school staff (curriculum & pedagogy)
3. Incentives for school staff to support children with disability
4. Recruitment, training & retention of SERC staff
5. Growth in tertiary-level training programs in area of disability
6. Government funding of SERC community-based education providers
7. Growth in SERC community volunteers & incentives

## (c) Growth in education services, programs & enrolments

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1. Growth in school resources supporting students with disability (hearing aids, low vision aids, braille equipment & books, wheelchairs & physical aids)
2. Growth in number & capacity of SERCs to deliver programs
  - a) SERC sub-centres in rural & remote communities
  - b) Growth in SERC programs (school, community & home-based) & resources

## (d) Responsiveness of education system to family issues limiting school engagement

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- Education system must be responsive to the issues, needs and expectations of families with children with disability

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Family issues and needs that limit enrolment, retention and achievement rates for children with disability

# **FAMILY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED BY EDUCATION SYSTEM**



# Issue 1 Social & cultural beliefs

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- Cultural beliefs about the causes of disability
- Limited awareness of the educability of children with disability
- Family shame & social stigma
- Family concerns about the personal safety of their children - on the way to school & bullying at school

## Issue 2: Geographical location

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- Approx 85% population living in rural & remote communities (PNG & T-L)
  - Subsistence farming & cash crops
  - Limited provision of education & rehab services in non-urban communities
- Resource centres (PNG) located in main towns
  - Limited road & transport infrastructure in non-urban areas
  - Limited family finances & time to travel to towns

## Issue 3: School accessibility

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- Inaccessible school buildings, classrooms, toilets, playgrounds
- Limited availability of physical access resources, e.g. wheelchairs & mobility aids
- Limited provision of learning resources, e.g. hearing aids, braille

## Issue 4: Financial needs of families

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- Approx 85% population employed in subsistence farming & small-scale community-based enterprises
- Prohibitive costs of school fees, uniforms, books
- Children with disability kept at home to support family's livelihood – tend crops & livestock, help with household chores

## Issue 5: Health & nutrition

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- Poor health & nutrition that impact upon capacity of children with disability to learn and thrive
- Malaria & malnutrition main causes of health problems and premature death
- High incidence of village births without access to health care professional
- Mortality rate 0-5yr olds: 6.8% (PNG) & 5.6% (T-L)
- Stunting 0-5yr olds: 44% (PNG), 58% (T-L)

# Issue 6: Post-school employment & social & financial independence

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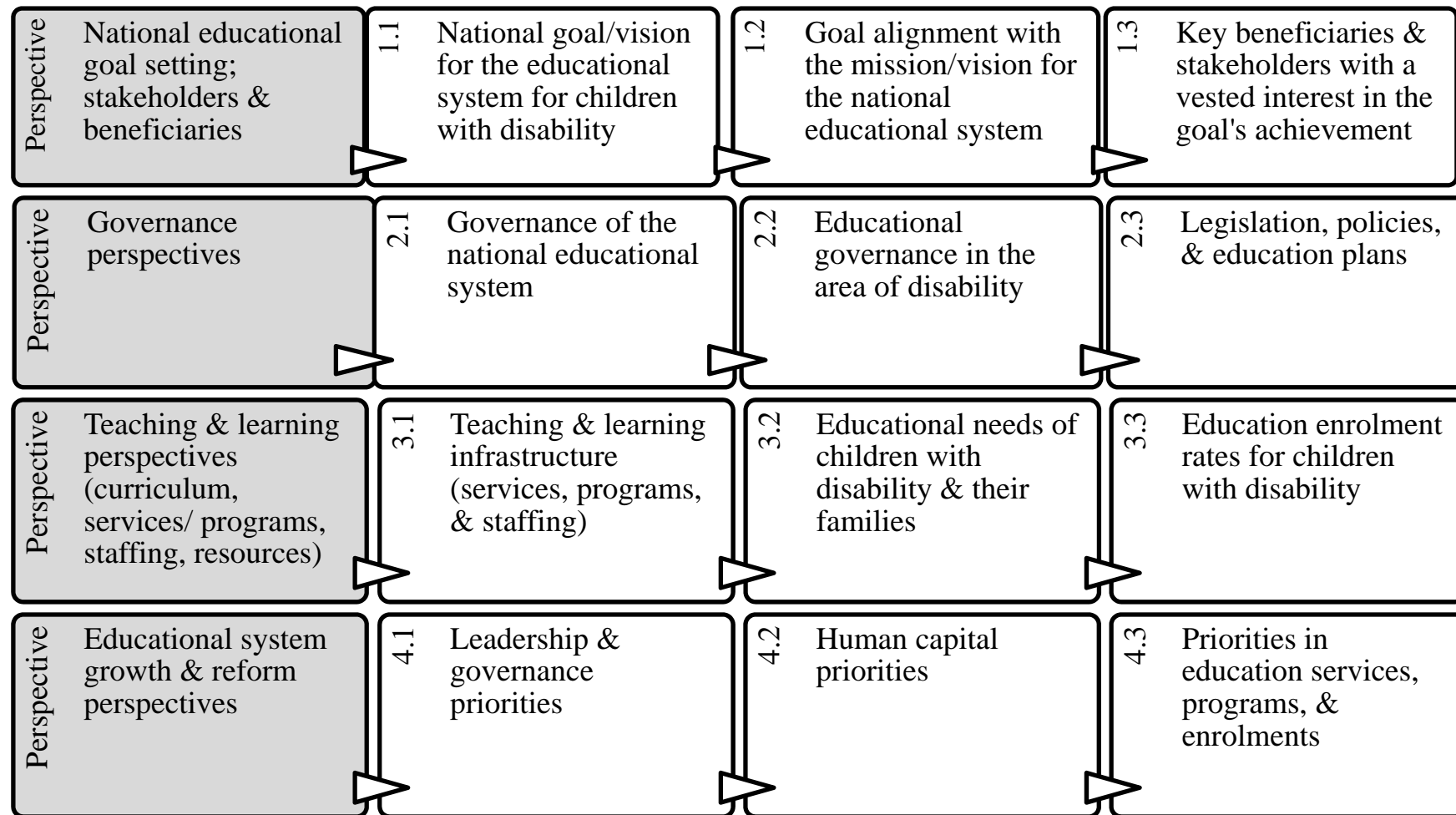
- Limited employment prospects – disincentive for poor families to invest their money in education for children with disability
- Reliance on family for housing, living, medical, food & other needs
- Need for training in income generation, self-help skills & independent living skills

