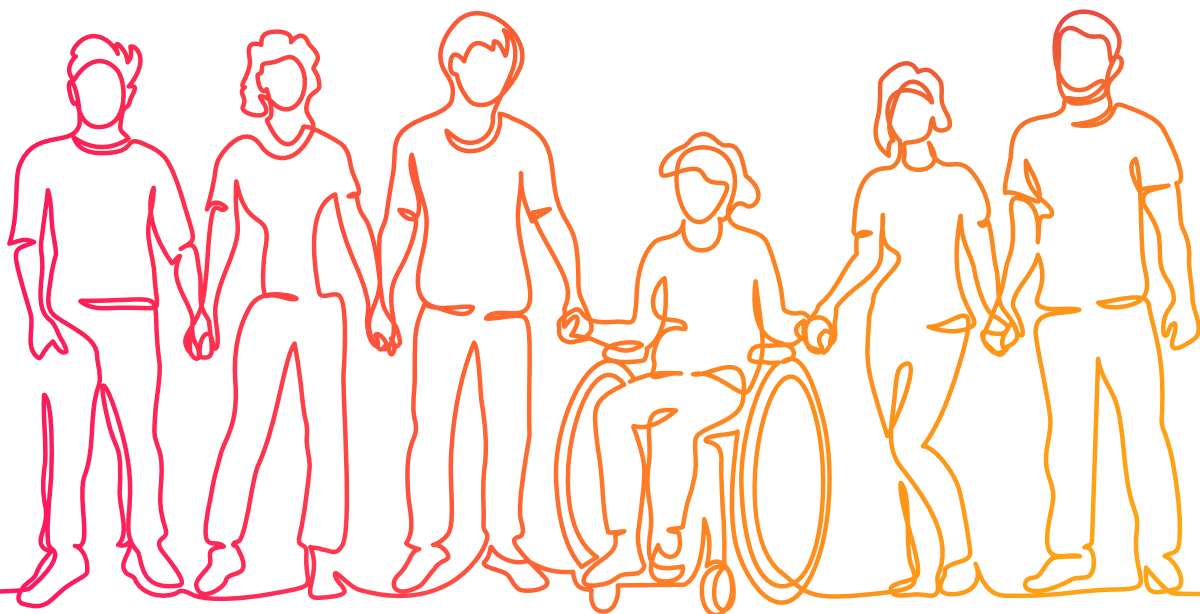




THE UNIVERSITY  
OF THE  
WEST INDIES



TRAINING MANUAL  
FOR THE MEANINGFUL INCLUSION OF  
**PERSONS WITH  
DISABILITIES**





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Author: Senator Floyd Morris, PhD, Director Centre for Disability Studies, University of the West Indies.

Editors: Isabel Viera Bermúdez, Paula Istúriz Cavero and Giuliana Neumann.

Designed by Clementina Villarroel González.

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# FOREV



## Saadia Sanchez Vegas, PhD

*Director & Representative  
UNESCO Cluster Office for the Caribbean*

The social sciences offer a unique perspective of viewing disability as a social construct, moving away from a purely medical understanding of disability. From this perspective, we can shift the spotlight to the responsibility of society at large which tends to disable persons with certain impairments by not making the environment accessible, thereby denying persons with disabilities full and equal enjoyment of human rights. At the core of this are deeply engrained attitudes, norms, stereotypes and prejudice that discriminate and exclude persons with disabilities in the Caribbean.

In this context, UNESCO is committed to strengthening social inclusion grounded on human rights and has commissioned this training manual to The University of the West Indies Centre for Disability Studies to engage two main target groups in advocacy actions for promoting the rights of persons with disabilities across the Caribbean.

The first target audience of this manual is youth and youth-led organizations. UNESCO considers youth to be critical agents of change and full-fledged partners to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and build a better world for all. The engagement of youth as change-makers is imperative, as they can contribute meaningfully, positively and actively to social transformations in the Caribbean.

Secondly, this manual was developed as an essential resource for journalists and media workers, who play a crucial role in portraying and making visible the diverse

range of lived realities of persons with disabilities in the Caribbean. It is vital to ensure that the portrayal of persons with disabilities does not reinforce negative and harmful stereotypes as the absence of disability coverage in the media may also be connected to a lack of representation of persons with disabilities as journalists or media workers. The manual aims to raise awareness on this matter among professionals in media houses and journalists, as well as journalism students.

The manual offers practical approaches to uphold the human rights and dignity of persons with disabilities in line with the Convention of Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the UN Charter. It also highlights the fundamental importance of policies and legislation for advancing, promoting and consolidating the rights of persons with disabilities. Furthermore, it aims to provide insights into meaningfully engaging persons with disabilities to equally and fully participate in social, cultural, political and economic life.

We invite you to engage in Human Rights centered actions for persons with disabilities by raising awareness on inclusiveness and driving the change of mindsets in the Caribbean through your advocacy actions. Concluding, we invite you to multiply this manual on disability inclusion as a resource to leverage the equality and sense of belonging of persons with disabilities as citizens and human rights holders.

# WORD

In 2006, the United Nations approved the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Similarly, in 2015, the United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). And, in 2013, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) formulated the Declaration of Pétion Ville. All of these documents were established inter alia, to facilitate the participation, inclusion and non-discrimination of persons with disabilities in society. Notwithstanding the establishment of these international and regional instruments, a lot of individuals are not aware of their provisions and how they can facilitate the meaningful inclusion of persons with disabilities in society on an equal basis with others. Resultantly, this training manual has been developed collaboratively between the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the University of the West Indies Centre for Disability Studies (UWICDS) to train professionals and advocate in how to meaningfully include persons with disabilities in society on an equal basis with others.

