

# Guyana Council of Organisations for Persons with Disabilities

## Annual Report

# 20 22



**G C O P D**



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# ABOUT GCOPD

The Guyana Council of Organisations for Persons with Disabilities (GCOPD) was established in January 2009 and was officially registered with the Ministry of Labour Co-operatives Division under the Friendly Societies Act on September 15, of the same year. The organisation serves as the umbrella body for the majority of Organizations for Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), across Guyana, with a present membership of 24 OPDs from Regions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 10.

The Guyana Council of Organisations for Persons with Disabilities (GCOPD) is the main civil society advocacy body for Persons With Disabilities (PWDs) at the national level, working to promote the rights of PWDs. GCOPD works in partnership with the National Commission on Disability (NCD) and other agencies to change the negative culture towards PWDs that exists in Guyana. The organization also partners with the government, the private sector, and funding agencies to implement various projects and initiatives to benefit the disability community

# EVENTS

## **Inaugural National Youth with Disabilities Conference**

On December 2nd and 3rd of 2022, the very first National Youth with Disabilities Conference was held at the Arthur Chung Conference Center by the Guyana Council of Persons with Disability (GCOPD), in collaboration with International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). On December 2nd, the ceremony was officially opened by Mr. Ganesh Singh (GCOPD Program Coordinator), Hon. Mark Phillips (Prime Minister of Guyana), and Ms. Sarah-Ann Lynch (US Ambassador to Guyana). The conference was launched in observance of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (which is on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, annually), with a total of 50 youths present.

During the conference, prominent presenters, including Karryann Ifill (former President of the State of Barbados) and Hon. Aubrey Norton (Leader of the Opposition), along with FES Sri Lanka/Bangladesh Deputy Director Lasanthi Dakson, outlined how persons with disabilities can meaningfully participate in society and become independent members of their communities. A range of topics were discussed, including education, employment, and political representation for persons with disabilities. The event highlighted the importance of promoting inclusion and accessibility and provided a platform for persons with disabilities to share their experiences and express their needs.

Participants created an action plan and statement centered on three categories—employment, accessibility, and leadership and governance—based on the themes that were highlighted. As they advocate for further growth, the proclamation discusses what they hope to see in society. Over the course of the upcoming year, these young people will collaborate to push for improvements to the statement, increase public knowledge of their rights, and inspire others to join the campaign.



# **US Ambassador's Reception in Honour of International Days for Persons with Disabilities**

On Decemer 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022, United States Ambassador to Guyana Sarah-Ann Lynch collaborated with GCOPD to host a reception in honour of International Day for Persons with Disabilities, to raise awareness. At the reception, key takeaways from the Inaugural National Youth with Disabilities Conference were discussed which included strategies undertaken GCOPD to achieve the goals set.



# First Lady's Cocktail Reception in Honour of International Days for Persons with Disabilities

On December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Her Excellency Arya Ali, First Lady of Guyana along with the GCOPD to host a cocktail reception under the Baridi Benab at the Statehouse in honour of persons with disabilities. The reception allowed for the networking of people who have been advocating for persons with disabilities and celebrated their accomplishments for this year.



# TRAINING SESSIONS AND WORKSHOPS

## ENGAGE Workshop

GCOPD in collaboration with IFES held a two days ENGAGE training session for persons with disabilities in late September, 2022 at the Arthur Chung Conference. The workshop is mainly a political leadership course that targets youths with disabilities and encourages them to chase opportunities to become leaders in their communities.





# Gender-based Violence Awareness Workshop for Women with Disabilities

In observance of “16 days of activism to end gender-based violence”, GCOPD partnered with UNICEF to host a workshop which teaches women with disabilities how to recognize abuse and how to get help.

The workshop was held in the Arthur Chung Conference Center on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022 and was facilitated by Rosemarie Ramitt (the Women with Disabilities Network Coordinator) and Ganesh Singh (GCOPD Programme Coordinator) and aimed to make young women with disabilities aware of their rights and the recourses they have if they face gender-based violence.



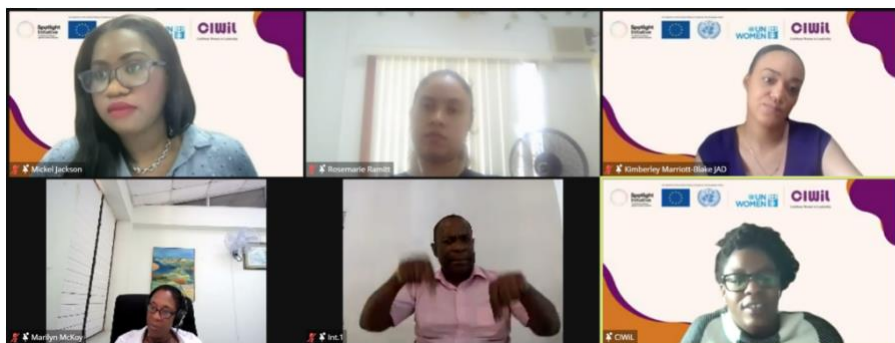
# Job Preparation Training for Persons with Disabilities

In early February 2022, GCOPD in collaboration with the US Embassy launched a nine week long training where a total of nineteen participants were exposed areas such as resumé writing, interview preparation, networking and examining their strengths and skillsets to realize their true potential under the Guyana Disability act of 2010.

## Disability Inclusion Advocacy for Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response

In aid of the Spotlight Initiative, CIWiL organized a virtual forum on Friday, December 9, 2022, with the theme Disability Inclusion Advocacy for Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response.

Rosemarie Ramitt, Coordinator for Women and Disabilities Network, The Guyana Council of Organizations for Persons with Disabilities (GCOPD), Marilyn McKoy, Executive Director of the Jamaica Association on Intellectual Disabilities (JAID), and Kimberley Sherlock Marriott-Blake, Executive Director of the Jamaica Association for the Deaf (JAD), were among the panelists. Mickel Jackson, Executive Director of Jamaicans for Justice (JfJ), mediated the discussion.





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