



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES  
AT MONA, JAMAICA



# **PROPOSAL FOR THE CREATION OF A REGIONAL INDEX FOR MEASURING PROGRESS ON PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

**By**

**UWI Centre for Disability Studies**

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University of the West Indies  
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## **Project Information**

**Project Title:** Creation of a Regional Index for Measuring Progress on Persons with Disabilities

**Name of Organization:** UWI Centre for Disability Studies (UWICDS)

**Address of Organization:** Centre for Disability Studies  
University of the West Indies  
Mona  
Kingston 7

**Location of Project:** Coordination will take place at the Centre for Disability Studies  
University of the West Indies  
Mona  
Kingston 7

**Contact Person:** Senator Floyd E. Morris PhD

**Position:** Director

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## **Applicant Information**

**Type of Organization:** Educational Institution

### **Names and Positions of Officers in Organization:**

1. Mr. Floyd Morris- Director
2. Miss Chevelle Gerson- Research Assistant
3. Mr. Jason Ricketts- Research Assistant

### **Purpose of Organization:**

The mission of the UWICDS is “to transform and empower disabled individuals throughout the Caribbean through the use of applied research, education and training and public advocacy”. The purpose is “to make UWI the premier research, academic and policy formulating institution for persons with disabilities in the Caribbean and to assist in incorporating members of this community in a broader productive network in the region.”

### **Institutional Profile**

In August 2009, The University of the West Indies (UWI) took the conscious decision to establish the UWI Centre for Disability Studies (UWICDS). The decision to establish the UWICDS came within the context of an urgent need for credible research and systematic planning for persons with disabilities in Jamaica and the broader Caribbean.

The UWICDS has eight major objectives which will be achieved through a variety of strategies that are captured under four overarching areas: research, academic programming, training and public advocacy. These objectives are listed below: -

- To actively place the issue of disability on the developmental agenda within the Caribbean.
- To place the Centre in a position to act as a focal point for soliciting funding for research and other projects relating to persons with disabilities in the Caribbean.
- To strategically increase the levels of expertise on the subject of disability in the Caribbean.
- To strengthen the teaching programme in relations to Disability Studies up to the Post-Graduate level.
- To increase the number of students with a disability at the University of the West Indies (UWI).
- To replicate the progress and achievements made at Mona, to the other UWI campuses within the region.
- To make available, the most modern and effective technologies for the empowerment of students with disabilities attending UWI.
- To actively pursue the expansion of scholarships for students with a disability at the institution.

A major part of the strategy of the UWICDS is to establish UWI as the quintessential research institution in the Caribbean on issues relating to persons with disabilities. It is within this context that the UWICDS will focus on areas of research relating to:

- The Disabled and HIV in the Caribbean.
- The Disabled and the Labour Market in the Caribbean.
- The Disabled and Entrepreneurship in the Caribbean.
- The Disabled and the Development of Sports in the Caribbean.
- The Challenges of the Disabled in the Education System of the Caribbean.
- The Disabled and Aging in the Caribbean.
- The Disabled and Poverty in the Caribbean.
- The Disabled and Family Life in the Caribbean.

The UWI Centre for Disability Studies is an approved and registered non-governmental organization of the UN Secretariat for the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and hopes to become the central intellectual and training hub for research and public advocacy on behalf of members of the community. It is our goal to advance the agenda of making the Jamaican society and the Caribbean at large an inclusive society by 2030, respecting the rights of persons with disabilities, as well as to actively place the issue of disability on the development agenda within the Caribbean.

## **Management of Project**

The UWICDS will be responsible for managing the overall project. The UWICDS has a team of individuals who are highly motivated and have the necessary competences to manage and execute any project. Led by Floyd Morris, who is blind and a prominent parliamentarian in Jamaica and hones tremendous expertise in the field of disability, the team will undoubtedly do an excellent job in managing this project. Floyd Morris was the lead negotiator for Jamaica on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and was the one who made Jamaica the first country in the world to ratify the said Convention in 2007. He is also currently, a member of the Jamaican Senate.

The UWICDS is guided by the internal structures of the UWI. All funding for projects are lodged to a special account at the Special Projects Unit which is a department within the UWI Bursary. Disbursements of funds are done strictly by the use of invoices and receipts.

An annual report will be submitted to the respective stakeholders for the project as a means of facilitating good governance and transparency.

## **Background**

In 2007, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously accepted the Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Convention came within the context of State Parties ignoring previously established instruments such as the Standard Rules. The previously established instruments were non-binding and State Parties were not mandated to honour the provisions. It was therefore felt that a new instrument should be established and this instrument would have more legally binding effect on State Parties. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is a consequence of this process.

According to estimates from the World Health Organization (WHO), there are over 1 billion individuals living with a disability across the world. These individuals live with disabilities such as: blindness and visual impairment; deafness; mental retardation; physical disability and learning disabilities.

