

The Hope of the Cendrawasih Children

This video shows that primary school children in Arso on the Indonesia-PNG border are keen to study – but teachers rarely come to the local school. The one teacher who does come is only on a short-term contract and gets paid once every six months. When school is out, the kids end up doing hard labour for the local palm plantation to earn money and kill time. The school buildings themselves are rough and dirty. There is no modern equipment.

The lack of teachers means that the children are not getting a basic education and are not learning how to read or write properly, and yet kids are passing their grades because the teachers are afraid of the parents. The children dream of getting jobs in the future and becoming teachers and policemen, yet how can these dreams become true if they are not receiving a proper education? There do not appear to be many non-Papuan children at this school—they are being educated at other, better run and equipped schools where they are receiving a far better education. This means that the discrimination that Papuans suffer now is becoming entrenched and will be the fate of the next generation.

Issues: Education, Development, Youth, the importance of literacy, inequality and discrimination

Talking Points

- 1 How would you feel going to a school where the teachers did not turn up? Do you think you would be able to learn properly in this school?
- 2 Why might children in this village want to be either a soldier or a police officer?
- 3 Do you think that it is fair that non-Papuan children get a better education than Papuan children because their parents can afford to pay for a school that has teachers? Why? Why not?

