

My name is William Akela. I am 21 years old. I ~~was~~ come from Waromo Village which is located along the West Coast of Vanimo in the Sandaun Province of Papua New Guinea.

I am a youth with a disability of hearing impairment. I started my education with the help of St Gemma, a Disabled Centre which is known as Santa Bilang Helpim and is run by the Passionist Congregation. It is located in the heart of my village. After being with them I moved to a near by school (Baro Primary School) and did my grade three (3) to Eight (8) in 2008 to 2012.

During my primary level of education, in the same year Callan Vanimo was first established. That's when and where I received the services that was provided by Callan Vanimo as a student with hearing ~~impairment~~ impairment. They taught me formal sign language that I used to communicate with other students.

In 2013 I was selected to do grade 9 and 10 at Don Bosco Secondary School. I spent two years there, ~~unfortunate~~ unfortunately I was not selected to continue on with my Higher Secondary education but I was able to graduate with a Lower Secondary Education certificate. Life was challenging and seem to be unfair from my point of view but with encouragement and positive attitudes from Callan Vanimo and my family member I was able to move out of my shell and live my life.

I joined Callan Service in 2015 as a helper and a young model to other children living with disabilities and especially children like me - the hearing impaired children. I helped by teaching them basic sign languages, drawing pictures and most of all being a friend.

I have learnt so many good skills with Callan Vanimo

I like playing sports like soccer, volleyball but most times I participate in Athletics (Track events) which I have been selected to represent my province in the paralympic category.

I am very proud and happy to be working as a Callan Vanimo Community Based Rehabilitation Volunteer (CV-CBR Volunteer) and as a person with a disability, I am looking forward to learn more and help others like me - in believing that there is a hope for us all, that we too have the rights to enjoy every thing in life like every other person.

To conclude, I would like to take this time to thank each one of you who have supported us through this MMI project. For giving us a chance to be somebody productive. Thank you for your loving hearts and May God bless You all.

— William Akela —

Callan Vanimo CBR Volunteer.