As an advocate for persons with disabilities for approximately 30 years; a global expert on the subject of disability; one who has conducted extensive research on the subject of disability and one who played a role in the negotiations on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD); I am deeply honoured to endorse this training manual. The manual perspicuously delineates some quintessential issues that must be taken into consideration for the participation, inclusion and non-discrimination of persons with disabilities. It speaks to what constitutes a

disability and who are persons with disabilities. It highlights some of the models of disability that have been formulated to shape an understanding of persons with disabilities. It then ventures into the CRPD, SDGs and the Declaration of Pétion Ville and their effects on persons with disabilities. Importantly, it gives some guidance on how to advocate for persons with disabilities and the appropriate language to be used in relating to these individuals. In all of this, the media has a preeminent role to play in making the public more aware of the international and regional agreements to protect persons with disabilities and to facilitate their meaningful inclusion in society on an equal basis with others.

The training and sensitization of critical stakeholders constitute an indispensable part of the efforts to make societies more inclusive and non-discriminatory of persons with disabilities. These stakeholders will have to lead the charge in advocating for persons with disabilities to be respected and for their human rights to be upheld. Therefore, UNESCO and the UWICDS must be commended for developing this training manual to be used in this noble human rights effort.



## **Senator Floyd Morris, PhD**

*Director Centre for Disability Studies,  
University of the West Indies  
CARICOM Special Rapporteur on Disability*



## ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

# CENTRE FOR DISABILITY STUDIES

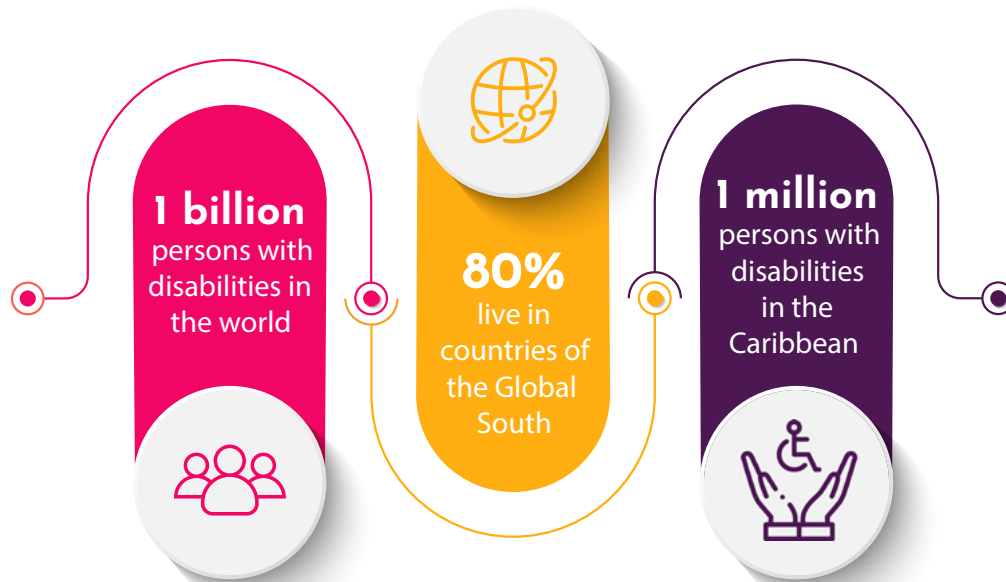
The UWI Centre for Disability Studies (UWICDS) was established in 2009 by The University of the West Indies (UWI) with the primary mandate of driving research, training, public education, and advocacy for persons with disabilities. Since its inception, the entity has been engaged in a plethora of activities to bolster research on persons with disabilities in the Caribbean, train professionals in meaningfully engaging persons with disabilities, sensitize the public on issues related to the community of persons with disabilities and to advocate for programmes and policies to be implemented for these citizens who have been isolated from the mainstream of Caribbean society. In the area of research, the UWICDS has conducted several research studies on the population of persons with disabilities, including the recently published Regional Disability Index that tracks and ranks countries within the Caribbean in terms of their effort to

implement the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). In the area of training, the UWICDS continues to prepare professionals in the Caribbean on how to relate to persons with disabilities. This preparation includes the introduction of three academic courses at UWI Mona on understanding issues relating to persons with disabilities. Its public education initiatives include a biennial regional academic conference on different aspect relating to the subject. In the area of advocacy, through its director who is a Senator in the Parliament of Jamaica, the CARICOM Special Rapporteur on Disability and a member of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, issues relating to members of this excluded community continue to be placed on the national, regional, and international agenda to include these citizens in the mainstream of Caribbean society.

## ABOUT UNESCO

As United Nations specialized lead agency on Social and Human Sciences, and lead UN agency on access to information, the United Nations, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO, is prepared to harness its expertise to support Caribbean countries and territories in identifying best policy practices to promote human rights and tackle intersecting forms of discrimination against persons with disabilities. UNESCO places special emphasis on bridging the gap between research and policymaking, access to information, ensuring quality education and building a culture of peace. UNESCO aims at equipping Caribbean Small Island Developing States with the capacities, tools and resources to produce and make meaningful use of policy-relevant, whole-of-society and human-rights-based social and human scientific research and knowledge, thus promoting inclusive and peaceful societies.

# 1. INTRODUCTION



Globally, there are over 1 billion persons with disabilities<sup>1</sup>, 80 per cent of whom live in countries of the Global South.<sup>2</sup> In the Caribbean alone, there are over 1 million persons living with some form of disability<sup>3</sup>, this amounts to more than the population of certain countries in the region. Nevertheless, across the Caribbean, persons with disabilities face systemic and intersecting barriers that limit their participation in social, economic and political life and prevent them from realizing their full potential.

The exclusion of persons with disabilities in the Caribbean has come about due to lower levels of education, poorer health outcomes, high levels of unemployment and extensive negative attitudes towards them in society. All of these have contributed to persons with disabilities being among the poorest in Caribbean society, thus contributing to their discrimination and exclusion.

