

**THE CONSTITUTION**  
**OF THE**  
**DISABLED PEOPLE'S ASSOCIATION**  
**SINGAPORE**



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## **CONSTITUTION OF THE DISABLED PEOPLE'S ASSOCIATION**

### **INTERPRETATION**

In these Rules, unless the context otherwise requires, "Board of Management" or "Board" means the Board of Management constituted under Clause 10 of these Rules.

"President" means the President of the Disabled People's Association (DPA).

"Vice President" means the Vice-President of the DPA.

"Honorary Secretary" means the Honorary Secretary of the DPA.

"Honorary Treasurer" means the Honorary Treasurer of the DPA.

"Assistant Honorary Treasurer" means the Assistant Honorary Treasurer of the DPA

#### **1. NAME**

The Organisation shall be known as the Disabled People's Association abbreviated and hereinafter referred to as the "DPA".

#### **2. PLACE OF BUSINESS**

The place of business of the DPA shall be 1 Jurong West Central 2, #04-01 Jurong Point Shopping Centre, Singapore 648886 or at any other place as decided by the Board of Management from time to time subject to the approval of the Registrar of Societies.

#### **3. OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the DPA shall be:-

- a) To encourage and enhance self-help and independent living among persons with disabilities in the community,
- b) To facilitate, encourage and further advance the full participation and the equality of persons with disabilities in the community so as to enable them to enjoy the living conditions and improvements in the standard of living resulting from social and economic developments,
- c) To do such other things that are incidental or conducive to the attainment of the above objectives as the General Meeting of Members of the Board of Management may from time to time decide, DPA shall:
  - i. work towards removing all architectural and attitudinal barriers and those barriers that would hinder the full participation of persons with disabilities in the educational, vocational, economic, social, cultural, sports and recreational life by making the necessary recommendations to the relevant authorities or organisations, by taking action to facilitate the full participation of all persons with disabilities, including those who are home-

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bound in the design, formulation, implementation and evaluation of policies, programmes, and services for their needs, and to monitor, evaluate and review such services; to also provide communication links with all persons with disabilities and to make accessible information about disability, its treatment, correction and prevention;

- ii) ensure that the benefits of reform and development programmes in every field, nationally and internationally, also reach citizens and all residents with disabilities;
- iii) promote or organise and/or to initiate the provision of cultural, educational/vocational, sports and recreational facilities, where none exists as well as social benevolent and other activities for the benefit and welfare of the persons with disabilities;
- iv) affiliate with and to further the work or purpose of any national or international organisation having as its objectives the promotion of the interest, welfare and rights of persons with disabilities through social justice;
- v) work closely and to provide consultative services on matters relating to persons with disabilities to Governmental and Non-Governmental Organisations engaged in the field of services to persons with disabilities; promote or undertake research in any aspect of prevention, habilitation, rehabilitation and equalisation of opportunities; organise training courses not for profit or commercial reasons for persons with and without disabilities concerned with programmes for persons with disabilities; organise conferences, seminars, study groups or workshops on subjects relevant to persons with disabilities;
- vi) run, with the approval of the relevant authorities, business(es) with a social mission to create work activities for people with disabilities and to assist them in achieving financial independence.

#### 4. **PATRONS**

The Organisation, may, on the recommendation of the Board, at any General Meeting nominate suitable persons to be Patrons and Vice Patrons of the Organisation.

#### 5. **MEMBERSHIP**

- (a) The membership of DPA shall consist of:
  - i. Ordinary Members
  - ii. Life Members
  - iii. Youth Members
  - iv. Associate Members

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v. Honorary Members

- (b) The Ordinary Membership is open to all persons with disabilities in Singapore who are 18 years of age and above. Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, when in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Disability is defined as the result of the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

- (c) Life membership is open to any person with disability who has made a significant contribution to the movement of people with disabilities either in DPA or in other affiliated organisations.
- (d) Youth Membership is open to persons with disabilities aged 13 to 17 years. Membership is valid from year joined till 18 years of age. Youth membership do not have voting rights until the conversion to ordinary membership at the age of 18.
- (e) The Associate Membership is open to all duly registered organisations or institutions of/for persons with disabilities in Singapore and individual persons without disabilities in Singapore who are directly concerned or involved with persons with disabilities and/or in agreement with the aims and objectives of the DPA as outlined. These members shall be known as "Allies of Persons with Disabilities". Advocates of persons with disabilities shall also be eligible for Associate Membership.
- (f) The Honorary Membership of DPA may be conferred by the Board of Management on individuals and organisations who have made substantial contribution to the cause of persons with disabilities.

