**DOMINICA ASSOCIATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (DAPD) INC.**

**2020/24 STRATEGIC, SOCIAL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

TITLE: PURSUING SOCIAL INCLUSION, ACCESS, AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH ADVOCACY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES.

*BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION:*

For over three and a half decades, the disability community has had the Dominica Association of Persons with Disabilities (DAPD) as its representative voice. Since the early nineteen eighties (1980’s) it has been an integral part of the international  consumer self-help movement that has sought to re-define disability from a medical and charity based model to one of a social inclusion and human rights issue, to ensure the “Full and Active Participation of Persons with Disabilities in Social Life and National Development”.

The human rights of persons with disabilities have been the subject of much attention in the United Nations and other international organizations over a long period of time, with some of the most important outcomes of the United Nations being:

1981: - International Year of Disabled Persons

1983: Adoption of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons

1983-1992: Decade of Disabled People

1991: Introduction of the Standard Rules on the Equalisation of Opportunities of Persons with Disabilities

1992: Declaration of December 3 as   annual observance of International Day of Disabled Persons

2008: Adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

All these treaties, principles and guidelines, have emphasized the right of persons with disabilities to the same opportunities as other citizens and to an equal share in the improvements in living conditions. They also recognize the importance of mainstreaming disability issues as an integral part of relevant strategies of national and sustainable development.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) appears to be the framework that has been generally accepted by the global community to take action to improve the lives and status of the over one billion people who have been living with disabilities, with  one hundred and eighty-one (181) of the one hundred and ninety-three (193) countries having ratified the treaty.

Dominica’s ratification was in 2012, and as exists in many UN Member States, implementation is at a very slow pace.

DAPD is anticipating an improvement in this regard, having noted   the Government of Dominica’s appointment of a Minister responsible for Dominicans with Disabilities and the following text in its 2020-24 Manifesto,

“*Dominicans with Disabilities*

*Our citizens who are physically and mentally challenged must be made to feel that they are full and valued members of our society and can live useful, fulfilling and productive lives. We intend to:*

*• Conduct a national census to identify Dominicans with disabilities; who they are, where they are, and the nature of their disability, in order to be better equipped as a government to address their needs.*

*• Improve access to buildings and facilities to accommodate the needs of the differently able.*

*• Work with international philanthropic organisations to obtain scholarships for the differently able to improve their education, access to opportunities and enhance their ability to earn*.” (Emphasis ours)

This suggests  to us,  that Government plans and intends to implement the UN CRPD by  instituting  the necessary mechanisms and measures as they are required to do.

The 2015/30 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Dominica’s National Development Resilient Strategy (NDRS) as well as  other initiatives, also indicate to us that disability related issues will be given  more    significant attention in the decades ahead.

DAPD has noted Government’s stated intentions of making Dominica the first “climate resilient country” in the world and already indicated its support for this venture.  We are also acutely and equally aware however, that this is a long-term accomplishment and believe that including persons with disabilities in the decision making process will ensure that “No one will be left behind” as is pledged in the 2015/30 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

 As DAPD   embarks on another five year cycle of programming,   its advocacy, awareness raising and development agenda will be even more forceful, having already identified its key programme areas for implementation.

*MISSION STATEMENT*

DAPD is committed to creating opportunities and to the promotion of effective measures whereby persons with disabilities can actively and equally participate in their country’s socio-economic development through education, training, rehabilitation and employment.

VISION STATEMENT

The Vision of DAPD is to achieve an “all inclusive society” and enhance the dignity and status of persons with disabilities, through legislation, policies and administrative measures to be initiated by the State.

*DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME*

DAPD’s Development   Programme has impacted the lives of persons with disabilities and non -disabled people locally, regionally and internationally.  This is based on the fact that it has attained some major goals and objectives, its members have held leadership positions on the regional and international levels, and have also attracted significant funding from foreign governments and international NGOs for projects and programmes.

OVERALL GOAL:

DAPD will continue to work towards achieving the standards set in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) and influence the introduction of policies and legislation by Government  to meet the needs of PWDS.

BENEFICIARIES

Most events and projects of this programme are primarily developed   to cater to the needs of Persons with Disabilities who are members of DAPD. However, those who are not won’t be discriminated against, and services and assistance will be provided once the Association is able to do so. We anticipate the whole island to benefit from advocacy and awareness rising since it will be directed at the entire population.