Data from the Economic Commission of Latin America

1. WHO, World Report on Disability, 2011. Available at: [https://www.who.int/disabilities/world\\_report/2011/report.pdf](https://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/report.pdf)

2. UNDESA, Factsheet on Persons with Disabilities. Available at: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/resources/factsheet-on-persons-with-disabilities.html>

3. ECLAC, Disability, human rights and public policy in the Caribbean, 2018. Available at: [https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/43306/1/S1701279\\_en.pdf](https://repositorio.cepal.org/bitstream/handle/11362/43306/1/S1701279_en.pdf)

and the Caribbean (ECLAC) 2018 Report, *Disability, human rights and public policy in the Caribbean*<sup>4</sup>, confirms that persons with disabilities in the Caribbean have lower-level education than those without disability. The Caribbean countries with the largest differences in completion of secondary education between working age adults with and without disabilities were Grenada (30 per cent), Trinidad and Tobago (30 per cent) and Antigua and Barbuda (26 per cent), all in 2010. The countries with the smallest gap were Belize (eight per cent in 2000), Bermuda (eight per cent in 2010) and the Cayman Islands (five per cent in 2010). Persons with disabilities face multiple challenges for accessing education, including financial, physical (linked to accessibility of education facilities), environmental (linked to access to transport, for example), and language and communications barriers. If persons with disabilities are unable to complete their education, they will not receive the certification that will give them access to decent jobs.

Lower rates of employment are persistent for persons with disabilities. Globally, for example, the employment-to-population ratio of persons with disabilities is almost half that of persons without disabilities; and employed persons with disabilities tend to earn lower wages than their counterparts without disabilities. Data

4 Ibid.

from 2006 to 2016 indicates that only 31 per cent of persons with disabilities older than 15 are employed in Latin America and the Caribbean.<sup>5</sup> Zooming in, data from the Economic Commission of Latin America and the Caribbean also suggests that over 80 per cent of persons with disabilities in the Caribbean are unemployed.<sup>6</sup>

The lack of access to information and communications technology (ICT) is also a hindrance for meaningful inclusion. ICTs can be helpful in enhancing access by persons with disabilities to educational tools, access to public services, and for conducting different professional activities. Nevertheless, households with persons with disabilities tend to have less access to Internet and usage of the Internet among persons with disabilities is lower than among persons without disabilities (both men and women).<sup>7</sup> In Guyana, for example, around 2011, less than 20 per cent of persons with disabilities had access to Internet compared to almost 60 per cent of persons without disabilities.<sup>8</sup>

Women with disabilities can also face double discrimination due to their gender and their disability status. In this regard, compared with men with disabilities, globally, women with disabilities are more likely to be unemployed, doing unpaid labour, or inactive in the labour market; have unmet health-care needs and face higher levels of sexual violence.<sup>9</sup>

Strong actions have to be taken by different stakeholders in the Caribbean, to aid in correcting this social and economic lacuna among persons with disabilities, and to eliminate barriers so persons with disabilities can fully enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms. One such action must come in the form of legislation to protect these citizens against discrimination and exclusion.

Data from the United Nations indicates that 12 Caribbean Community (CARICOM) countries have signed and ratified the CRPD. Similarly, six countries within the Caribbean have established legislation to protect

5. UNDESA, Disability and Development Report, Realizing the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with persons with disabilities, 2018. Available [here](#).

6. ECLAC, Disability, human rights and public policy in the Caribbean, 2018. Available [here](#).

7. UNDESA, Disability and Development Report, Realizing the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with persons with disabilities, 2018. Available [here](#).

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.



the rights of persons with disabilities. All of these are strengthening the legislative environment for persons with disabilities in the region and measures must also be put in place to train professionals and practitioners in the Caribbean in how to relate to these citizens as there will be increased interaction with them in various aspects of life. It is within this context that the UWICDS has been developing and introducing academic courses to equip professionals within the Caribbean on issues relating to persons with disabilities.

Women  
with disabilities  
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disability status

Building on this knowledge, the UWICDS and UNESCO present this training manual on the meaningful inclusion of persons with disabilities and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This manual gives professionals and practitioners a lucid understanding of issues relating to persons with disabilities. Importantly, understanding different aspects of the CRPD is fundamental to this manual. At the end of the training manual, professionals and practitioners will be able to articulate and embrace persons with disabilities, thus leading to their meaningful inclusion in Caribbean society.

Resultantly, this training manual contains four major axes to form a training module for youth and media practitioners in the Caribbean. These will include: what is disability and who constitutes persons with disabilities; the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Declaration of Pétion Ville; how to communicate with persons with disabilities and what is advocacy in the context of persons with disabilities. Such topics will sensitize participants in the training programme of the diverse needs and potentials of persons with disabilities and how to advocate for their meaningful inclusion in mainstream Caribbean society.



# RATIONALE



# RATIONALE

There is a great push to include persons with disabilities in the mainstream of Caribbean society and ensure the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This is being facilitated through the introduction of the CRPD, the Sustainable Development Goals, and the establishment of legislation by some Caribbean countries. Resultantly, there will be more services and programmes for persons with disabilities in the Caribbean. Professionals, especially those in the media, need to be trained on how to relate with and report on the different realities of persons with disabilities. This is extremely important if the negative attitudes and stigma towards persons with disabilities in the Caribbean are to be changed.

Overcoming the challenges of inclusiveness demands free, independent, non-biased and inclusive media-

both traditional and new- committed to respecting and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities. This training manual contributes to develop the capacities of media professionals and practitioners which are essential to achieve SDG 10 on reduced inequalities.

Additionally, with 63 per cent of the CARICOM population under the age of 30, there is the urgent need to train a cadre of young persons, including youth with disabilities to continue the advocacy for programmes and policies of persons with disabilities in the Caribbean. Most of the outstanding advocates for persons with disabilities have retired or are in the process of retiring throughout the Caribbean. Therefore, it is imperative for the region to identify and train a new set of advocates who can carry the message on behalf of the community of persons with disabilities in a modern context.



# Target Audience

The main target audience for this training manual is media professionals and practitioners, youths with disabilities and youth-led organizations in the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean.

## Aim

The main aim is to equip youths with disabilities, youth-led organizations, journalists, media professionals and practitioners within the Caribbean to an understanding of the concept of disability and sensitize them of the needs and potentials of persons with disabilities so that these diverse voices can be meaningfully brought in the mainstream of Caribbean society.