6. **APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP**

- (a) An application for Membership shall be made in the prescribed form duly completed and forwarded to the Honorary Secretary.
- (b) The Board of Management of the DPA may approve or reject any application for membership at its sole discretion, provided that any subscription fee so paid in advance shall be refunded to the unsuccessful applicant.
- (c) All members shall, upon admission in the membership of the DPA, be deemed to be bound by these rules and the by-laws made thereunder.

7. **SUBSCRIPTION FEES**

- (a) The Board of Management shall have power to set, review and revise the rates of the annual subscription fee with the consent of the General Meeting of Members.

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- (b) The income and property of the DPA whensoever derived shall be applied towards the promotion of the objects of the DPA as set forth in this Constitution and no portion thereof shall be paid or transferred directly or indirectly by way of dividend or bonus or otherwise howsoever by way of profit to the persons who at any time are or have been members of the DPA or to any of them or to any person claiming through any of them.

8. **RIGHTS AND LIABILITIES OF MEMBERS**

- (a) All Ordinary Members who are not disqualified by failure of payment or suspended from membership under any provision of these Rules shall have the right to attend, speak and vote at any General Meeting of Members, provided that an Ordinary Member is otherwise unable to exercise his rights of membership due to the severity of his disability shall be allowed to do so through an approved advocate who shall be a person whom a member with a disability has nominated in writing or any other accepted method of communication to the DPA to be his/her representative. Provided that in cases where due validity of the nomination by the person with disability is in doubt, the Board of Management shall have the authority to verify the nomination.
- (b) All Ordinary Members who are entitled to participate in a General Meeting of Members shall, unless otherwise disqualified from holding office, be eligible for nomination and election or appointment to any office in the Board of Management.
- (c) Before any member is expelled or suspended from membership, an independent Committee known as the Board of Inquiry, appointed by the Board of Management, shall conduct an inquiry in which the member shall be informed of the precise allegations against him and he shall be given ample opportunity to refute the allegations. Such notice in writing may be served by delivery in person or by registered mail to the last known mailing address.
- (d) A suspended member shall not be entitled to any of the benefits of membership or use or enjoy the facilities and amenities of the DPA during the period of suspension, which shall not affect his obligation to pay an annual subscription.
- (e) A member shall, upon expulsion, forfeit all his rights and interests in the DPA.

9. **RESIGNATION**

Any Ordinary or Associate Member desiring to resign from the membership of the DPA shall give a month's notice in writing to the Board of Management. No member shall be entitled to a refund on any subscription fee paid in advance.

10. **BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

- (a) The DPA shall be managed by a Board of Management to be elected at every third Annual General Meeting of members from among the Ordinary Members of the DPA provided that at anyone time, the members of the Board should not be related to each other or to the staff of the DPA and majority of the Board of Management members shall comprise persons with disabilities.

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- (b) The Board of Management shall comprise:
- i. A President
  - ii. One Vice-President
  - iii. An Honorary Secretary
  - iv. An Honorary Treasurer
  - v. Assistant Honorary Treasurer
  - vi. Up to ten Committee Members
- (c) i. No person shall be nominated as a member of the Board of Management unless written notice of such nomination supported by written acceptance by the nominee shall have been given by an Ordinary Member not less than two weeks prior to the election at the every third Annual General Meeting. Such notice shall, except in the case of existing members of the Board of Management, contain biographical details of the nominee and a statement as to whether or not the nominee is a person with disability.
- ii. The scrutineers who shall be appointed at the every third Annual General Meeting to conduct the election of the Board of Management, shall ensure that the Board members declared elected contain the requisite majority of persons with disabilities pursuant to Rule 10 (a) above.
- (d) The Board can co-opt up to four members who can be persons without disabilities and who shall serve for a period agreed to by the Board. These co-opted members shall be eligible to vote at Board meetings only.
- (e) Representatives from the Ministries of Social and Family Development, Manpower, Health, Education, National Development and Communications and Information, the National Trades Union Congress, the National Council of Social Service and the People's Association may be invited to serve on the Board of Management. They shall have no voting rights.
- (f) Members of the Board shall hold office for a term of three years. All retiring members of the Board except the President and the Honorary Treasurer shall be eligible for re-election. The President shall not hold the same office for more than two consecutive terms and the Honorary Treasurer shall not hold the same office for more than one term. The President and the Honorary Treasurer shall be eligible for re-election to other offices.
- (g) i. The Board shall meet at least once every three months and whenever the President or three voting members, one of whom shall be an office-bearer of the Board, deem it necessary.
- ii. The notice and agenda for a meeting shall be given not less than seven days in advance. The President may call a meeting of the Board at any time by

