



Improving accessibility for Youth with disabilities through ICT and open solutions in the Caribbean

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| Geographical scope/benefitting country(ies): | Caribbean sub-region: 18 countries |
| Duration (in months): | 24 months |
| Name and unit of project officer | Hara Padhy, CI |
| Partner(s) institutions: | Ministries of Youth and Culture Ministries of Women and Gender University of West Indies University of Guyana The McCam Child Development Centre CARICOM Secretariat OECS secretariat Disabled People International The Latin American Network of Non-Governmental Organizations of Persons With Disabilities and their Families (RIADIS) |
| Total estimated budget inclusive of Programme Support costs | US\$ 1,000,000 |

Rationale and background

The difficult situation faced by a significant segment of young women and men in the Caribbean, related in most cases to the negative consequences of social exclusion under its multiple forms of manifestations including physical disabilities, is a problem for which international cooperation is highly demanded and appreciated by the CARICOM communities. Today, more than one billion people live with some form of disability in the world. There are at least 50 million disabled people in Latin America & the Caribbean (LAC) – approximately 10% of the region's population.

A robust capacity building programme for youth engaged in fighting social exclusion, discrimination and violence in terms of physical disabilities and empower them to providing innovative local solutions through ICT are some of the important steps taken by some of the local governments in the Caribbean.

In September, 2013, Caribbean Community (Caricom) countries have pledged in the United Nations their commitment to ensuring the rights of the disabled citizens in the region, noting

also that internationally agreed development goals cannot be achieved without incorporating persons with disabilities. CARICOM represented in the High Level Meeting on the Realization of the Millennium Development Goals for Persons with Disabilities expressed that the lack of accessibility is one of the key barriers to the full participation of persons with disabilities. "Accessibility is both a means and a goal of inclusive and sustainable development and is essential to social integration and the full enjoyment of human rights", CARICOM added.

Both UNESCO and CARICOM (through a recent MOU) committed to cooperate to provide support, to the countries of the region for the development of policy-oriented research and related capacity-building in such fields as poverty eradication, the sustainable development of SIDS and the UN Post-2015 Development Agenda, social inclusion in the Caribbean, the social dimensions of climate change, youth and sports, migration, human rights, gender equality and philosophy.

The activity will be linked to the following-up and implementation of St. Georges' declaration and plan of actions for Building Caribbean Knowledge Societies adapted in UNESCO/ IFAP Conference organized in June, 2012 with the participation from 14 CARICOM countries and 12 international/regional partners.

The activity would also facilitate to complement UNESCO SHS collaboration on social inclusion with UNESCO's Communication and Information, and Education which also addressed issues of social inclusion of young women and men in different dimensions. The activity will be also coordinated with other UN agencies in the context of the CARICOM process.

Why UNESCO?

UNESCO is mandated by member countries to provide Universal Access to information including people with various disabilities and committed to cooperate to provide support, to the countries of the Caribbean region for the development of policy-oriented research and related capacity-building in such fields as poverty eradication, the sustainable development of SIDS and the UN Post-2015 Development Agenda, social inclusion in the Caribbean, the social dimensions of climate change, youth and sports, migration, human rights, gender equality and philosophy. The World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva 2003 and Tunis 2005 provided specific role and mandate to UNESCO to helping member countries to provide access to information knowledge for the people with disabilities.

Overall Goal/Objective

The activity will try to provide young people and ministries special skills to develop innovative solutions(hardware and software) for fighting social exclusion, discrimination and poverty through the application of innovative ICTs (Assistive technologies both hardware and software) and through Open Solutions (both hardware and software including OER, Open Access, FOSS, Open Standards, Open training, cloud computing etc.)

Main expected results

Expected Result 1

Capacities of local authorities and youth strengthened to foster social inclusion and fighting poverty of young women and men in the context of empowering people with disabilities in providing innovative ICT interventions and solutions

Activities and outputs/deliverables relating to the achievement of expected results

Activity 1 – expected result 1

Enhancing technical capacities of the Ministries of Youth and Culture (and Women's Affairs) of CARICOM countries enhanced for **formulating ICTs for socially inclusive policies and master plans** on people with disabilities through a series of technical help and missions

Output/deliverable 1.1

ICTs for socially inclusive policies and master plans on people with disabilities prepared

Activity 2 - expected result 1

Building ICT capacities (both hardware and software) through open solutions among youth in the CARICOM counties to **develop innovative tools and solutions locally** for solving the problems and empowering people with disabilities people in order to promote their social inclusion through a series of capacity building workshops

Output/deliverable 4.1

Capacities for innovative ICT solutions of young people strengthened to empower youth with disabilities

Beneficiaries and stakeholders

Beneficiaries:

Policy makers
Youth with disabilities
Educators for people with disabilities

Stakeholders:

Ministries of Youth and Culture
Ministries of Women and Gender
Ministries of Education
Free and Open Solution Professionals

Our partners include but are not limited to: UN agencies; the National Commission on Disability; the Ministry of Health; the Ministry of Education; Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports; the Civil Defense Commission; University of West Indies; University of Guyana; American Society of Speech, Language and Hearing Association; and ORBIS International. The McCam Child Development Centre, CARICOM Secretariat, OECS secretariat, Disabled People International, The Latin American Network of Non-Governmental Organizations of Persons With Disabilities and their Families (RIADIS)

Implementation strategy

The implementation strategy will be informed by evidence, position stakeholders and key beneficiaries – disabled youth, at the heart of the leadership, design and management of, especially national initiatives and will be bolstered by a dynamic and shared platform of advocacy and communication, utilizing such networks as the Youth-In Caribbean Network for Youth Development and information and communication technologies (ICTs) spaces frequented by youth. The strategy will be sensitive to gender variables that will see gender equality approaches integrated into policies and strategies for building capacities of women and girls in ICTs and gender inclusive access to information and knowledge reinforced.

The project will try to identify beliefs and values, the social and cultural norms that shape people with disabilities in the Caribbean and try to engage them with ICTs as a two-way communication (sharing ideas knowledge) to seek solutions on their own through diversified ICTS and open solutions and improve lives. A wide range of range of communication tools and approaches will be identified and used for this process.

The intervention logic begins with the inputs of technical expertise and normative tools of UNESCO and key regional partners and stakeholders. Activities will be carried out in (i) a diagnostic phase to document and understand the situation, generate baseline and inform programming as a result of evidence (ii) a consultative design phase in which UNESCO brokers dialogue at regional and national levels to engage participation and build ownership among key stakeholders and beneficiaries, enhanced by the process of policy review/development; (iii) an implementation/service delivery phase focused on capacity building, mobilization, advocacy and communication; and (iv) a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) phase which will assess and document reach, impact and lessons learned.

The project will have an advocacy plan. It will include the production and wide distribution of news items in printed, broadcasted and digital press about project main features and results. The final publication will be widely distributed. The communication strategies will include online forum, dedicated website for trained professionals and use of social network sites.

Sustainability and exit strategy

Incorporating the components of communication and M&E will be crucial in paving the way for the project's sustainability, creating a product for leveraging additional technical and financial resources on the basis of documented results, efficiency gains, value for money and its alignment with regional and national priorities on youth development. Sustainable entry points also exist in the form of complimentary programme linkages with such partners as the CARICOM and OECS secretariat and policies such as National Youth Policies and National Policies for people with physically disabled and the implementation of the CARICOM Youth Development Action Plan.