

NCPD Connection

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Disability and Employment

By Niala K.C. Deonarine

According to Article 27 of the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), "States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to work, on an equal basis with others; this includes the right to the opportunity to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities. States Parties shall safeguard and promote the realization of the right to work, including for those who acquire a disability during the course of employment, by taking appropriate steps." With this in mind, the question considered should be "Are persons with disabilities really given equal employment opportunities in Trinidad and Tobago?"

In our country, the unemployment rate currently stands at 5.3%. A person without a disability in T&T already faces difficulty in obtaining employment, due to the economic downturn in the nation. On the other hand, for persons with disabilities, culturally, there

are societal views and social constructs which dominate their gaining employment. Howard Becker (1963) postulated a 'Labelling Theory' which exists in society. This is evident in the misguided assumptions that persons with disabilities are "not able to" work or perform tasks and duties. Traditionally, people underestimate the working abilities of such persons and "work" is typically given to those without physical, mental or intellectual challenges. This label becomes their self-fulfilling prophecy and ultimately their master status.

There are several issues facing persons with disabilities being able to land a job. These include stigmatization, unavailability of jobs for them, inequality, access and lack of facilities in an organisation which should cater for the needs and requirements for persons with disabilities. Fortunately, the National Centre for Persons with Disabilities, (NCPD) serves a great purpose as an organisation which addresses issues like these by providing certified skilled training, advocacy

and sensitization. The organisation stays true to its mission "To empower persons with disabilities through vocational rehabilitation, training, advocacy, research and consultative services in partnership with diverse stakeholders". It allows persons with disabilities to feel a sense of purpose, belongingness and pride as they are given the opportunity to be amongst other people with similar goals and aspirations. NCPD is also guided by the key principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

There is a great desire by persons with disabilities to provide basic necessities and care for their families as well as reduce their dependency on State Welfare. Persons with disabilities may experience disadvantages in obtaining a job due to an employer's perception. They may be considered a liability rather than an asset. For instance, a wheelchair-user may be subjected to increased scrutiny and screening during the interview process. They are judged upon as "disabled,

invalid, lazy, and unproductive”. Their qualifications and experience may be overlooked because more focus is placed on their limitations. However, in addition to their qualifications/experience persons with disabilities may possess brilliant critical thinking and communication skills, intellectual abilities and other useful qualities that can positively impact any organisation.

There are countless capabilities that PWD’s possess which remain unnoticed and unrecognized in today’s society. It is a sad reality for many of them struggling everyday who seek employment. They have families too; they too are part of society and should be

treated fairly. Disability should not be a deterrent for someone entering the workplace; instead it can be channelled into innovation and or creation. There is the definite possibility to accept persons for their differences, their uniqueness and the exceptional qualities they may possess.

Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Beverly Beckles emphasizes a caring message, “See the ability and not the disability”. Let these words be engraved in gold in your hearts. The Late Stephen Hawkins once said, “Disability need not be an obstacle to success.” Employment equals empowerment.

Quote Corner

“A Winner is a Dreamer
who never gives up.”

-Nelson Mandela

WHAT IS AUTISM?

"Autism is one word attempting to describe millions of stories" - Stuart Duncan



Autism is a developmental disability

Children with autism, also known as autism spectrum disorder or ASD, have social, communication and language problems. They also have restricted and repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities.



Autism may be mild or severe.

This is why it is called Autism Spectrum Disorder. All children with autism don't have the exact same problems contrary to normal perceptions.



According to the CDC

1 in every 68 children has been diagnosed with autism. ASD is 4.5 times more common in boys than girls. There is a great need for statistics in Trinidad and Tobago on the number of persons with ASD.



There is no cure for Autism

There is currently no medical diagnosis that can detect Autism. From birth to at least 36 months of age, every child should be screened for developmental milestones during routine checkups with a medical professional.

TREATMENT AND ASSISTANCE FOR PERSONS WITH AUTISM

Each child or adult with autism is unique and, so, each autism intervention plan should be tailored to address the specific needs of the person.



Intervention can involve behavioral treatments, medicines or both.



Early intervention often can reduce challenges associated with autism, lessen disruptive behavior, and provide some degree of independence



With appropriate treatment and education, many children with autism spectrum disorders can learn and develop.

For further assistance for persons with autism please seek support from local institutions such as:

Autistic Society of Trinidad and Tobago

Tel.: 1 (868) 646-5506 / 225-6808

E-mail: autismtt@gmail.com



SYMPTOMS OF AUTISM

"Autism is not a choice, acceptance is. Imagine if the opposite was true" - Stuart Duncan

Autism spectrum disorders (ASD) are characterized by social-interaction difficulties, communication challenges and a tendency to engage in repetitive behaviors. However, symptoms and their severity vary widely across these three core areas.

