



The UWI Network and Outreach for Disability Education and Sensitization (NODES)
in collaboration with the Student Life and Development Department

DISABILITY MATTERS

Inclusive Futures- Transformative Structures

Friday April 21st 2023 | 9.00am – 5.00pm | The Teaching and Learning Centre, The UWI, St Augustine

PROGRAMME

8.00 am **Registration**

OPENING SESSION

9.00 - 9.05 **Opening statement**
MC: Senator the Honourable Dr Paul Richards

9.05 - 9.12 **Welcome**
Dr Jacqueline Huggins - Nodes Chairperson & Manager, Student Life and Development, UWI

9.12 - 9.15 **Introduction of Principal**
Ms Shanitol Ince - Student

9.15 - 9.30 **Principal's Remarks**
Professor Rose-Marie Belle Antoine - Principal & Pro-Vice Chancellor, UWI

9.30 - 9.35 **Introduction of Speaker**
Ms Rachel Taylor – Student

9.35-10.15 **Feature Address:**
**Leaving No One Behind: Disability Inclusion
in EU External Action – Sharing Best Practices**
His Excellency Mr Peter Cavendish, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Delegation of the European Union

PANEL 1 SCIENCE & DISABILITY

10.15-11.15 **Bringing Astronomy down to Earth for Everyone**
Professor Shirin Haque - Astronomer and Founding Member of Caribbean Astronomy
for Inclusion (CAI)
Dr Wanda Diaz-Merced - Blind Astronomer
Ms Zobaider Maharaj - Disability Activist
Ms Cecile Alves - Blind Librarian

Moderator: Ms. Darnelle Hamilton, Science Teacher and Astronomy Enthusiast

PANEL 2 MINING ACADEMIA: DISABILITY MATTERS

- 11.15-12.15 **Understanding Disability through an Intersectional Lens: Reflections from Caribbean Deaf Communities**
Dr Ben Braithwaite - NODES Board Member and Linguistics Lecturer UWI
- Disability, Theology, Potentiality**
Dr Adanna James - Dean of Studies at the Seminary of St John Vianney and the Uganda Martyrs
- “Yet I See”**
Dr Sylvia Ros-Ann Walker, Assistant Professor
- Telling Tales: Child Sexual Abuse, Mental Disability and Narrative**
Participant Moderator: Professor Paula Morgan, NODES Board Member

12.15 -1.15 LUNCH

- 1.15 -1.20 **Introduction of Speaker**
Ms Leslie-Ann Jolly-Huggins – Former Student
- 1.20 - 2.00 **Feature Address:**
The Right to Have Rights: We are Human Too
Dr Jean Antoine-Dunne - Disability Activist and Founder of NODES

PANEL 3 ROUND TABLE- THE LAW AND DISABILITY

- 2.00 -3.00 **Why is Law Reform Critical to Protect the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago**
- Mrs Ria Mohammed-Davidson – Attorney at Law
Mr Glen Niles – Founder of Down Syndrome Family Network
Ms Jacqui Leotaud – Disability Rights Activist
Mr Francis and Mrs Laura Escayg – Parents of a child with a disability and Advocates
- Participant Moderator: Senator Dr Paul Richards

STUDENT ROUND TABLE - LIVED EXPERIENCES & FUTURE PROSPECTS

- 3.00-4.20 The Impact of the Covid 19 Pandemic on the Future of Student Support Services for Students with Disabilities
- Mr Quincy Watche
Ms Shanntol Ince
Ms Shania Samaroo
Ms Minnie Tambie
Ms Leslie-Ann Jolly-Huggins
Mr Xavier Carter-Tam
Ms Ashley Constantine
- Moderator: Dr Kendra Pitt, Lecturer, Faculty of Social Sciences

ABSTRACTS

PANEL 1

Bringing Astronomy Down To Earth For Everyone

In 2020, the organization “Caribbean Astronomy for Inclusion” (CAI) was formed for the purpose of making astronomy more accessible to persons with physical or social disabilities. CAI is composed of astronomers from the Caribbean region, including Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Honduras, Haiti, and Trinidad and Tobago. It is also supported by astronomy enthusiasts from around the world, such as the United States.