KEY PROGRAMME AND PROJECT AREAS

DAPD 2020/2024Strategic, Social and Personal Development Programme will continue from where it ended in 2019. Capital and income generating projects, Educational activities, Skills Development programmes, Cultural, sporting and Special Events   will all be expanded once resources are acquired.

DAPD engaged its constituents in consultations and dialogue to determine the   priority needs for this programme and based on their ideas and suggestions, the following areas will be covered:

1.   HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT, TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Objectives

To enrich Persons with Disabilities  with knowledge and  life-long skills

To organize training programmes geared towards the personal development of Persons with Disabilities.

To get PWDs to understand and become knowledgeable of the requirements of the UN CRPD.

To realize these objectives, DAPD will develop projects and organize short term courses in Amateur Radio, Project Writing, Music, Art and Craft, Sign Language, ICT, Woodwork, Needlework,  and Floral Arrangement.

There will also be seminars and workshops on various articles of the UN CRPD, Climate Change and other current issues so that our constituents can become a more informed community.

 At least two short term courses will be organised annually, to last for approximately three months.

2. PUBLIC EDUCATION, AWARENESS RAISING AND ADVOCACY

Objectives

To continue educating the public on disability related issues.

To increase awareness of PWDS capabilities in keeping with Article 4 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Forming part of this component will be the observance of International Days specific to Persons with Disabilities. DAPD will collaborate with other local organizations to commemorate these observances which will include, Glaucoma Day, World Autism Day, World Down Syndrome Day, World Sight Day, White Cane Day, International Day for Disabled People and Deaf Week.

Visual Awareness Week will be organised in October and Disability Enlightenment Week in December with presentations at schools, churches, service and social clubs. Media programmes on Talk Shows will also be planned.

The popular Dinner in the Dark will also be a form of awareness rising since it is designed to provide information on working with and catering to the needs of persons with sight impairments. ,

Attempts will also be made to have a monthly programme on one of the radio stations and efforts will be made to engage the Media with a means of Promoting an accurate and positive image of the disability community and enhance the voice and presence of persons with disabilities

Public Education Campaigns, Symposiums and Exhibitions will all be incorporated in this project.

All this is geared towards promoting equality and to ensure the elimination of discrimination and address the issue of stigma and stereo typing.

3. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Objectives

To increase access to technology for Persons with Disabilities.

 To   improve the means of communication of Persons with Disabilities through the Internet.

The lives of persons with disabilities can be significantly improved through the use of Information and Communication Technology. It has the potential to enhance their social, cultural, political and economic integration in communities and society.

In Dominica, some persons with disabilities are already benefiting from the advantages of ICT’s, but much more needs to be done to increase the numbers, particularly among those with Sight Impairments.

UN agencies, governmental organizations and academia have all realized the importance of ICT’s for the empowerment of persons with disabilities. However, progress has to be accelerated towards a more inclusive ICT-enabled future through and with the full participation of persons with disabilities.

DAPD will seek to Mobilize Social Partners in conducting training courses on providing access to ICT’s by persons with disabilities.

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has already expressed interest in assisting national Disability Based Organisations to access Universal Service Funds to implement ICTs projects.

DAPD intends to submit the necessary proposals which will include recruiting a trained and qualified facilitator preferably someone living with a disability. It is envisaged that at the end of the programme, someone will be identified who will be qualified and responsible for DAPD’s ICT programmes thus ensuring the local resource is readily available and that the issue of capacity building is addressed.

UNESCO has also stated that it plans  to build capacities of information, media, education and ICT professionals on design and application of inclusive technologies, accessible content and services.

UNESCO advocates for the rights and needs of persons with disabilities and fosters the effective use of ICTs that are accessible, adaptive and affordable.

We commend them on this initiative since they are assisting with efforts to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

DAPD will also seek to benefit from the programmes that they offer and provide whatever direction and support that it is able to.

Acquisition of computers, laptops, tablets, software, and assistive aids and  devices  necessary for the implementation of IC T will also be sourced. We are aware though that the exorbitant cost of these devices may be beyond the ability of PWDs and DAPD will attempt to facilitate these individuals by lobbying for discounts and concessions for those wishing to acquire this equipment. If beneficiaries of these programmes are not able to use this technology because of them not having these resource than any training would be defeating the purpose.

We have already   had a project approved by the National Tele-communications Regulatory Commission (NTRC) funded by the International Tele-communications Union (ITU) and training programmes will be effected as soon as funds are acquired for other aspects of this project.

