

Combined Disabilities Association

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Combined Disabilities Association/DPI, Jamaica

The Combined Disabilities Association is a non-profit, non-governmental organization, which was formed in 1978 and officially launched in 1981, during the international year of persons with disabilities (IYDP) – its main focus is advocacy. This organization was born out of a need to have a voice of our own. The board of Directors consist of three (3) psychically disabled, three (3) hearing impaired, and three (3) mentally challenged or their representatives. Prior to the birth of this organization disabled persons were not involved in the decision making process neither of the disabled persons themselves in the society, organization of and for disabled person's with disabilities were managed fully by able-bodied persons.

The Combined Disabilities Association is an umbrella organization of individuals and not of agencies or organizations. However we network with agencies both governmental, and non-governmental.

Access is one of the main components of our advocacy, access to: -

- Mobility
- Housing
- Education
- Recreation – Rehabilitation
- Employment

Its objective is to enable persons with disabilities to have a greater voice and active participation in their affairs, and to affirm the rights of persons with disabilities.

To ensure provision in all national plans for development. The organizations target group is all persons with physical, visual, hearing, and mental disabilities.

CDA's Resource Center

The resource center contains historical and current data relating to issues of concern to persons with disabilities. This material is available on short-term loan to members of CDA free of cost. However, some materials are for rental to outside organizations as required. A list of the available documents and books are available in hard cop and audio for a modest fee. The fund raised is used to update the current inventory.

Rap Session

Monthly meetings are held mainly in the corporate area for the discussion of issues relating to the disabled.

Loan Scheme

The CDA operates a revolving loan scheme to help unemployed persons in income generating projects.

Revenue Generation

Computer classes

Resource center

Printing – printing and designing of raffle tickets, cards, and small posters

Photocopying – current rate and scheduling of a print job can be done by phone

Training

Leadership training – National and Regional levels

Training in Information Technology

Workshops on women's issues

Literacy sessions for its members

Training in small business management

Rural Out-reach Programmes

CDA has participated in the establishment of three (3) rural groups and is currently organizing three (3) more in other rural areas with the rest of the island targeted for a three-year period.

CDA has a very active women's group focusing on skills training and development programmes aimed at empowering women.

Communication

CDA's magazine is called "Mainstream" and is published quarterly.

Sign language interpretation of the major news one (1) of our leading television stations.
Networking with other NGO's (example: Association of Development Agency [ADA], Council of Voluntary Social Services, and CUSO)

Advocacy

To ensure the full participation of person with disabilities in all areas of national interest. Also areas such as drivers license for the hearing impaired, national policy on disability, societal change in attitude and perception of persons with disabilities. University of the West Indies committee for disabled students towards full integration and accessible facilities for all students.

Public Education

Visit to school

Consumer Education Programme – for persons with disabilities

Public awareness programmes in printed and electronic media

Activities and Achievements

Employment : - Deeds Industries diversified, Economic Enterprise for Disabled self help is a subsidiary of CDA which employed over sixty persons with disabilities and twenty able bodied to ensure integration, this is a wood work factory.

Government Policy

CDA has worked on a government policy for the disabled. This has being tabled and passed by cabinet and is now waiting to be legislated. Being a watchdog for government to make sure they adhere to their policies.

Access/Mobility

The revision of the national building code by the development of a building guideline along with the Rottary Cub in Kingston.

Access Watch Committee

To identify the construction of public buildings and sites to ensure that accessible features are put in place.

Working with the Airport Authority to make airports and airdromes accessible. CDA is committed to the full development and independence of persons with disabilities in Jamaica.

“NOTHING ABOUT US WITH OUT US”