



***Fully accessible Barbados...the gateway to access in the Caribbean.***

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(presenter)*

### SITUATION

The **Fully Accessible Barbados (FAB)** Accreditation Program was conceptualized to address the lack of inclusion of persons with disabilities living in and visiting Barbados. Being the first and only program of its kind in the Caribbean, **FAB** targeted the tourism industry and its nucleus is designed to create a new norm for the inclusion of persons with disabilities. With the changing demographics of travelers with disabilities searching for new and exciting accessible destinations, Barbados could no longer ignore this expanding clientele or run the risk of giving similar destinations outside our region a competitive edge. Our island must undergo the environmental and attitudinal transformation required to create a universally recognized accessible destination. Lack of foresight ruled the early years of development, therefore Barbados's present thrust to create access is hindered by a challenging landscape where roads run alongside properties, many of which are within the tourism plant.

### METHODOLOGY

Implementing the strategy to create **Fully Accessible Barbados (FAB)**, a FAB Accreditation Assessment program was developed offering (6) Accessible Standards.



Universal Design and International Accessibility Standards guides the assessment process of various facilities and sectors of the Tourism plant. Related criteria's had to be designed to meet these requirements. Following **FAB** assessments, recommendations are made in order to qualify for any of the six **FAB** Accredited Standards. A second visit is conducted to ensure that the recommendations were addressed. When completed, a well-designed **FAB** Plaque depicting the qualifying standards is presented to the facility.

A necessary criterion to acquiring **FAB** Standards is Sensitivity Training; offered to the facility's staff along with the physical recommendations.

**FAB** properties are then promoted by the businesses and via **FAB** Website and Facebook page; an area keenly supported by the Barbados Ministry of Tourism.

## RESULTS

**FAB** is progressing in the direction intended. More of the tourism plant is incorporating Universal Design and International Standards in their building and refurbishing plans. The Commercial sector is making strides in keeping up with the provision of access as they too are recognizing the value of the customers with disabilities.

Though **FAB** is still heavily focused on tourism, the program is expanding into schools environment and curriculum. Having attracted the support of the Barbados National Standards Institute, the Ministry of Tourism and the newly formed Committee on Accessible Standardization of All Caribbean Hotels; Fully Accessible Barbados will be the catalyst that creates the new norm for accessible destinations in the Caribbean.