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giving three days' notice.

- iii. The quorum for all meetings of the Board shall not be less than one third of the Board appointments, two of whom shall be office-bearers. The President or in his/her absence, the Vice President or either of the two other office-bearer in order of preference shall preside at all meetings of the Board.
- iv. The Board shall reach a decision on any matter by a majority of votes among the persons present and voting. When necessary such decisions can be done via e-mail exchanges and the results recorded and filed for a minimum period of 5 years.
- (h) In the event of any vacancy arising in the Board of Management from any cause whatsoever, the Board of Management may co-opt any member of the DPA to fill the vacancy, provided that the Board shall not be precluded from holding any meeting or acting in any manner merely by reason of any vacancy in its membership.
- (i) Any member of the Board of Management who absents himself/herself from three consecutive meetings thereof without prior excuse in writing to the Honorary Secretary or sufficient reason acceptable to the Board of Management shall cease to be a member of the Board of Management with effect from the date of such third meeting.
- (j) Any changes in the Board of Management shall be notified to the Registrar of Societies and the Commissioner of Charities within two (2) weeks of change.
- (k) The Board of Management may expel or suspend from the membership of the DPA any member whose conduct is in the opinion of the Board prejudicial to the reputation of the DPA or to the interest of the members of the DPA.
- (l)
  - i. The Board of Management shall have power to manage and administer the funds of the DPA.
  - ii. Any cheque drawn on a banking account of the DPA shall be signed by the President or the Honorary Secretary in addition to the Honorary Treasurer or Assistant Honorary Treasurer.
- (m) The Board of Management shall be empowered to establish such funds or schemes as may be necessary and expedient to provide financial or other assistance to members.
- (n) The DPA shall raise, cause to be raised and receive such donations that it deems necessary for the effective promotion and the carrying out of all of its activities.
- (o) All funds received by the DPA shall be deposited at any Bank approved by the Board of Management either in current, savings or fixed deposit accounts.
- (p)
  - i. Whenever a member of the Board of Management in any way, directly or indirectly, has an interest in a transaction or project or other matter to be



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discussed at a meeting, the member concerned shall disclose the nature of his or her interest before the discussion on the matter begins.

- ii. The member concerned should not participate in the discussion or vote on the matter, and should also offer to withdraw from the meeting and the Board of Management shall decide if this should be accepted.

11. **ACQUISITION AND DISPOSAL OF PROPERTY**

- (a) The Board of Management shall have the power to purchase or acquire movable or immovable property or other assets for the purposes of the DPA without having to obtain the sanction of a General Meeting of Members and shall have power to invest any funds of the DPA not immediately required for any such purposes upon the security of any investments for the time being authorised by law for the investment of trust funds with full power to sell, realise, vary or otherwise deal with such movable property and investments.
- (b) The Board of Management shall have power to sell, realise, vary or otherwise deal with the movable property and investment of the DPA but the DPA shall not make investments in the share market and no immovable property of the DPA or any part thereof shall be sold, assigned, transferred, conveyed, mortgaged or otherwise disposed of without a resolution authorising or sanctioning such a sale, mortgage or other transaction being first passed at a General Meeting of Members of the DPA.
- (c) The investments, which shall exclude fixed deposit accounts and immovable property of the DPA shall be held by a corporate Trustee Company as Custodian Trustee, registered under the Trustee Companies Ordinance of the Republic of Singapore (hereinafter called the "Custodian Trustee"). The Custodian Trustee shall act in a "Nominee" capacity and shall be indemnified by the DPA for any liability which may result from holding property as trustee for the DPA. The Custodian shall be entitled to act in all dealings with the property in accordance with the wishes of the Board of Management as evidenced by true copies of resolutions passed at General Meetings, such true copies to be certified as correct by the President or a Vice- President and the Honorary Secretary.
- (d) The Registrar of Societies and the Commissioner of Charities shall be notified of the address of the DPA immovable property, name of Trustee Company and subsequent changes.

