NEWSLETTER

DISABILITY EMPOWERMENT FOUNDATION (D.E.F.)

2026 COMMUNITY UPDATE

EMPOWERING INDIVIDUALS, BREAKING BARRIERS, AND BUILDING INCLUSIVE FUTURES ACROSS NIGERIA AND CANADA

1. **A Message from Our Leadership:** Inclusion is a Right, Not a Privilege

Dear D.E.F. Family and Global Partners,

As we progress through **2026**, our foundation's core mandate has shifted fully from raising abstract awareness to deploying direct, localized support, led by our dedicated board—including **Rev. (Dr.) Olutayo Stephen Shodipo** and **Prof. Olugbenga Olumekun**, and the entire board members and council.

D.E.F. continues to construct reliable pathways for individuals with developmental and physical disabilities to influence policy, shape local decisions, and build independent futures.

"Our mission is to stand alongside our brothers, sisters, and families to break environmental barriers and create concrete opportunities to live life to the fullest."

2. **Breaking News:** 1,000-Person Tech Training Partnership Launches

We are thrilled to officially announce our groundbreaking 2026 partnership with **GetBundi Education Technology**. Together, we are offering **1000 Nigerians living with disabilities** completely **100% FREE** access to high-demand digital skills. This major 12-week program provides live classes, tailored masterclasses, professional mentorship, and even free monthly data allocations to bypass learning barriers. Trainees are specializing in:

- Digital Marketing
- Graphic Design
- Video Editing

"Unlocking economic self-reliance: Our 2026 GetBundi tech cohort prepares for digital career paths."



3. **Real Talk:** Mental Health Seminar in Edmonton





On **Saturday, August 29, 2026**, D.E.F. collaborated with the Canadian Association for Black Health & Safety Professionals (CABHSP) to present **"Real Talk: Your Mental Health and Total Wellbeing".**

Held at the Fellowship Hall inside **Southgate Baptist Church** in Edmonton, Canada, this focused seminar provided youth and young adults (ages 13–30) with safe spaces to converse with leading consultant psychiatrists and emergency responders. The event successfully broke down heavy cultural stigmas and outlined actionable, compassionate paths toward accessible community mental health care.

"Fostering understanding and hope at the Southgate Fellowship Hall for our August 2026 seminar."

4. **DAIC 2026:** Pathways to Disability Inclusion Conference

Earlier this year, on Saturday, March 28, 2026, we hosted the landmark Disability Education Awareness and Inclusion Conference (DAIC 2026) at the Baptist College of Theology in Igede Ekiti.

The theme, "Pathways to Disability Inclusion: A Movement From Awareness and Reflection to Action," gathered religious leaders, social care practitioners, and allies to actively challenge systemic limitations within community structures and faith spaces.

"Moving from reflection to action: Global dialogue on accessibility at the Baptist College of Theology."



5. **Ongoing Initiatives:** Accessible Infrastructure & Equipment

Beyond our targeted conferences, our everyday programs continue to change lives at the grassroots level:

- **School Renovations:** D.E.F. teams continue structural safety overhauls to build accessible school layouts for integrated classrooms.
- **Equipment Distribution:** Following our previous outreach efforts to institutions like the Ondo State School for the Disabled, we continue auditing and delivering tailored vocational machinery and mobility equipment to specialized learning environments.

Demonstrated Impact

1. **Community and faith-based inclusion:** Reached more than **50 locally led ministries in Nigeria** with inclusive, person-centred training and programming for persons with disabilities.
2. **Skills and economic empowerment:** Provided more than **50 students** with physical and intellectual disabilities with vocational training equipment, including sewing machines, computers and trade tools, supporting pathways toward independence and economic participation.
3. **Awareness and inclusion advocacy:** Trained and engaged more than **150 church leaders and workers** through seminars, conferences and outreach initiatives designed to improve disability awareness, accessibility and inclusion
4. **Caregiver and institutional capacity:** Delivered specialised workshops for caregivers and institutional staff supporting more than **100 residents** with intellectual and developmental disabilities, strengthening care systems and quality-of-life outcomes.
5. **Research and policy contribution:** Uses community-based participatory research to generate evidence that can improve service delivery, inform policy and strengthen disability-inclusive practice.

How You Can Move Into Action With Us

We operate strictly on transparency and collective impact. Here is how you can support our upcoming late-2026 efforts:

- **Contribute:** Directly fund adaptive learning materials and tech kits for our vocational students.
- **Partner:** Connect your business or ministry to our inclusion training frameworks.

Visit: Disability Empowerment Foundation Portal to register for programs, review our complete visual event archives, or submit a donation.

For general inquiries or to connect directly with regional chapters, contact the administration teams at 780-243-6336 or 587-501-5149 (Canada) & +234-703-127-5142 (Nigeria)