4. CULTURE, RECREATION, SPORTS AND LEISURE

Objectives

To create opportunities for participation by Persons with Disabilities in sports, cultural and other social activities.

To showcase and expose the creative abilities and artistic skills of Persons with Disabilities.

To establish a Cultural Group comprising of Persons with Disabilities.

This project will include Sports, formation of a musical band, organizing of Special and Social Events, Visits to Natural Sites that are accessible, and Visits to home-bound members.

DAPD will endeavour to have its Cricket for the Blind, Tor Ball, Table Tennis and other sporting disciplines which it has organised in the past, to be more sustainable. It plans to set up a Cricket for the Blind Management Committee and seek to host regional tournaments between OECS countries.

Sports Days will be regular features and these will be held in conjunction and partnership with other sports organizations such as the Special Olympics.

It is hoping that one day it can also participate in the Para Olympic Games.

5. SUSTAINABLE LIVING INITIATIVES, EMPLOYMENT CREATION, AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Objectives

To assist persons with disabilities with livelihood support.

To provide technical support to Persons with Disabilities wishing to establish small business and cottage industries.

To establish viable economic enterprises and provide employment to some members.

There is a high rate of unemployment among persons with disabilities the world over, although they have demonstrated that they possess the abilities, capabilities, skills, and capacities to be productively and meaningfully engaged, and Dominica is no exception.

Social barriers, discrimination, misconceptions, and stereo-typing are some of the factors that severely affect their ability to acquire decent work and be gainfully employed. As a result, many remain liabilities of their families and the state.

We have created some employment with the establishment of our Secretariat and establishment of a Specialised Taxi Service, to demonstrate that we can be a valuable resource in the workforce. A small number of the private sector has also employed some persons with disabilities, others are part of the National Employment Programme (NEP). However, there is a need to determine the true picture of the unemployment situation. This we hope will be captured when the government of Dominica undertakes the proposed survey.

DAPD is also desirous of determining the business ideas and needs of Persons with Disabilities. It plans to undertake a survey during the first six months of 2020, funding for which it has already acquired.

On its completion, it will assist PWDs to develop projects and source funding to get these businesses established.

The UNDP Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme (G EF SPG) has indicated a willingness to support this initiative and we anticipate that our community will be part of the Country Programme Strategy Phase 7 now in effect.

We have already made an input to the actions for the SGP in Dominica for the next 4 years and anticipate a favourable response in support of our programmes for the next five years.

6. HEALTH, REHABILITATION, SAFETY AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT

 OBJECTIVES

To encourage healthy living.

• To assist members to acquire assistive devices and appliances.

• To support members who need medical care.

• To provide rehabilitation assistance to newly disabled persons.

• To ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in times of disasters.

This section of the Programme will concentrate on five main areas as indicated in the objectives.

There will be:

Educational seminars on health and related topics, all geared at assisting our members to maintain good health and healthy life-styles. Chronic Non-communicable Diseases also affect the disability community and managing one’s health and adhering to medical protocols also has to be the responsibility of our constituents. Whatever support DAPD can provide in this area will also take place.

Acquisition of Assistive Aids and Devices

Many Persons with Disabilities lack the resources to acquire Mobility Aids, Assistive Devices and Equipment and DAPD is regularly approached by those needing these devices for assistance.

In this Plan, DAPD will seek to source this equipment by working with benevolent institutions and Service Clubs which have these projects as part of their social agendas.

Rehabilitation

There is a need for many persons living with disabilities to improve their functioning and independence. Some of those who acquire disabilities in their adult age do not receive any rehabilitative services. A Community Based Rehabilitation Programme is important and should be initiated. DAPD will seek to develop such a programme with assistance from agencies already advanced in this field. We are already aware of a proposed programme in Antigua in 2021. This is being initiated by a regional agency.

Medical User Fees

Under this component, DAPD will continue to make requests to have User Fees at the main hospital waived for Persons with Disabilities who are unable to meet the cost of these fees. This is a facility that has been in place for several years.

Climate Change Adaptation, Disaster Risks Reduction, and Mitigation

Several international studies have indicated that disabled people face heightened levels of risk and vulnerability both during and after a disaster: New physical barriers are created and support networks are disrupted. Dominica is one of the countries that are most susceptible and vulnerable to hazards and natural disasters and their frequent occurrences make it imperative that its population is always prepared for any eventuality.

Persons with disabilities are among sections of the population which get affected and many lack knowledge on Best Practices for catering to their needs.