# Objectives

This training manual aims to contribute to the following objectives:

- Provide tools to help youth and media practitioners from across the Caribbean in how to relate with persons with disabilities.
- Share techniques of advocacy for persons with disabilities.
- Expose practitioners, professionals and youth in the Caribbean to international treaties such as the CRPD and regional agreements such as the Declaration of Pétion Ville.
- Expose practitioners, professionals and youths in the Caribbean on the correct language to use as it relates to persons with disabilities.

# OVERVIEW OF TOPICS

- **What is Disability?**

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- **Who is a Person with Disabilities?**

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- **What are the major Models of Disability?**

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- **What is the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities?**

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- **What are the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and how do they connect to the CRPD?**

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- **What is the Declaration of Pétion Ville?**

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- **What is Advocacy?**

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- **Is language important in the advocacy process for Persons with Disabilities?**

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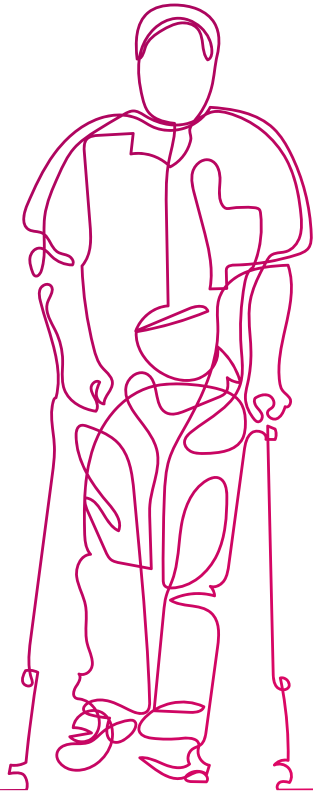
- **The Media**

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- **Now that you know, what will you do?**

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- **Putting knowledge into action**



# WHAT IS **DISABILITY?**

In this training, it is paramount for us to define what is disability. Disability is an important concept in understanding how to relate and treat with persons with disabilities. In this context, the definition as cited by the World Health Organization (2011) is indeed significant. “Disability is the umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions, referring to the negative aspects of the interaction between an individual (with a health condition) and that individual’s contextual factors (environmental and personal factors)”<sup>11</sup>. Here we see a disability being construed as a restriction of an individual’s capacity to function and participate effectively in society because of varied contextual factors which can be social, environmental, economic, technological, or attitudinal. Disability, therefore, is a social construct and it requires actions from the society to correct the problems associated with disability.<sup>11</sup>

It must be noted that disability can happen to anyone. It can be caused from an accident, illness, birth defect and any other such factors. Under whatsoever circumstances, every individual can develop a disability and it is incumbent for individuals without a disability to ensure that the human rights of persons with disabilities are respected and protected. Always remember that you may be non-disabled today and become disabled tomorrow.

Disability is a **social construct** and it requires actions from the society to **correct the problems associated with disability**

11. Morris, F. 2021. [Prospects for the employment of persons with disabilities in the post-covid-19 era in developing countries.](#)



# WHO IS A PERSON WITH DISABILITIES?

For us to understand persons with disabilities, we have to be able to define who we are talking about. We have seen the WHO's definition of disability and this is linked to other references on the subject. The most accepted reference as to who is a person with a disability is in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). According to the CRPD, persons with disabilities "include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others".<sup>13</sup> Conspicuously, the reference from the CRPD highlights the fact that the disability comes about when the individual with the impairment interacts with society and the varied barriers therein, restrict the participation of these individuals on an equal basis with others. The definition also views disability as a long-term experience and cites some of the categories of disabilities.

There are eight major categories of disabilities. These include: blindness/visual impairment; deafness/hard-of-hearing; physical disabilities; mental illness; speech disorders; intellectual disability; learning disabilities and neurological disorders.

13. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006. Available [here](#).

## **Blind or Visually Impaired**

A disabling condition where an individual has no or limited sight. Cataract, glaucoma, and diabetes are the main causes of blindness.

## **Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing**

A disabling condition where an individual has no or limited hearing. Measles, excessive noise, and accidents are leading causes of deafness.

## **Speech Disorder**

A disabling condition that impacts on the ability to speak clearly or speak at all.

## **Physical Disability**

A disabling condition where an individual has an impairment of a limb or loses a limb or more than one limb. Diabetes, poliomyelitis, strokes, and accidents are leading causes of physical disabilities.

## **Learning Disability**

A disabling condition that contributes to an individual's inability to comprehend Mathematics, English, or any academic subject.

## **Mental Illness**

Any disabling condition that contributes to an obscuring of reality by an individual.

## **Intellectual Disability**

A disabling condition that sees an individual performing below regular Intelligence Quotient (IQ) function and this can be deemed as mild, severe, or profound.

## **Neurological Disorder**

A disabling condition that emerges as a result of malfunction in the Central Nervous System. Epilepsy and birth defects are leading causes of neurological disorders.

Despite an individual having any of the above conditions, the individual can still function effectively in society on an equal basis with others. What is required is for individuals in the broader society to have an understanding and respect for persons with disabilities and put in place the necessary mechanisms to accommodate their inclusion and participation. Building of ramps to accommodate wheel-chair users; providing sign language interpretation for the deaf; providing braille and other voice activated devices for the blind; developing easy read and pictures to accommodate persons with intellectual disabilities; giving time to persons with learning disabilities to complete their task and other such forms of reasonable accommodations are effective strategies for the inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in society. Persons with disabilities are not a homogeneous group and as such, reasonable accommodation should be designed based on the nature and type of disability.



## In summarizing, can you answer these three questions?

- 1• Who is a person with a disability?
- 2• What are the major categories of disability?
- 3• Can you name four major types of disability?



# WHAT ARE THE **MAJOR** MODELS OF DISABILITIES?



It is very important to understand the different paradigms that have been formulated to create understanding of persons with disabilities. Several models have been developed to contextualize the situation of persons with disabilities. For this training, we will focus on five major models:

- 1. The Charity Model**
- 2. The Medical Model**
- 3. The Social Model**
- 4. The Bio-Psycho-Social Model**
- 5. The Human Rights Model**

## **1. The Charity Model**

The charity model is one of the oldest models that has been formulated to create an understanding of persons with disabilities. It posits that persons with disabilities are not able to meaningfully contribute to the development of society and thus, they have to depend on the State or their families for support. Under this model, persons with disabilities are institutionalized or forced to stay at home with their families. This model triggers deep negative attitudes and stigma relating to persons with disabilities, as members of society view them as social outcasts.

