

KNPD'S Consultative Committee of Persons with Intellectual Disability

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Published on pg 20, The Malta Independent on Sunday on 25th November 2012

The Consultative Committee of the National Commission Persons with Disability (KNPD) is led by persons with intellectual disability with the support of non-disable people. It was set up in 2007 and consists of two committees – the Full Committee and the Core Committee. The Full Committee has around thirty members who elect the seven members of the Core Committee from among themselves. Currently, the Core Committee members are Alison Bonello, Lisa Borg, Chris Camilleri, Malcolm Camilleri, Marthese Deguara, Lourdes Farrugia, and Omar Jelassi. They were elected by the Full Committee members last July for a period of two years.

The Core Committee's role is to plan the meetings of the Full Committee. The seven members together decide the subjects we discuss during these meetings and prepare a list of questions related to the subject which are then discussed with all the members of the Consultative Committee. Because there are so many members, we split them up into smaller groups and do several meetings to discuss the chosen subject.

After all the meetings have been held, we draw up a report which we present to the KNPD Board. During this year we have held meetings about how we would like to live. The report was presented during a seminar for which we invited all the Consultative Committee members and those who provide services for disabled persons. We led the seminar and presented the report. The seminar was addressed by Dr Chris Said, Minister for Justice, Dialogue and the Family, and Dr Justyne Caruana, Spokesperson on the Family and Disabled Persons.

The report deals with the activities that we like to do, where we would like to live, whether we feel accepted by others, and our rights and duties.

We enjoy doing paid and voluntary work, errands and cooking. We also like to go out with our friends and our workmates; do sport and drama, or watch them; do physical exercise or crafts; watch television and listen to music. Some of us also like reading and writing. We also enjoy holding meetings. Some love feasts; or going aboard; or using the computer.

Many of us said that we have the opportunity to do the things we enjoy doing. Some said that they need better time management to do all their favourite activities. Others said that they do not always manage to do the activities they like to do. We agreed that it is important that we are independent in our choices and can choose to do what we enjoy doing. Some pointed out that we need money to be able to do these things. And some added that they would like to have more friends who respect them and with whom they can do these different activities.

When we discussed where we would like to live, there were different opinions. One member mentioned a flat in Sliema that she would share with her boyfriend and three other friends, as well as a support worker. She would also like to have a dog. She said it's important that they all have their own key. Someone else wants a villa with a garden and pool! Some of us want to live with our friends, while others want to live

with their parents or other family members, or other persons they can trust. Finally, some members said they prefer to live on their own while others want to live with someone who can help them with their daily needs.

Another subject we talked about in our meetings was whether or not we feel accepted by others. Some Committee members mentioned that some people make fun of them or laugh at them. Others ignore them. Someone pointed out that as disabled people it is also important that we are careful how we behave with others. Some members said that they feel accepted, but not always and not by everyone. They said it's important that people get to know more about disabled persons. Some said that they do not feel accepted when someone pities them (*miskin*), shouts at them or say that they are good for nothing. We also do not like it when people pick on us at school, at work or when we're out in society. Some members said that they feel accepted when people talk to them and take notice of them, help them and show them respect. There are many people who do this and there are many places where we are feel accepted and treated well. These include schools, workplaces, and places like restaurants.

We also looked at what Committee members think are our rights. Among the rights mentioned, there is the right to get married and to choose where to live, and the right to choose whether to go out on our own, with friends or with family members. We also have the right to accessible places and roads. Some Committee members also mentioned the right to be respected by others and to speak up for ourselves.

Finally, we also talked about what we think are our duties. We said that we have the duty to respect other people and treat them well, and to do our work well. We also have the duty to speak appropriately, not to talk too much, not to use offensive language, gossip, or quarrel with others. We have the duty to love each other, help each other, obey the rules of society and defend our country.

The Consultative Committee is very important for us since it gives us the opportunity to talk about subjects that interest us.

More information about this Committee can be obtained from KNPD.