



Commitments for Inclusive Development

The CDB Policy Brief 2024 outlines key recommendations that can shape Caribbean societies, making them truly inclusive, as follows:

- 1 Regional and National Disability Assessments, Policies and Strategic Plans** to advocate for the rights of persons with disabilities and improve data collection and use for evidence-based decision-making, good practice and policy effectiveness.
- 2 Inclusive Education, Training, Health, Social Protection and Economic Infrastructure Projects** for a more socially cohesive, adaptable and equitable environment for persons with disabilities
- 3 Digital and Disaster Readiness Programmes** for ensuring digital inclusion and disaster preparedness for persons with disabilities, aiming to improve crisis/disaster response, risk management and evacuation plans within climate financing and environmental resilience interventions.

By implementing targeted plans, projects and programmes such as improving economic infrastructure, access to quality education, healthcare and employment, we can create a more equitable society where persons with disabilities are treated with dignity and respect and have increased voice and agency.

We can commit to short-, medium- and long-term actions, collectively paving the way for a region that values and includes persons with disabilities and thus providing them more opportunities to contribute to personal, community and national development.



Caribbean Context

Within Caribbean societies, persons with disabilities encounter significant challenges to their survival, well-being, safety, and development.

Despite constituting a considerable proportion of the populations in the region, ranging from 4.2% in Jamaica to 15% in Saint Lucia, they face harsh realities, including voicelessness and invisibility; inadequate access to essential services; and elevated levels of abuse, stress and isolation. Hence, urgent action is needed to address these barriers, increase visibility and promote inclusion. Achieving a more inclusive society for persons with disabilities requires a multidimensional and phased approach.

Regional Disability Challenges

The Caribbean Development Bank's Disability Assessment in Borrowing Member Countries (2024) identified key gaps and barriers, including the following:

- 1** The rights of persons with disabilities are not mainstreamed in the State's policies and programmes.
- 2** Persons with disabilities do not have adequate access to health services, and essential health services are often inaccessible.
- 3** Persons with disabilities have limited access to basic social services. When they are available, access to them may be hindered by transportation costs, time, or the type or the mode of delivery.
- 4** Good quality education to fulfil their fullest potential is culturally and intellectually exclusive, and few persons with disabilities continue their education after leaving Special Education Centres.
- 5** Persons with disabilities experience limited access to employment opportunities, as well as discrimination and stigma in the labour market.

- 6** Many persons with disabilities face significant challenges in accessing important information from service providers, which results in them being unaware of updates, deadlines or changes in services.
- 7** Mobility plays a crucial role in promoting independence, dignity and a sense of self-worth. However, for many persons with disabilities, simply moving around within their communities is a major challenge.

Caribbean Development Bank Commitments

Caribbean Development Bank has demonstrated its ongoing commitment and investment opportunities to the Caribbean region's growing communities of persons with disabilities.

Over the past five years, the Bank has identified the needs of persons with disabilities and mobilised resources to enhance the policy and technical capacity of Borrowing Member Countries in order to increase the dignity, agency and opportunities of persons with disabilities and enable them to contribute to society.