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Education of children with disability in PNG & Timor-Leste

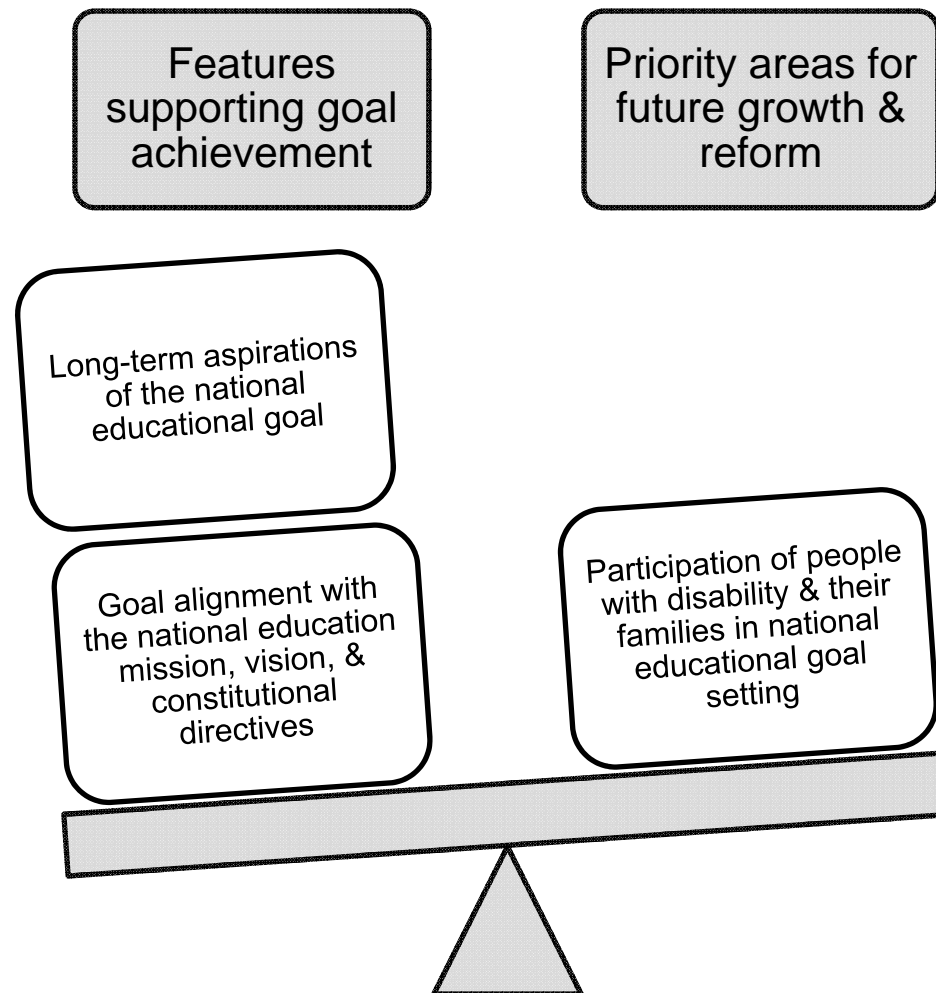
# RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS

# Model of education system components supporting children with disability

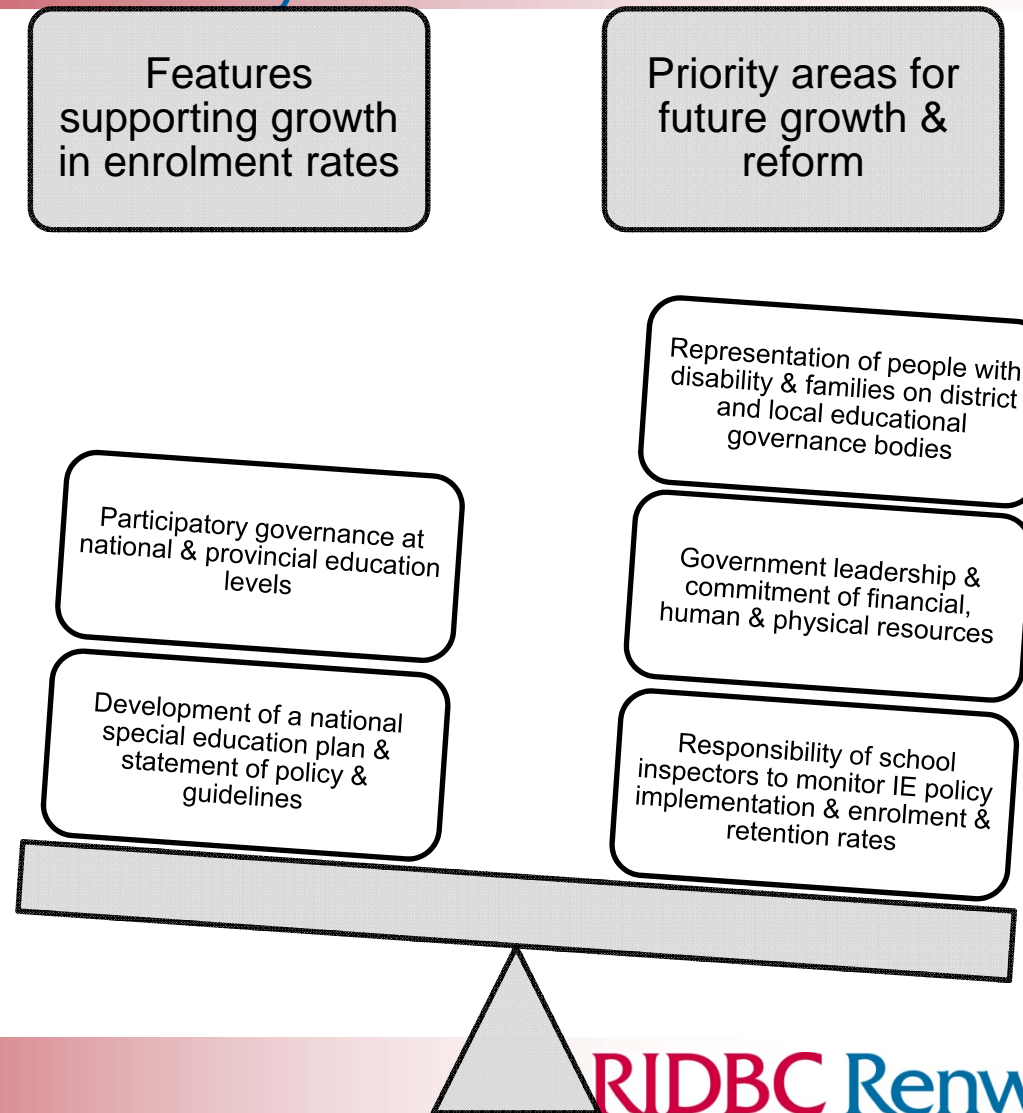




# Scales depicting supportive & constraining features of national goal setting for education of children with disability



# Scales depicting supportive & constraining features of the governance system supporting enrolment of children with disability



# Scales depicting supportive & constraining features teaching & learning infrastructure

Features supporting growth in enrolment rates

Priority areas for future growth & reform

Enrolment in local schools as the first & foremost placement option for children & families

Establishment of special education resource centres (SERC) to provide formal & non-formal services