Most of these persons with disabilities are living in extreme forms of poverty. They are largely unemployed because their societies have not been socialized or equipped with the necessary facilities to deal with them and their needs. If the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that have been established by the United Nations is to be meaningfully achieved by State Parties, the issues which contribute to these extreme forms of poverty among persons with disabilities must be addressed.

Since the signing of the Convention in 2007, over 120 countries have signed and just over 80 have ratified. The signing and ratifying of the Convention by these countries means that the provisions are enforceable. The UN has put in place several mechanisms to monitor the implementation of the

Convention by State Parties. What is lacking however is a mechanism to measure and rank the progress of State Parties in establishing facilities in their countries for persons with disabilities. It is within this context that the UWICDS has developed a mechanism to track and monitor the progress of countries in the Caribbean and Latin America in implementing measures to actualize the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

## **Situation Analysis**

For centuries, matters relating to persons with disabilities have been treated with scant regard by countries. Efforts by the UN to have its member countries improve conditions for this vulnerable group have been met with a great deal of ambivalence. The blatant disregard for the Standard Rules which were adopted by the UN in the early 1990s is a clear testament to this. As a result, most countries do not have the necessary infrastructure to support the advancement of persons with disabilities.

The ambivalent attitudes of governments across the world towards issues relating to persons with disabilities have contributed to a marginalization of this vulnerable group. The absence of accessible facilities at educational institutions, for example, has contributed to a significant portion of the population of persons with disabilities not receiving appropriate education which would transform their lives. The result being that persons with disabilities are relegated to one of the poorest groups within the world.

Of the over 1 billion persons with disabilities living within the world, more than 750 million or approximately 75% reside within developing countries. Developing countries have not aggressively placed the issue of disabilities on their developmental agenda. They still continue to treat the subject of disability as a welfare matter. For the Sustainable Development Goals that were adopted by the UN to be meaningfully achieved, the issues which contribute to the persistent poverty among persons with disabilities must be dealt with.

Developed countries on the other hand, have adopted a more pragmatic approach towards persons with disabilities. We have witnessed where they have been using legislation and education to lead

the transformation of the lives of persons with disabilities. In the United States of America (USA) we have seen where legislation has been adopted in the form of the American Disabilities Act (ADA) to empower persons with disabilities. Canada for example, has been focussing on the built environment and as a consequence, persons with disabilities have been able to access public facilities with significant ease. The Europeans, have been treating the subject of disability as a human rights issue. The subject is a part of the European Human Rights Treaty. All of this has contributed to persons with disabilities having a totally different quality of life than their counterparts in developing countries. This gap must be narrowed and State Parties who have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, must honour their commitments to transform the lives of persons with disabilities.

The United Nations over the years has established the Human Development Index (HDI) to track the progress of countries in the development of their human capital. This index does not speak to the issue of disability and would not be an appropriate means to capture the progress of State Parties in the implementation of the provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. There is therefore an urgent need for a specific index to measure the progress of State Parties in the implementation of the provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Sustainable Development Goals in the Caribbean.

## **Rationale for Project**

In 2007, the UN Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) came into force. This has been followed by the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. The Convention clearly outlines certain issues that must be prioritized by State Parties to transform and empower persons with disabilities. The UN has put in place a number of mechanisms to monitor the implementation of the Convention by State Parties. There is however a need for a mechanism to track and rank the countries that have signed and ratified the Convention according to the progress they have made on improving the quality of life for persons with disabilities. This initiative by the UWI Centre for Disability Studies seeks to correct this gap by establishing a Regional Disability Index (RDI) to rank countries according to the progress made under the UN Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Sustainable Development Goals. Such an index will encourage State Parties who have ratified the Convention to consistently implement programs and policies to improve the quality of life for persons with disabilities. The more programs and policies put in place by State Parties to improve the quality of life for persons with disabilities, the better their ranking will be on the RDI.

## **Aims and Objectives**

The main aim of this project is to establish a special measurement index to track and rank countries that have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities from the Caribbean in accordance with the progress they have made to improve the quality of life for persons with disabilities. The aim will be supported by the following objectives:

1. To develop a regional measurement instrument that will be able to track the progress made by countries on improving the quality of life for persons with disabilities residing in the Caribbean within a 10-year period.
2. To use the UWI Centre for Disability Studies office as the hub for coordinating and implementing the measurement index.
3. To ensure that State Parties that have ratified the UN Convention for persons with disabilities within the Caribbean are making meaningful progress in improving the quality of life for persons with disabilities.
4. To develop a model questionnaire for testing and to commence actual measurement by 2018.
5. To publish the findings in a biennial publication.

## **Methodology**

1. This project is about the creation of a Regional Disability Index (RDI). It is being created to measure and rank the progress of countries that have ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The RDI will be published on a biennial basis and will be done over a 10-year period.
2. In order to develop this regional index, a carefully designed methodology has to be crafted. This is to ensure the capturing of accurate and relevant data. Consequently, the main instrument for capturing data will be a survey questionnaire.
3. In developing this questionnaire, we will be using the various articles, as spelt out in the UN Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to formulate the questions. The questions will be coded and the answers will be given a score. The scores will be tallied in order to contribute to the ranking.
4. In conducting the survey two (2) sets of institutions will be targeted in each country: A government institution with responsibility for persons with disabilities and the other being a non-governmental institution with independence from the governmental apparatus. The scores from both of these institutions will be added and the average will be used as the final figure to give the ranking on the index for each country.