Traditionally astronomy was considered a visual science. Today, we have technology that allows us to observe the universe in frequencies that our eyes are not designed for. Unfortunately, there are little to no resources available, and not enough effort to reach out to persons with disability in the Caribbean in astronomy. By extension, we as a community of scholars, lose out on the richness and potential contributions of persons with disabilities to this field leading to socioeconomic impact and scientific knowledge loss. People with disability bring diversity to the field allowing for a deeper understanding of the universe.

This panel will discuss the efforts of CAI in its attempt to bring astronomy to blind persons by converting light into sound using devices such as LightSound and Orchestar, and by using CARDIS, Coordinates and Relative Dimension in Space, to bring mathematical concepts in tactile ways. We will hear from panel members who work with various communities of persons with disabilities, or who have a disability themselves, regarding their personal experiences of making astronomy more accessible. The discussion will also address how this might be made possible for the science education in general, since astronomy encompasses all the mainstream sciences. The challenges specific to the Caribbean region, and in particular with astronomy, will be highlighted for the purpose of charting a trajectory into the future in this exciting area scientific exploration and discovery.

PANEL 2

Mining Academia - Disability Matters

Dr Ben Braithwaite. Understanding Disability through an Intersectional Lens: Reflections from Caribbean Deaf Communities

Disability intersects in crucial ways with gender, sexuality, poverty, social class, race, and many other factors. Disabled people face multiple layers of oppression by virtue of separate but overlapping structures, connected with these different aspects of their identities. This paper demonstrates some of the ways in which this can work by discussing examples from research in Caribbean deaf communities. I argue that attempts at building more equitable and inclusive societies in the Caribbean can only succeed if they incorporate approaches to disability within a broader intersectional analysis.

Dr Adanna James. Disability, Theology, Potentiality

This research looks at how the Caribbean reality could provide tools for speaking about and reflecting upon complex, paradoxical experiences such as one finds when encountering persons with intellectual impairments. Edouard Glissant's 'Poetics of Relation' was used as an example of this unique Caribbean dynamic. The work offered the tools for analysing and communicating such complex realities especially within a religious/faith-based setting. This work also briefly looks at methods to start implementing inclusive ways of relating with persons with disabilities especially within a Christian context.

Dr Sylvia Ros-Ann Walker. “Yet I See”

In response to the conference theme, this paper proposes to explicate Professor Wilfred Cartey's self-described transformative vision to affirm that disability matters. Cartey was born sighted on July 19th 1931 but lost his eyesight in 1962 due to airplane pressure destabilization. He articulated his transformative vision during the 31-year non-sighted phase of his life.

Professor Paula Morgan. Telling Tales: Child Sexual Abuse, Mental Disability and Narrative

Child sexual abuse deeply traumatizes those with underdeveloped physical and psychic resources. It can potentially inflict indelible traumatizing wounds on children, generating in the process deep-rooted fear, enduring mistrust, low levels of resilience and impaired capacity to cope with ever-day life challenges. The invisible wounding of the fledging psyche is particularly resistant to healing because of the cultural norms of social silencing and even tacit acceptance of this evil, which has become near endemic within segments of Caribbean societies.

This paper analyses samples of real life discourses on child sexual abuse collected in the process of extending practical, faith-based support to survivors. It argues that survivors grapple with the aftermath of abuse and violation for decades. Long after the physical acts have ceased, the mental torment and in some cases impairment endures. The paper zeroes on operation and long term impact of the resultant fragmentation and dissociation, as manifested in samples of survivor discourses.

PANEL 3

THE LAW AND DISABILITY - Why is Law Reform Critical to Protect the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago ?

The Disability Legislation Working Group has been established under the auspices of the Human Rights Committee of the Law Association to assist in the enactment of national disability legislation. The panel discusses its work and its objectives.

PANEL 4

The Impact Of The Covid 19 Pandemic On The Future Of Student Support Services For Students With Disabilities

It is well known that the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic were devastating in many areas of societal, world over. The negative effects on the institution of Education in Trinidad and Tobago cannot be discounted. We will hear the real-life experiences of our students from the UWI St. Augustine campus as they recount student life before, during and after COVID-19.

DONORS

NODES is grateful for the generous contributions from the following:

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