## **2. The Medical Model**

The medical model is another old model of viewing and portraying disability, as members of the medical profession contend with ways and means of dealing with the issue of disability. In this model, it is postulated that the problem stems from the disease affecting the individual. The approach to disability thus entails a focus on curing the disease. No attention is placed on the varied contextual factors that would impact on the ability of the individual to function in society on an ongoing basis.

Indeed, the medical model embraces aspects of the charity model, as it supports the institutionalization and isolation of persons with disabilities. The model has been rejected by scholars and activists in the community of persons with disabilities. It is seen as an antiquated means of assessing and understanding disability.

### 3. The Social Model

The social model of disability came about in the 1980s. It came within the context of years of advocacy by persons with disabilities and some scholars for greater inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in mainstream society. These advocates and scholars rejected the charity and medical models of disability as they were considered to contribute to the exclusion of persons with disabilities from mainstream society. Consequently, in the early 1980s, Professor Mike Oliver developed the social model of disability.

In the social model of disability, it is adumbrated that a disability comes about when the person with an impairment, interacts with various contextual factors in society and these serve to restrict the participation and inclusion of persons with impairments in society on an equal basis with others. Such contextual factors include social, economic, environmental, and attitudinal.

The social model has contributed to the greater acceptance and respect of persons with disabilities in mainstream society, although there is a lot of work that needs to be done. The establishment of the Standard Rules and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for example, have emanated from the social model of disability. Similarly, subsequent models of disabilities such as the bio-psycho-social and human rights models of disability have been influenced by the social model of disability.

### 4. The Bio-Psycho-Social Model of Disability

The bio-psycho-social model of disability was developed in the mid-1980s. It sought to create a middle ground between the medical model and the social models of disability. In this model, the issue of functioning is foundational. It treats disability from the perspective of the extent of the individual to function in society on a daily basis with an impairment.

### 5. The Human Rights Model

The human rights model came about during the mid-2000s. It was formulated during the negotiations on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Along with the social model of disability, the human rights model constitutes the core paradigm of the CRPD.

The human rights model postulates that all persons with disabilities are human beings and as such, are subject to the fundamental rights and freedoms espoused in diverse international treaties relating to human rights. The Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights are two such instruments that come immediately into play. The CRPD has not prescribed any new rights for persons with disabilities. It has, however, reaffirmed the rights contained in distinct human rights treaties.

The human rights model is the predominant paradigm adopted by members of academia and policy-makers. Contextually, countries that have signed and ratified the CRPD are obligated to honour the provisions contained in the Convention. Persons with disabilities are therefore able to enjoy the same rights and privileges accorded to individuals without disabilities.

**In summarizing this section on the models of disability, three questions are important for you to answer:**

- 1• Can you name two of the major models of disability?
- 2• What is the social model of disability?
- 3• Which models of disability form the core of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities?



# WHAT IS THE **CONVENTION** **ON THE RIGHTS** OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES?

For this training, it is paramount to understand what the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is. These days, no one can speak about persons with disabilities with any authority and not reference the CRPD. This is because the CRPD is the irrefutable human rights treaty that was adopted by the United Nations in 2006, to ensure, promote and protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of persons with disabilities and to facilitate their inclusion in society on an equal basis with others.

In 2021, 181 countries have ratified the CRPD. Another 96 countries have signed the Optional Protocol to the Convention. Once a country signs and ratifies the CRPD, it is duty bound to honour the provisions contained in the Convention.

The CRPD is a legally binding instrument as it receives its legitimacy from the Vienna Convention of Treaties. All countries that sign and ratify the Vienna Convention are bounded by law to honour international treaties. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has jurisprudential charge over the Vienna Convention.

## **1. How does the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities seek to address the challenges of Persons with Disabilities?**

Over the years, a number of challenges have confronted the population of persons with disabilities. Some of these challenges include but not limited to; lack of access to educational institutions; lack of access to health care and health facilities; exclusion from the labour market; limited access to public transport; inadequate social protection systems; restriction in political participation and negative social attitudes. These challenges contributed to the establishment of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities in 1993. However, the Standard Rules was not a legally binding instrument. It was left up to the good conscience of countries to implement the provisions. Such good conscience was lacking and very little was accomplished from the Standard Rules. It is within this context that the CRPD was



established as a legally binding instrument, to reaffirm the fundamental rights and freedoms of persons with disabilities across the world.

With the establishment of the CRPD, the right of persons with disabilities to education, health care, employment, political participation, access to public facilities and other such factors, become a governmental imperative. The CRPD expressly outlines, in different articles, the rights of persons with disabilities and actions that must be taken by governments to protect and empower these individuals. States Parties must honour these obligations under the Convention, or they run the risk of being sanctioned under international law.

In order to track and monitor the progress being made by countries in improving the conditions of persons with disabilities, States Parties are required to submit a report, two years after ratifying the Convention. Thereafter, they are required to submit a report every four years after the initial report. All of these reports are submitted to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which is the entity established under the CRPD, to monitor and report on its implementation by States Parties. Failure to account for their obligations to the CRPD can see them being reported to the United Nations. In instances where there are violations

of the human rights of an individual with a disability by countries that have ratified the Optional Protocol, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities can take action against the State Party.

The CRPD is thus a major positive development for persons with disabilities globally. It gives them a legislative anchor to protect them against discrimination and to facilitate their meaningful inclusion in society on an equal basis with others. Undoubtedly, over time, the CRPD will

correct some of the age-old problems that have plagued members of the community of persons with disabilities.

The CRPD expressly outlines, in different articles, the rights of persons with disabilities and actions that must be taken by governments to protect and empower these individuals

## 2. What are the essential features of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities?

The essential features of the CRPD are participation, inclusion, non-discrimination, and equality. These can be easily remembered using the acronym "PINE", where "P" is for participation, "I" is for Inclusion, "N" for non-discrimination and "E" is for equality.