Innovative SERC services & programs in rural & remote regions

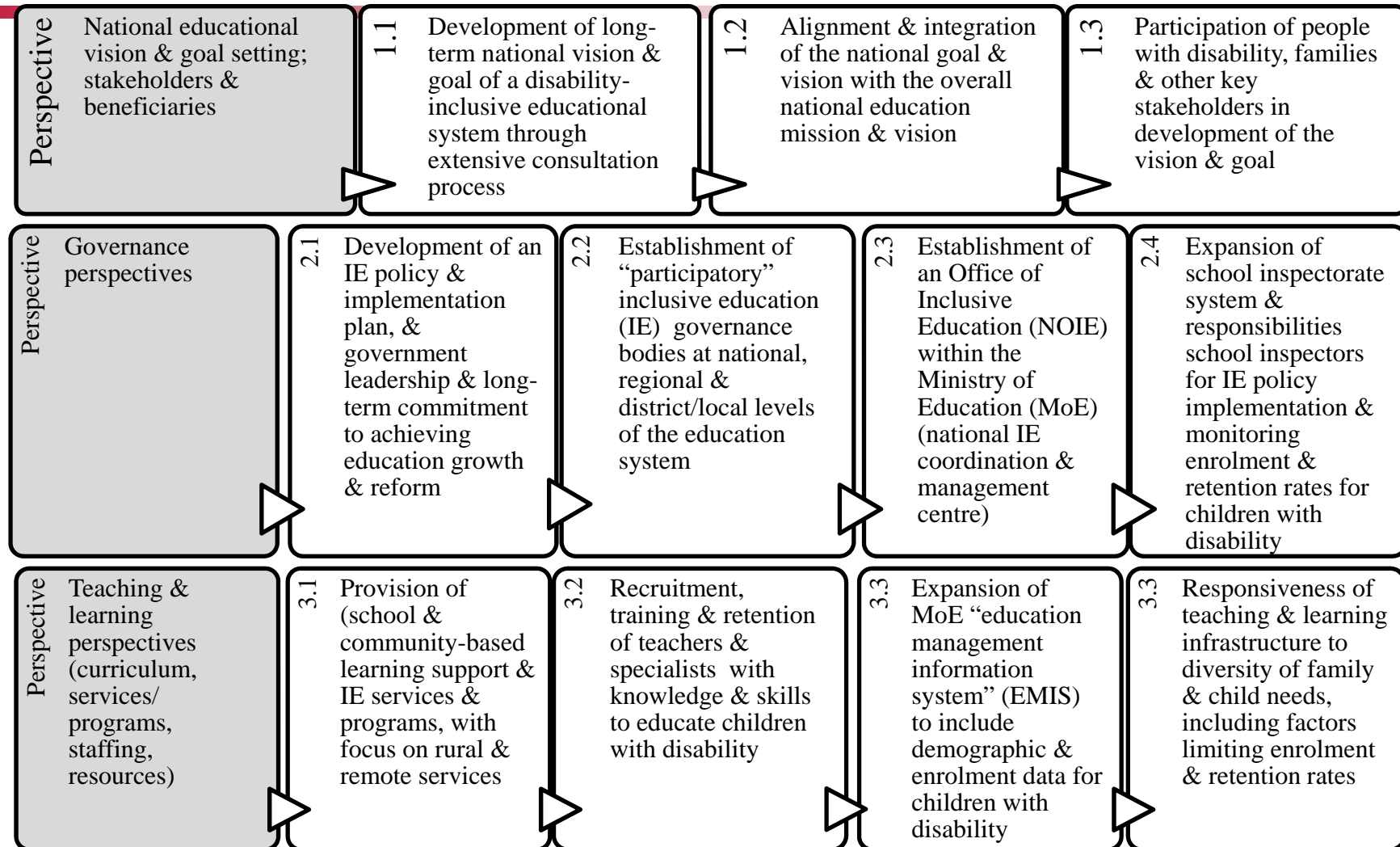
Adoption of rights-based & inclusive culture by all schools

Financial, human, & physical resource provision through stakeholder partnerships

Links between unmet educational needs of children & families & educational marginalisation

Recruitment, training & retention of staff committed to inclusive education

# Recommendations offered for Timor-Leste educational system for children with disability



## In conclusion

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- Study's focus: PNG & Timor-Leste educational systems for children with disability
- Theoretical foundation: Qualitative, systems theory, and transformative human rights perspectives
- Data sources: Case study, reference group & documentary (published & unpublished), researcher's empirical knowledge
- Study highlighted the supportive & constraining features of the education system that influenced enrolment rates for children with disability
- In 2008, the Timor-Leste Ministry of Education adopted several major components of the Timor-Leste model
- Further research needed to expand the study's results

# References

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