

**Commonwealth Disabled People’s Forum**

 **c/o World of Inclusion**

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**CDPF Brief Information on Implementation of UNCRPD Questionnaire**

Will all DPOs joining the Commonwealth Disabled People’s Forum and/or their delegates please ensure this form is completed and emailed back. Return to rlrieser@gmail.com along with the completed application form.

1.Name of your DPO: AUTISM ASSOCIATION OF NAMIBIA (Section 21 not for profit)

2. Name of your country: NAMIBIA

3. Has your country ratified the UNCRPD and when? YES, 4 December 2007

4. What has your country done to Implement the UNCRPD? (See attached doc)

5. How much is your DP0 involved in implementation with the Government of your country? We have been involved with disability matters and government in Namibia since 1994, when the policy for people with disabilities was being developed. We have further been part of committees regarding education & disability & inclusion. We have been part of a SIDA working group between governments, universities, and dpo/npo to improve inclusion and to do action research as to how this is done or could be done. The countries involved were Namibia, Botswana, South Africa and Sweden.

6. Has your DPO been involved in producing a shadow report to go to UNCRPD Committee and how?

The shadow report is currently being developed and AAN is a member of the steering committee for the National Disability Forum.

7. What progress has been made on implementing Inclusive Education?

Policy on inclusive education; Assessment of the policy; pilot projects in various regions. Ongoing work to improve inclusion.

8. What progress has been made on social protection for PWD?

Attached doc

9. What progress has been made in implementing employment opportunities for PWD?

The National Training Authority and the special education schools are developing programmes to improve employment opportunities. In some cases mainstream commercial enterprises employ people with disabilities on a regular basis. We do not have an analysis exactly who employs, who is employed, and how/through whom were they employed, neither do we know how many or how many in each town/region of Namibia.

10. What progress has been made on challenging negative attitudes and stigma to PWD? Regular awareness campaigns. Very difficult as myths and stigmas abound, and because of lack of resources access to schools and everywhere else still very difficult.

11. What progress has been made in achieving gender equality for PWD?

I don’t have details, but if I look at our Government and the departments, Namibia is doing OK with their gender/equality

12. What capacity building does your DPO need? Identify areas.

Funding to do all the admin work, research, and more (eg attend the above named meetings, or produce statistics that will underwrite my statements made above, etc.

Funding and resources to assist more people. Autism support requires specialised knowledge in many fields and for inclusion and mainstream education and employment a greater number of assistants and care workers is needed.

Funding to be able to provide online training. Our country is vast, travelling is expensive. Internet access and accompanying resources would help us reach far more people.

13. If you are the National Umbrella DPO, how do you operate democratically with other DPOs?

We have a database not only with families or people with Autism, but other disabilities as well, including schools, universities, teachers, interested individuals and more.

We are also part of the Disability United Network Forum which is a loose group of DPOs, NPOs, Government Ministries, interested parties and more where we share disability related matters. Before Covid-19 we met on a monthly basis and the minutes were shared with all (as not all members are in Windhoek, and do not have the funding to travel). With Covid-19 we are in the process of re-visiting our meeting format and looking for an online way to include everyone, especially those with visual impairments and /or hearing impairments/deafness.

14. If you are an impairment specific or have a particular focus or are a regional DPO, how do you work with Umbrella DPO?

I have found many years ago that Autism is a complex matter, and many children have other disabilities too. Also – there aren’t separate disability organisations for each disability that there is, thus we have always included and not turned away families with other disabilities who came for assistance. Most disabilities also have some form of communication difficulty, thus our focus is on all aspects of Autism and also Communication and AAC (Alternative and Augmentative Communication). See also answer to 13. Networking and information sharing is key!

15. If there is no national umbrella DPO, how could one be built?

Autism Association of Namibia is the National DPO. We are also in regular contact and have now applied for membership with NFPDN (the national federation of people with disabilities in Namibia).

16. How does your DPO get funded?

Mostly private funding; fundraising efforts through flea markets, letters of request and private donors. Since we have been registered in June, we will now broaden our fund raising efforts to include applications and grants to and by bigger foundations and corporations.

17. What training capacity does your DPO have?

My training and experience in Autism and disability over 30 years (busy collating all the certificates, etc for courses, conferences, workshops).

Furthermore we are in dire need for funding for a travelling trainer/educator who would travel in the regions to improve knowledge for parents, teachers and families.

18. What regular training do you provide for PWD?

Have not done any this year because of Covid-19, but hope to continue with our regular parent and class assistant training programme. When we have funds we invite relevant professionals from South Africa or abroad to do training.

19. How does your DPO involve young PWD?

We have very few young people with Autism currently able to join us except for support sessions as many of them have high anxiety levels. We do regularly invite them to assist at flea markets or other events and sessions, and if they’d like to they can also speak about and inform others about their autism. (Most of them do not want others to know (yet) that they are autistic because of fear of stigmatisation.

20. Does your DPO have any experience working in a humanitarian disaster?

No, unfortunately not. So far we have only picked up knowledge through the experience of others in other countries.

As for Covid-19 – we have shared on FB on our database and by email any AAC materials and visuals to make it easier for people with autism to understand and to give families tools on how they can explain things to their children.