5. A mechanism will be established for the pre-testing of the questionnaire. This is to ensure that the questions asked, are not offensive to persons with disabilities. A pilot program will be initiated to test the project and will commence in the English-Speaking Caribbean.
  
6. In implementing this initiative, the UWI Centre for Disability Studies, will work in close collaboration with the CARICOM Secretariat.

## **Implementation Plan**

An implementation plan for the project is listed below; the plan is also illustrated in the table 1 located on page 18.

- This project is to be implemented over a 10-year period. This is the timeframe that we believe that is reasonable for State Parties to fully implement the provisions of the Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- To engage in a pre-testing of the questionnaire by September 2016. This will allow the researchers to correct any deficiencies detected in the questionnaire.
- To commence the annual survey by August 2018. This will be done by posting the questionnaires via e-mail, to the relevant agencies in the countries that are being assessed. These agencies will be required to complete the forms and return them via the said medium to the Centre for Disability Studies. The relevant agencies will have two (2) months to complete the questionnaire.
- To commence the collation of the data by March 2019. In collating and analysing the data, due consideration will be given to the general principles articulated in the Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. These principles include:

“(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.”

- To commence and complete the writing of the first report by September 2019 and to have the report circulated to the respective stakeholders.

## Project Implementation Schedule July 2015- September 2017

**Table:1**

Month	Activities	Personnel
July 2015	Commencement of Questionnaire Design	Staff of UWICDS
September- December 2016	Pre-testing of questionnaire	Staff of UWICDS
February-August 2018	Issuing of questionnaire to relevant agencies in selected countries	UWICDS
November 2018	Collation of data	UWICDS
September 2019	Completion of Report	Staff of UWICDS
September 2019	Presentation of Findings to Stakeholders	Staff of UWICDS

## Budget

**Table: 2**

Items	Year 1 Amount In US\$\$s	Year 2 Amount In US\$	Year 3 Amount In US\$\$s	Year 4 Amount In US\$\$s	Year 5 Amount In US\$\$s	Year 6 Amount In US\$\$s	Year 7 Amount In US\$\$s	Year 8 Amount In US\$\$s	Year 9 Amount In US\$\$s	Year 10 Amount In US\$\$s
Design of Questionnaires	\$5,500.00		\$5,500.00		\$6,000.00		\$6,000.00		\$6,500.00	
Collection & Collation of Data	\$15,500.00		\$15,500.00		\$17,000.00		\$17,000.00		\$18,500.00	
Data Analysis and Writing of Report		\$50,000.00		\$50,000.00		\$55,000.00		\$55,000.00		\$60,000.00
Preparation and Presentation of Report		\$60,000.00		\$60,000.00		\$65,000.00		\$65,000.00		\$70,000.00
Travelling Expenses	\$70,000.00	\$70,000.00	\$70,000.00	\$70,000.00	\$75,000.00	\$75,000.00	\$75,000.00	\$75,000.00	\$80,000.00	\$80,000.00
Project Management	\$80,000.00	\$80,000.00	\$80,000.00	\$80,000.00	\$85,000.00	\$85,000.00	\$85,000.00	\$85,000.00	\$90,000.00	\$90,000.00
Administrative Fees	\$17,100.00	\$26,000.00	\$17,100.00	\$26,000.00	\$18,300.00	\$28,000.00	\$18,300.00	\$28,000.00	\$19,500.00	\$30,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$188,100.00</b>	<b>\$286,000.00</b>	<b>\$188,100.00</b>	<b>\$286,000.00</b>	<b>\$201,300.00</b>	<b>\$308,000.00</b>	<b>\$201,300.00</b>	<b>\$308,000.00</b>	<b>\$214,500.00</b>	<b>\$330,000.00</b>

The budget above gives an indication as to the likely costs to be incurred on an annual basis for the special index. The Caribbean

Development Bank is being approached for funding this initiative. One possible source of funding is through the Basic Needs Trust Fund (BNTF).

## **Conclusion**

In 2007 a number of countries signed and ratified the UN Convention for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Similarly, in 2015, the UN adopted the Sustainable Development Goals. This convention, coupled with the Sustainable Development Goals constitute the commencement of a global process of transformation for persons with disabilities. Countries that sign and ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities are expected to honour their obligations. The UN has put in place a number of mechanisms to monitor the implementation of the provisions of the Convention. There is however a need for a measurement of the progress countries are making with regards to executing the provisions of the Convention. The UWI Centre for Disability Studies is responding to this need by creating the Regional Disability Index and is submitting this proposal to your organization for funding.