DAPD is initiating measures to provide those charged with the responsibility of providing safety and protection to that section of the population with knowledge and information through the production of a Guidebook.

This will be useful for the Office of Disaster Management, Local Government Authorities, Private Sector bodies, Faith-based and Civil Society Organisations, Families and Learning Institutions, Disaster Preparedness Committees, Shelter Managers, Parliamentarians and of course the Government of Dominica.

DAPD will, as part of its Disaster Preparedness and Management programme, organize regular Consultations with PWDs on climate resilience hazards and natural disasters, hold Workshops for Community Emergency Response Teams and Disaster Preparedness Committees, and work to have all persons with disabilities prepare a Disaster Preparedness Plan. National Health Emergencies should also be given serious consideration in these Personal Disaster Plans.

This is all in keeping with Article 11 of the UN CRPD on SITUATIONS OF RISK AND HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES

7. LINKAGES, AFFILIATIONS, AND PARTNERSHIPS

Objectives

To deepen the relationship with movements and organizations serving people with disabilities.

To maintain, strengthen and increase partnership with other agencies.

To collaborate with social partners for the advancement of its mission

DAPD’s achievements over the years have a great deal to do with the linkages, relationships, and collaboration that it has had with other agencies. It has been a Member National Assembly of Disabled Peoples’ International (DPI) for almost thirty- seven years and forms part of the North-America and Caribbean Region (DPI NAC Inc.

It is represented on the Regional Council with its delegate serving as the Treasurer of the Board of Directors and a World Council Member of Disabled Peoples’ International

It is an Associate Member of the Caribbean Council for the Blind and a Full Member of the Commonwealth Disabled Peoples’ Forum (CDPF) which was re-launched in 2019. One of its members was elected on the Executive Committee of the Forum to represent the Caribbean Commonwealth Countries.

These regional and international organizations meet and hold events annually or biennially, and DAPD’s representatives are expected to attend and participate in these forums when they are held out of Dominica.

Training programmes and conferences are expected to take place during the life of this programme and DAPD will send delegates to these events all in an effort to broaden their horizons and get them to become stronger advocates.

We already know of DPI World Assembly in 2020 to be held in Peru and CDPF’s proposed training programme on Capacity Building in 2021 to be organized in one of the Caribbean countries.

Cricket for the Blind:

The Windward Islands Sports Association for Cricket and other Sports for Persons with Impaired Vision (WICSAPIV) is to be formalized and legally instituted. This is a body that was to be the implementing agency for Cricket for the Blind in the Windward Islands. Logistical and geographical issues affected its operations and only DAPD and St. Lucia Blind Welfare Association (SLBWA) kept the body alive for some time. The Windward Islands is also part of the West Indies Cricket Council for the Blind (WICCB) and some of its players serve on the Board of Directors. Presently, DAPD has a blind woman serving as the Assistant Secretary/Treasurer.

Training Camps of Cricket for the Blind in the Windward Islands and WICCB Regional Tournaments are expected to take place.

Exchange Visits

Exchange Programmes once formed a major activity on DAPD’s Calendar of Events and members looked forward to visits with joy and excitement. Financial and other mitigating factors have made it impossible to organize these for a long time. However, this was one of the activities that members have requested to include in this new Plan and these will be again undertaken.

8. ORGANISATIONAL STRENGTHENING, GOVERNANCE, AND MANAGEMENT

Objectives

To assist Persons with Disabilities realise the importance of effectively running an organisation.

To develop, support and promote leadership amongst young People with Disabilities.

To build the capacity of PWDs to serve as directors of DAPD.

To ensure continuity and the long term survival of DAPD.

The continued existence of DAPD is of much concern to those who have provided long service and those who are approaching or in their twilight years. It has seen the need for grooming young Persons as future leaders and recognizes that “Successor Planning is vital. It is equally cognizant of the fact that many Persons with Disabilities do not possess the requisite skills, competencies, and capacities to perform the various roles on its Board of Directors. There is also a dire need to increase the numbers who can represent it on the Media, Public Forums and Civil Society Organisations with which it is affiliated. However, it believes with the necessary training and exposure, the numbers can be improved.

Sessions will be organized in Leadership Development, Public Speaking, Report Writing, News Writing, Organisational Management and Conducting of Meetings.

Seminars and Workshops to include DAPD’s Constitution, policy and operating procedures will also form part of the training for new officers.