Social Interaction



Persons with ASD may have problems using social skills to connect with other people. They may seem to be in their own world. It may be hard for them to:

- share a common focus with another person
- play with others and share toys;
- understand feelings;
- make and keep friends.

Communication



Persons with ASD trouble with communication skills like understanding, talking with others, reading or writing; understanding and using gestures, like pointing and waving.

following directions; understanding and using words; having conversations; Learning to read or write.

They may repeat words just heard or words heard days or weeks earlier; talk with little expression or use a sing-song voice;

Children may use tantrums to tell you what they do or do not want.

SYMPTOMS OF AUTISM

"I am different not less" - Dr. Temple Grandin

Common Behaviors



Children with autism may:
have trouble changing from one activity to the next;
flap hands, rock, spin or stare;
get upset by certain sounds; like only a few foods;
have limited and unusual interests-for example, talk about only one topic or keep staring at one toy.



Recent research confirms that appropriate screening can determine whether a child is at risk for autism as young as one year. While every child develops differently, we also know that early treatment improves outcomes, often dramatically.



The Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers-Revised (M-CHAT-R™) is a scientifically validated tool for screening children between 16 and 30 months of age that assesses risk for autism spectrum disorder (ASD)



Copy and paste the link below to screen your child on the Autism Speaks website

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/what-autism/diagnosis/mchat>

Did You Know?

That the United Nations Conventions of the Rights for Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) comprises of eight (8) General Principles?

Here they are:

The principles of the present Convention shall be:

- a. Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons;
- b. Non-discrimination;
- c. Full and effective participation and inclusion in society;
- d. Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity;
- e. Equality of opportunity;
- f. Accessibility;
- g. Equality between men and women;
- h. Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities.

New Faces at NCPD

NCPD is pleased to introduce two new members of staff into the NCPD Family.



Ms. Kristina Ramdath

NCPD welcomes Ms. Kristina Ramdath as one of our new On the Job Trainees in the position of Teacher's Aide. Ms. Ramdath is a 3rd year student of the University of Trinidad and Tobago. She is pursuing a Bachelor's degree with a focus in Special Education. Kristina hopes to positively make a difference as she gains the necessary professional skills and experience in the field of disabilities.



Ms. Ebony Williams

The NCPD family warmly welcomes Ms. Ebony Williams, a past trainee of NCPD as one of our new On the Job Trainees in the position of Clerical Assistant. Ms. Williams successfully graduated from the Office Administration skilled area in 2015.

Ebony looks forward to this new challenge of entering the world of work as she continues her career enhancement.

NCPD's Activities April - June 2018

Light It Up Blue for Autism

To mark the beginning of Autism Awareness month, Soroptimist International, held a ceremony to Light up the Promenade Blue on April 8th 2018 at Harris Promenade, San Fernando. In attendance were members of the Autistic Society of Trinidad and Tobago, Chief Executive Officer of NCPD, Dr. Beverly Beckles and other members of staff.

The NCPD Ensemble performed at the event and was well received by the audience.



World Immunization Week 2018

In recognition of World Immunization Week, 24th to 30th April 2018, Victoria North district of the Ministry of Health carried out an initiative to administer vaccines to schools/institutions. National Centre for Persons with Disabilities was a benefactor of this program and over a hundred persons including both trainees and staff received vaccines on April 25th 2018 on NCPD's compound.

UNCRPD Workshop

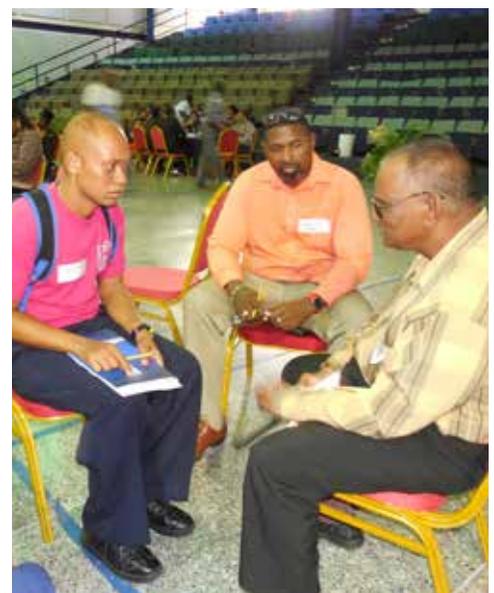
On May 1st 2018, National Centre for Persons with Disabilities hosted its public awareness workshop on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at the Naparima Boys' College Auditorium, San Fernando.

This workshop was sponsored by Caribbean Policy Development Centre and funded by the European Union.