The CRPD was designed to get persons with disabilities participating in mainstream society on an equal basis with others. It recognizes that these are individuals with rights and

their rights and freedoms must be respected by others in the society. The CRPD thus places obligation on States Parties to ensure that persons with disabilities are allowed to participate in society on an equal basis with others.

Inclusion is a primordial feature of the CRPD. The Convention is of the distinct view that persons with disabilities must be included in the community and the broader society. Inclusion of persons with disabilities in mainstream society is needed to prevent isolation and alienation.

Non-discrimination is another indispensable feature of the CRPD. Persons with disabilities have been subjected to major acts of discrimination over the years. The CRPD expressly frowns upon discrimination and requires that States Parties put in place the requisite mechanisms to prevent these diabolic acts.

Equality is extremely important to the CRPD. The CRPD recognizes that as human beings, persons with disabilities are equal and must be treated by others within this context. It therefore requires States Parties to put in place measures to promote equality of opportunity for persons with disabilities in their society.

### 3. What are some of the Major Articles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities?

All the articles of the CRPD are extremely important to the development and empowerment of persons with disabilities. However, there are some major articles that should be highlighted for the purpose of this training. These are:

- The principles of the CRPD;
- The obligations of the CRPD;
- Equality and non-discrimination;
- Accessibility;
- Access to justice;
- The right to education;
- Health;
- The right to work and employment;
- Social protection;
- Public life and the right to political participation;
- International cooperation;
- Statistics and
- The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

**In summarizing, at the end of this section you should be able to answer the following three questions:**

- 1• What is the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities?**
- 2• What are the four main features of the Convention?**
- 3• Can you name three of the major articles of the CRPD?**



## WHAT ARE **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)** AND HOW DO THEY CONNECT TO **THE CRPD**?

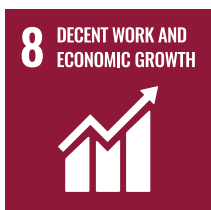
The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by all Member States of the United Nations in 2015. At the heart of it lie 17 goals, called the Sustainable Development Goals, and 169 targets that countries pledged to achieve by 2030. Though there is no specific goal on disability in the 2030 Agenda, five of the targets make specific reference to persons with disabilities. Without the inclusion of persons with disabilities as both agents and beneficiaries of development the SDGs will not be achieved.

In this light, throughout the SDGs, the international community commits to:



### **SDG 4:**

Guaranteeing equal and accessible education by building inclusive learning environments and providing the needed assistance for persons with disabilities.



### **SDG 8:**

Promoting inclusive growth, full, productive and decent employment allowing persons with disabilities to fully access the job market.



### **SDG 10:**

Emphasizing the social, economic and political inclusion of persons with disabilities.



### **SDG 11:**

Creating accessible cities and water resources, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems, providing universal access to safe, inclusive, accessible and green public spaces.



### **SDG 17:**

Underlining the importance of data collection and monitoring of the SDGs, emphasis on disability disaggregated data.<sup>14</sup>

14. Adapted from Disability Inclusive Infographic. Available [here](#).

## **You may find more information on the SDGs and the CRPD here:**

- [Disability and Development Report 2018](#)
- [Factsheet on Persons with Disabilities](#)
- [The Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)
- [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)
- [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)

There is a firm connection between the SDGs and the CRPD. You will recall that in this training, the social model and rights-based approaches were foundational guides to the formulation of the CRPD. There is a strong developmental and human rights focus to the CRPD. The SDGs are designed to assist in the actualization of the provisions of the CRPD. For example, the SDGs have targets set for the improvement of education and employment of persons with disabilities. Countries are required to ensure that by 2030, persons with disabilities are brought into the mainstream of their education system and labour market. Similarly, the SDGs require that access to justice is provided for all citizens, and this includes persons with disabilities. The SDGs therefore have strong and binding linkage to the CRPD.



# WHAT IS THE **DECLARATION OF PÉTION VILLE?**

In 2004, ministers with responsibility for persons with disabilities across the Caribbean came together in Kingston, Jamaica, to deliberate on the situation of persons with disabilities in the Caribbean. Emanating from the consultation was the Kingston Accord. The Kingston Accord set out certain specific targets to be achieved for persons with disabilities in the region.

However, the Kingston Accord never achieved its desired objectives. Resultantly, in 2013, the Heads of Governments mandated that a special consultation be done of the situation of persons with disabilities in the Caribbean. A special meeting was thus held in Pétiion Ville, Haiti, in December 2013, with technical experts, policy makers, advocates for persons with disabilities, persons with disabilities and members from the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). Emanating from this meeting was the Declaration of Pétiion Ville, which is a road map to guide the situation of persons with disabilities in the Caribbean. A Special Ministerial Conference on the Establishment of Specific Legislation to Protect the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities was held in July 2021 as a part of advancing this regional agenda.

## **1. In what ways does the Declaration of Pétiion Ville seek to improve the situation of persons with disabilities in the Caribbean?**

The Declaration of Pétiion Ville outlines a vivid framework for inclusion, participation, and non-discrimination of persons with disabilities in the Caribbean. The instrument recognizes that for persons with disabilities to be a part of the development agenda of the region, legislation, education, employment, public awareness, access to public facilities, access to public transportation, among other such factors, must play an indispensable role. The Declaration of Pétiion Ville has included in the road map, the establishment of a special rapporteur on disability to advocate for the



greater improvement of the quality of life of persons with disabilities in the region.

Since 2018, CARICOM has established the office of the Special Rapporteur on Disability. The Rapporteur has placed emphasis on issues of legislation, education, employment, and public awareness for persons with disabilities. Foundational to the work of the Rapporteur is the advocacy for special legislation to protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities in the region. Thus far, only six countries within the Caribbean, Jamaica, Bahamas, Antigua and Barbuda, Haiti, Cayman Islands and Guyana, have specific legislation to protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. It is the aim of the Special Ministerial Conference for all countries within the Caribbean to have specific legislation to protect the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities.