Under this component, meetings of the Board of Directors, Annual General Meetings, Retreats, Planning Workshops and a Membership Recruitment Drive will also take place.

• Recruitment of Staff

With such a wide-ranging plan, it is imperative and necessary that DAPD has employees with the skills, capacity, and qualifications to deliver the services and activities that are proposed.

Presently, it employs an Executive Director, Administrative Assistant, an Office Assistant, Messenger/Cleaner and driver.

DAPD will undergo a staff restructuring exercise and create new Positions to ensure that it provides the quality of service that its members are expecting.

Persons with Disabilities with the requisite qualifications and skills will be given priority and must make up the majority of the staff enrolment at all times.

The U.S. Peace Corps with whom DAPD has had a long lasting relationship has been approached to provide volunteers on a short term basis, and already a Sign Language Trainer has been identified to work for one year in 2020.

The service of Volunteers already exists and this will continue.

9. CONSTRUCTION OF AUDITORIUM

Objectives

To construct the auditorium and complete the Multi-purpose Development Centre in 2020.

To have adequate equipment to conduct programmes.

To conduct most activities in the Association’s facility.

One of DAPD’s goals was to establish a facility that could serve as a model of a fully accessible  and disability-friendly building and have a centre where most activities can take place. This would comprise of an Administrative Area, Training Unit/Meeting Room, Dormitory and Auditorium. Work on this began in 2001 with the construction of the Administrative Area.

The Training /Meeting Room was built in 2006 followed by the Dormitory in 2015. The Auditorium is the final phase and this is to be built in 2020. It will be funded by the Caribbean Development Bank/Basic Needs Trust Fund. They also funded the Training/Meeting Room. The Administrative Area was financed by the European Union and the Dormitory by the Japanese Small Grants Grassroots Project.

The facility will be built in keeping with the standards for the creation of the Climate Resilient country and provisions are being made to have all the necessary equipment, office furniture and features needed to put the centre to immediate use on its completion.

In addition to holding more activities, DAPD will also expand services and reduce its dependence on utilising other venues which are sometimes difficult to find due to the lack of the necessary access.

We have scheduled an Official Opening of the facility for Monday, October 26, 2020, the day DAPD celebrates its 37th Anniversary.

10. FINANCING, REVENUE CREATION, AND RESOURCE MOBILISATION

 Objectives:

To establish a stable financial base for DAPD

To ensure the long-term sustainability of our organization.

DAP programmes and projects have been funded primarily through the mobilization of grants and donations. However, its long-term goal is to become self-sustaining and it has explored many areas as to how this can be achieved.

The strategies it intends to pursue to acquire these resources will continue and this will entail but not limited to:

* External grants for specific projects
* Continuation and Increased Government Subvention for some operating expenses
* Other Government Grants for participation in overseas conferences
* Corporate and Private Citizens donations for local meetings, training and Skills Development Programmes,
* Special Events
* Registration Fees for Sign Language programmes
* Membership Fees,
* Endowments,
* Renting of the auditorium to other agencies
* Continuation of the Dial-a-Ride Service
* Sale of Goods and Services
* Rent of Dormitory to individuals and groups

11. OUTCOMES

This Strategic, Social and Personal Development Plan, will focus heavily on education, Capacity Building, and Independent Living Initiatives. These activities will be tailored to cater to the needs of people with disabilities. All persons with disabilities in Dominica will be encouraged to take advantage of the opportunities made available.

Approximately twelve percent of Dominica’s disabled population could potentially benefit directly or indirectly from these opportunities that will be created. We anticipate that the knowledge and information that will be provided and passed on to the rest of the population will influence them to cater to the needs of this sector of the population, and we can begin to see the breaking down of these social barriers.

12. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

DAPD will undertake periodic evaluation of the programme to determine whether it is realising the objectives. The Board of Directors will carry out intervals of six months of internal evaluation of the Calendar of Events. An individual evaluation will be conducted at the end of every activity. A Mid-term review will be undertaken involving Social Partners and annual Evaluation and Planning Retreats among Board of Directors and Staff will be organised.

ANNUAL ESTIMATED BUDGET

A Programme of Activities and estimated budget will be formulated every year incorporating activities under the eight Key Programme Areas and Recurring expenditures. DAPD benefits significantly from Non-Monetary contributions and this will be factored in the budget.

The estimated budget for 2020, in Eastern Caribbean dollars, is as follows:

Cost: $323,577.40

In-Kind Contributions: $55,668.00

Required: $267,909.40