Various stakeholders including but not limited to personnel from the Ministry of Education, Student Support Services Division, Disability Affairs Unit of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services, Special Schools, CSO's, Organisations of and for Persons with Disabilities etc. were all in attendance.

Dr. Beckles, CEO chaired the event while Ms. Kerryann Ifil, former President in the Senate of Barbados was the main facilitator for the Workshop.

The event was a success and attendees expressed an interest in learning more about the UNCRPD and how it can be used in advocacy.



Welcome to NCPD

On May 10th, 2018, NCPD held its first Open House Day for prospective trainees and their parents. A presentation followed by a full tour of the facilities was extended to the group. They also had the opportunity to interact with trainees and instructors.

The NCPD team that led this open house session comprised of Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Beckles, Program Manager, Ms. Sooklalsingh and Social Workers, Ms. James and Ms. Ramose.

The event attracted over forty parents/guardians all excited about getting their child enrolled in our program.



Visit by SERVOL Life Skill Centre

The Freeport SERVOL Junior Life Centre visited the NCPD facilities on May 17th, 2018. The group got a full tour of the facilities and got the opportunity to ask questions, seek clarification and interact with both instructors and trainees/apprentices.

Job Placement Officer, Mr. Ricardo Rampaul facilitated the tour. The group was very impressed with the facilities/training and got sensitised on various disabilities including disability etiquette.



World Challenge Day '18

First Citizens Sports Foundation held its Annual World Challenge Day event at Centre of Excellence on May 29th 2018. A group of 22 trainees along with instructors, Ms. Betty-Ann Julien, Ms. Lesa Paul and Ms. Princess Lewis attended the event.

Trainees got the opportunity to engage in various sporting events while having fun.



Visit by Point-A-Pierre Special School

A small group of students from the Point-A-Pierre Special School comprising of students who are visually impaired along with their teacher, Ms. Marsha Williams and their parents visited the Centre and got a full tour of NCPD's facilities on June 1st 2018. Program Manager, Ms. Kahaya Sooklalsingh conducted the tour.

They met with various instructors, interacted with trainees/apprentices and got an overview of the training that the Centre offers.

The group found that the visit was insightful and meaningful.

National TVET Convention 2018

The National Training Agent (NTA) held its Annual Convention on TVET on June 13th 2018 at the HYATT Regency, Port-of-Spain. Program Manager, Ms. Kahaya Sooklalsingh and Life Skills instructor, Ms. Camille Brown-Hosein attended the event.

The event focused on the role of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in skills development for employment and entrepreneurship, the gaps that need to be filled and the way forward.

Annual General Meeting

National Centre for Persons with Disabilities held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on June 28th 2018 on the NCPD's compound.

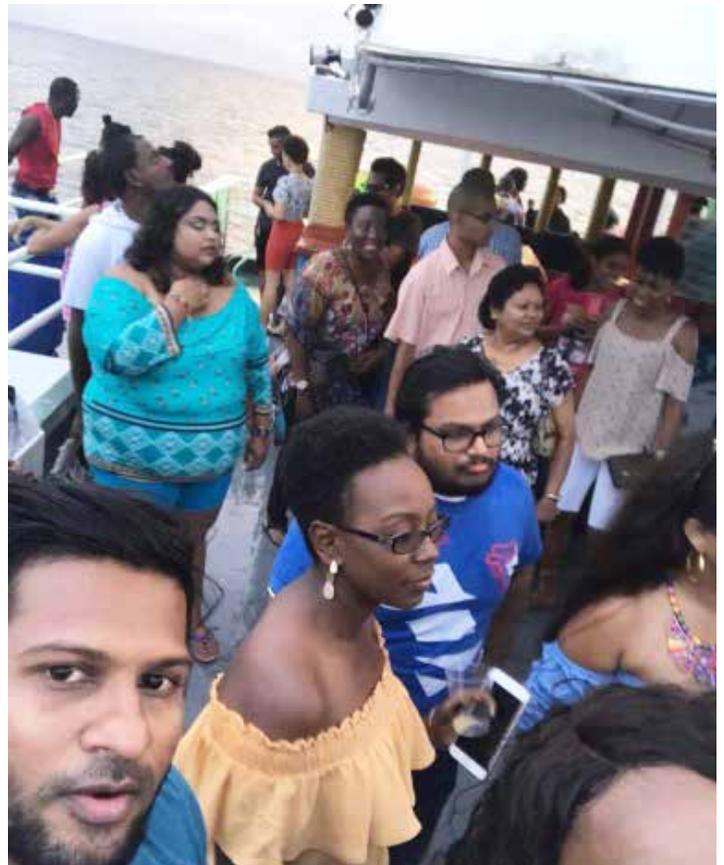
Mrs. Frances Guide-Atherly chaired the event. Members of the organisation were presented with last year's Minutes, Reports from the Chairman of the Board, Treasurer and CEO along with 2017 Audited Financial Statements and accepted by the general membership.



