

**AWID THIRD INTERNATIONAL FORUM  
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Presentation at Caribbean session**

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**QUESTION:** What can be done to include women who are marginalized especially women with disabilities in Caribbean women's programmes?

**Definition of Disability and Handicap**

Disability is the functional limitation within an individual caused by physical, mental, psychological or sensory impairment.

Handicap is the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the normal life of the community on an equal level due to physical and social barriers.

Types of Disabilities include:

1. Mobility impairment: e.g. wheelchair users, amputees and persons who use some form of assistive aids in order to be mobile.
2. Sight Impairments: e.g. totally blind, partially blind, partially sighted or low vision.
3. Speech and Hearing Impairment: e.g. totally deaf, hard of hearing or a combination of both.

To include women with disabilities in programmes therefore the following areas facilities and services must be borne in mind and provided when activities are being planned and organised.

**ACCESSIBILITY**

This should cover two aspects. The Physical environment and public buildings, and Access to Information.

Access to public buildings should include ramps, grab bars, corridors and doors large enough for free movement of wheelchairs, etc.

Access to Information for persons with Speech and Hearing Impairment means Sign Language Interpretation or Lip Reading.

Access to Information for sight-impaired persons entails Braille, Sighted Readers, and electronically generated material for those who are computer literate, and equipped with the technology, which should be provided before hand if possible.

**Consultation and not Assumptions**

Always consult persons to enquire of their needs and never assume that you believe this is what will be required or best for the individual.

This is extremely important when services are to be provided since these provisions will contribute to their active participation and involvement in these programmes.