## In summarizing, there are two major questions for you to answer:

- 1• When and where was the Declaration of Pétion Ville established?
- 2• Name three countries in the Caribbean that have disability specific legislation?



# WHAT IS **ADVOCACY**?

Advocacy is organized action to create positive change. Change in the context of human rights advocacy may include enabling and empowering persons with disabilities to have a voice of their own, supporting disability law or policy change and persuading decision-makers to support the proposed law or policy, gaining, and exercising power to exert influence over a particular political action concerning persons with disabilities, or mobilizing citizen action in support of institutional change to advance disability rights.

Advocacy usually involves many people and/or organizations working together toward a shared vision for change. Advocacy can be used for many purposes: for personal needs, for the needs of others with disabilities, or for the needs of the community of persons with disabilities as a whole. Advocacy can take place at many levels: locally, nationally, regionally, and internationally.

## **1. Local Advocacy**

This is where individuals and organizations come together to argue for change to take place at a national level for persons with disabilities. An example of this is the advocacy by members of the community of persons who are deaf in Jamaica to advocate for legislation to allow deaf persons to legally drive on the road in the island. This contributed to the amendment to the Road Traffic Act.

## **2. Regional Advocacy**

This is where individuals and organizations come together with a unified action for change on a regional level. An example of this is when the community of persons with disabilities and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) came together and formulated a grouping to develop a regional template for advancing the disability agenda. The result of this was the drafting of the Declaration of Pétion Ville which is the regional roadmap for advancing the disability agenda in the Caribbean.

### 3. International Advocacy

This is where individuals and organizations come together in a unified action to argue for change at an international level. An example of this is the advocacy for an international treaty to guide how persons with disabilities are treated across the world. This resulted in the formation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2006. Some 181 countries have signed and ratified this global treaty, making it the largest treaty body in the United Nations.

### 4. Who Can be Involved in Advocacy

Anyone can be involved in advocacy. However, to be effective, one must be able to articulate the issues in an efficacious manner. Individuals and organizations such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are generally at the forefront of advocating for change to take place for persons with disabilities.

### 5. Individual Advocacy

Acting on disability rights requires self-advocates – persons with disabilities themselves – to design, implement, and evaluate advocacy efforts. Self-advocates who have lived experience of disability are best placed to ensure that the voice of persons with disabilities is heard through advocacy efforts. It is also the case, as in all human rights advocacy initiatives, that self-advocates must be prepared to work with other human rights and social justice allies in collaboration to ensure that human rights are respected and to effectively create social change.

### 6. Advocacy by Non-Governmental Organizations

Most of the changes that have come about locally, nationally, regionally, and internationally; have come about due to the work of non-governmental organizations. NGOs are independent organizations that are outside of the governmental structure and have a mandate of their own. They generally form alliances among each other in order to bring about greater effectiveness in their lobbying efforts. Awareness alone does not create change. Organized action does and a commitment to undertaking advocacy is essential to taking action.

It is important to start with small attainable steps. It is also important to effectively organize advocacy action. Defining advocacy goals, developing an advocacy strategy, making decisions about leadership and coordination, crafting communication and messaging, mobilizing, and undertaking advocacy activities, and measuring progress towards goals and objectives are all part of effective, organized advocacy.



## 7. Who is a Champion?

In any advocacy effort, it is extremely important that there is the presence of a champion. A champion for disability inclusion is an individual who will consistently advocate for the establishment of programmes and policies that will lead to effective change in the lives of persons with disabilities. A champion must be knowledgeable of the issues being advocated for. He or she must be credible and articulate. An excellent champion will always be equipped with cutting edge information on the subject to which he or she is advocating.

An excellent example of a champion is Ambassador Dr. Aubrey Webson of Antigua and Barbuda. Ambassador Webson has consistently championed the cause of persons with disabilities in the Caribbean and across the world. Now that he is an ambassador for Antigua and Barbuda at the United Nations, he continues to champion the cause of persons with disabilities in that multilateral institution.

## 8. How to Plan and Advocate for Persons with Disabilities

Planning is an essential part of the advocacy process. There are many ways to think about advocacy planning. The following steps represent one approach:



**In summarizing this aspect of the training, there are three questions for you to answer:**

- 1.** Who is an advocate?
- 2.** Can a non-governmental organization be an advocate?
- 3.** Who is a champion?

# IS **LANGUAGE** IMPORTANT IN THE ADVOCACY PROCESS FOR **PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**?



In any advocacy work, language is pivotal as it determines the efficacy of the communication. In advocating for and on behalf of persons with disabilities what is said and how it is said, is extremely important. It is quintessential for us to understand that we are communicating about human beings. These individuals might have physical challenges, but one is required to speak about them with respect and dignity. In speaking or writing about persons with disabilities, 'people first language' must be used. For example, one should say 'persons with disabilities' or 'people with disability' and not 'disabled persons'. Additionally, we do not say 'disabled community'. Instead, we say 'community of persons with disabilities'.

Some individuals have resorted to use particular language to refer to persons with disabilities. This is an ablest attempt to placate the impairment affecting the individual. For example, we have seen modern language such as 'differently abled' 'person with exceptionality' 'person with special needs' and 'gifted child'. These references are frowned upon by the global community of persons with disabilities.

Similarly, negative language such as 'handicap' 'wheel chair bound' 'deafy' 'blinie' 'oney' or 'mad man' has become common place in describing persons with disabilities. These negative languages serves to impair the dignity of persons with disabilities and should not be used in any circumstance. Please, call the person by his or her name or simply say, person with disability.

It is also important that when writing, the term 'persons with disabilities' be spelt out. No acronym should be used when referring to individuals with a disability. Thus, it is unacceptable to use 'PWDs' as an acronym for persons with disabilities.



# THE MEDIA

The media have a major role to play in the advocacy process for persons with disabilities. They are the ones who have the capacity to bring information on issues to a wide cross-section of people. The media in this context refers to both traditional and new media.

## 1. Traditional Media

Presenting information, such as human rights monitoring results, to the news media to influence public opinion on a disability rights issue and to address policy makers. For example: issuing a press release urging action on a disability rights violation, holding a press conference to highlight abuses in institutions, writing a letter to the editor of a newspaper about a policy proposal. Writing an article on a particular issue confronting persons with disabilities.