We Boat Ride

‘We Boat Ride 5’ was held on June 30th 2018 onboard the Sea Champion. Patrons boarded the boat at King’s Wharf, San Fernando at 3pm and sailing took place from 4pm-7pm. The Cooler Cruise which featured Dj Black Gold and the GOG family had cruisers dancing and wanting more to the end.

‘We Boat Ride’ is NCPD’s second annual fundraiser and all funds go towards the Vocational training programme.



NCPD's participation in Consultations and Workshops

Teacher Training Workshop

Social Worker, Ms. Cheimeka James and Job Placement Officer/Sports Coordinator Mr. Ricardo Rampaul attended a one week Teacher Training in Sexuality Education at the University of the West Indies. The Workshop was facilitated by Family Planning Association of Trinidad and Tobago. The Workshop addressed Human Rights issues, Sexuality, Sex and Gender and Safety Practices.

Hidden Disabilities

CREDI (Catholic Religious Education Development Institute) held a seminar on Unseen Disabilities at the Government Campus, Port-of-Spain on May 16th and 17th, 2018.

The Seminar addressed various Unseen Disabilities and how to meet the educational needs of persons who are diagnosed with those disabilities.

Ms. Kahaya Sooklalsingh, Program Manager and Social Worker, Ms. Giselle Ramose attended the 2 days seminar.

Course Development

In partnership with Commonwealth of Learning, National Centre for Persons with Disabilities and Youth Training Entrepreneurship Partnership Programme (YTEPP Ltd) were trained in Course Development with a focus on Blended Learning which comprises of Online Learning and face-to-face where more emphasis is placed on online learning.

The training which took place from May 21st-25th 2018 was held at YTEPP's Ltd Head Office in Chaguanas. Food Preparation Instructor Mrs. Leonie Hall, Life Skills Instructor Ms. Camille Brown-Hosein and Information Technology Instructor Ms. Candice John attended the training. The training also exposed participants to the online platform, Moodle.

Ms. Heather Persons Certified Instructional Designer from Canada facilitated the one week training.

Therapy Base Education

On May 24th and 25th, DIGICEL Foundation held a workshop which focused on Therapy Base Education in Chaguanas. Program Manager, Ms. Kahaya Sooklalsingh and Instructor, Ms. Betty-Ann Julien attended the 2 day workshop.

Sustainable Development in TVET – Caribbean

In collaboration with the TVET Council of Barbados, Commonwealth of Learning conducted a one week training on Integration of Sustainable Development in Technical Vocation Education and Training (TVET) in the Caribbean on June 6th-8th 2018 in Barbados.

The Training brought together various persons from National Training Agencies and Training Agents across the Caribbean. NCPD, the Organisation responsible for training persons with disabilities was represented by Food Preparation Instructor, Mrs. Leonie Hall and Information Technology Instructor, Ms. Candice John.

The training focused on how sustainable development can be integrated in TVET, how programs can contribute to sustainable development and the way forward through plans. The training also presented a great opportunity for networking and future partnerships.

The training was facilitated by COL Education Specialist; TVSD, Dr. Alison Mead Richardson.





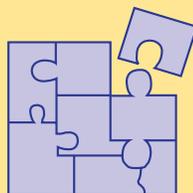
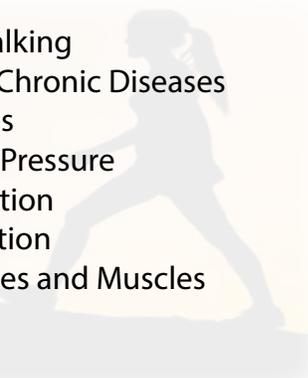
NCPD extends sincere appreciation to patrons of our fund-raiser: “We Boat Ride 5”

We look forward to your continued support.

Wellness Tip

Some Benefits of Walking

- Reduces risk of Chronic Diseases
- Aids Weight Loss
- Regulate Blood Pressure
- Improve Circulation
- Improves Digestion
- Strengthen Bones and Muscles
- Uplifts Mood



**NATIONAL CENTRE
FOR PERSONS
WITH DISABILITIES**

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Website: www.ncpdtt.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/ncpdtrinidad
YouTube: <https://bit.ly/20texm1>

Our Vision

To be a World Class Social Enterprise promoting social inclusion for persons with disabilities.

Our Mission

To empower persons with disabilities through vocational rehabilitation, training, advocacy, research and consultative services in partnership with diverse stakeholders.