## 2. New Media

Online and social media: presenting information on disability rights issues utilizing the new tools of social media. For example: building coalitions to highlight disability rights issues through Facebook and Twitter or spreading information about a human-rights violation through YouTube.

## 3. Training of Journalists, Media Professionals and Practitioners

Presenting information and guidelines to media to improve quality of coverage of disability issues in the media. For example: holding participatory workshops to train journalists on disability rights and the appropriate portrayal of the voice and image of persons with disabilities in the media.

**Activity:** To put the knowledge gained into practice, it is suggested to write a summary of a particular journal article relating to an aspect of the training. The summary will be a one pager and no more than 300 words.

## NOW THAT **YOU KNOW**, WHAT **WILL YOU DO?**



This training manual was designed to equip and transmit information to you about persons with disabilities. We have examined what is disability. We assessed the definition of who is a person with disability and the types of disability. We examined the different models of disability and how they shape development. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was discussed, along with the Declaration of Pétion Ville. We examined what is advocacy and who are an advocate and a champion. We delved into the various steps of advocacy and looked at the language we use to write and speak about persons with disabilities. And, finally, we looked at the role of the media in driving the disability agenda. The fundamental question is, now that you know, what will you do with this knowledge?

There is a big opportunity to go forth and be champions and advocates for persons with disabilities. The Caribbean cannot claim development and have over 1 million of its population being excluded. These individuals never brought the disability on themselves. Disability can happen to anyone. And so, one must always remember to respect and treat persons with disability, the same way they would want to be treated if one should develop a disability.



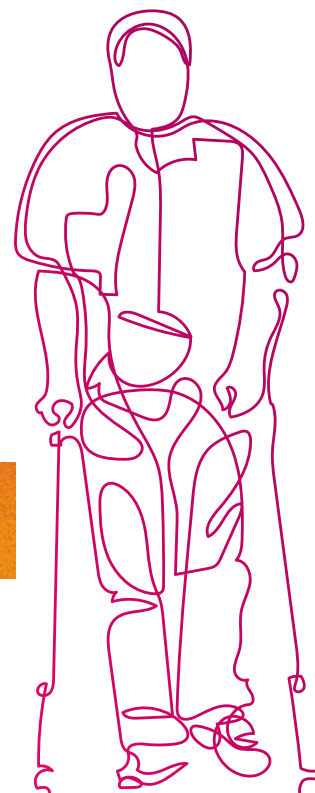
# PUTTING KNOWLEDGE INTO ACTION

For this training, the following scenarios have been elaborated. Choose one and then develop an advocacy plan. This will be an opportunity to use the knowledge that has been garnered from the manual.

1. John is a child with a disability in a rural community. He has cerebral palsy and as such, he is unable to walk. He is not able to attend school as the Free Hill Primary that is based in his community, is not accessible. What can be done to correct this situation?
2. Mary resides in an inner-city community. She has a mental illness that affects her from time to time and she is often abused by men in the community. As a community activist, how can you assist Mary to overcome the challenges that confronts her in the community?
3. Joan is a mother of three children. She is deaf but is very competent in different areas. She graduated from college with a first degree but is unable to find work to take care of herself and family. As an advocate for persons with disabilities, how can you assist Joan to find decent work and to ensure that individuals within the society adopt a more positive approach to the employment of persons with disabilities?
4. David is a blind man living in a rural community. He has a girlfriend and from time to time he visits the pharmacy to purchase condoms. Whenever he visits the pharmacy, there are whispers about the purchase that he makes. Individuals at the pharmacy wonder why is it that a person who is blind is engaging in sexual activities. As an advocate for persons with disabilities, how can you assist David in overcoming this stigmatization and discrimination?
5. Ronald is a young person living in an inner-city community. He has mild form of intellectual disability. He loves to play football. However whenever he goes to the community playfield, he is isolated by individuals who abuse and call him names such as 'crawny' and 'fool fool'. What can you do in the community to change this negative attitude towards Ronald?
6. Jane is a 43-year-old woman with a physical disability. As such, she uses a wheel-chair. She met in an accident, and it was reported in the newspaper that "Wheel-chair Bound Woman Meets in Motor Vehicle Accident." Language matters and the media play a major role in how persons with disabilities are perceived and treated. How can you assist to change the use of negative language in the media and the public at large, in referencing to persons with disabilities?



# CONCLUSION



Disability inclusion is a necessary measure towards realizing the pledge of leaving no one behind, and for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is also a way to uphold the commitments of the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

There is an urgent need for practitioners and professionals within the Caribbean to be sensitized in how to relate to persons with disabilities. Various national, regional, and international treaties, legislation and programmes are being initiated in the Caribbean to integrate persons with disabilities in the mainstream of society. For these treaties, legislation, and programmes to be efficaciously implemented, media professionals and practitioners, youths with disabili-

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ties and youth organizations, must be exposed to the latest information on how to relate with persons with disabilities. The UWICDS has been actively involved in research, training, public education, and advocacy for persons with disabilities over the past 11 years and is in a credible position to lead this effort of sensitization. Thus, UNESCO and UWICDS offers this special training manual, so that more people across the Caribbean can come closer to an understanding and appreciation of persons with disabilities, thus contributing to their meaningful participation in all aspects of social, economic and political life. Respecting and promoting the human rights of persons with disabilities, entails eliminating barriers to construct an inclusive environment where everyone can fully participate as equal members of society.

# READING MATERIAL

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# APPENDIX

Caribbean Countries that have signed and ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

COUNTRY	SIGN	RATIFY	RATIFY OPTIONAL PROTOCOL
Antigua and Barbuda	*	*	-
Barbados	*	*	-
Belize	*	*	-
Dominica	*	*	*
Grenada	*	*	-
Guyana	*	*	-
Haiti	*	*	-
Jamaica	*	*	-
St. Kitts	*	*	-
St. Lucia	*	*	-
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	*	*	*
Suriname	*	*	-
The Bahamas	*	*	-
Trinidad and Tobago	*	*	-