12. **DUTIES AND POWERS OF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

Subject to the over-riding power of the General Meeting of Members, the Board of Management shall:

- (a) Be responsible for the execution of all matters decided upon at the General Meeting; and shall appoint/employ an Executive Director, Executive Officers and any other staff as it shall consider appropriate to constitute the Secretariat and other departments of the DPA;
- (b) Have power to appoint sub-committees, if and when the necessity arises or to

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delegate any part of its duties to a member of the Board of Management;

- (c) Give directions to and receive and approve reports from sub-committees and other officials if any;
- (d) To recommend such Singapore citizens or permanent residents as it deems fit to become Patrons or Vice-Patrons of the DPA;
- (e) Approve applications for membership;
- (f) Raise funds for the DPA with the approval of the Registrar of Societies and other relevant authorities;
- (g) Approve expenditure from the funds of the DPA;
- (h) Select representatives to attend any local, regional or international conferences;
- (i) Establish and define the boundaries of District Committees and define and control the duties, powers and obligations of such District Committees;
- (j) Make, alter and rescind by resolution working by-laws and rules to control and regulate:
  - i. The administration of District Committees of the DPA;
  - ii. Meeting procedures to be adopted by District Committees;
  - iii. All other matters specified or involved in the aims and objectives of the DPA or in these rules;

provided however that any such by-laws shall be subject to and shall not conflict with the provisions of these rules;

- (k) Carry out all the functions and powers in any district where no properly constituted District Committee exists or in respect of which the powers of the District Committee have been suspended by the Board of Management;
- (l) Institute or carry out or defend legal proceedings when necessary including the recovery of any debts due to the DPA;
- (m) Establish and administer an information/resource centre and communications bureau to facilitate links with home-bound disabled people using so far as possible electronic and other modem communication facilities including 'sign' language for the deaf and a loop system in the meeting room, and all documents and material should be made available in Braille and/or on cassettes for the visually impaired members; to establish contact on a regular basis with people with disabilities who will be prevented by any disability from attending meetings of the DPA, its District Committees or constituent organisations;
- (n) Meetings should ordinarily be conducted in the English language provided where there are specific requests for translation and interpretation, facilities for such

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translation/interpretation shall be provided by the DPA in any of the other three official languages as well as in the sign language for the deaf, and Braille and cassettes for the visually-impaired members; and

- (o) Carry out and enforce any of the other aims, objectives and interests of the DPA;

13. **DUTIES OF OFFICE BEARERS**

(a) **President**

The President shall:

- i. Preside at all General Meetings of the DPA and all meetings of the Board of Management and preside at all other functions of the DPA and represent DPA at all formal and informal functions to which DPA's President is invited. In his absence, the Vice President or Honorary Secretary will be deputised to chair the meetings or attend the functions to which DPA is invited;
- ii. Be responsible for the proper conduct of the business and affairs of the DPA.

(b) **Vice- President**

The Vice-President shall deputise for the President in the latter's absence.

(c) **Honorary Secretary**

The Honorary Secretary shall:

- i. Arrange and attend all meetings;
- ii. Record the minutes of such meetings; and
- iii. Keep in custody all official records and documents and the Register of members.

(d) **Honorary Treasurer**

The Honorary Treasurer shall

- i. Collect all monies on the authority of the Board of Management;
- ii. Keep proper books of accounts and be responsible for all funds of the DPA.
- iii. Keep a petty cash account of which the sum will be determined by the Board and money in excess of the amount shall be deposited with the DPA'S bankers; and
- iv. Present a Statement of Accounts as often as is required by the Board of Management.

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(e) **Assistant Honorary Treasurer**

The Assistant Honorary Treasurer shall deputise for the Honorary Treasurer in the latter's absence and assist the Honorary Treasurer in carrying out his/her duties.

(f) **Executive Director**

- i. There shall be an Executive Director of the DPA who shall be appointed/employed by the Board of Management and, subject to the instructions of the Board of Management, shall be responsible for the efficient conduct of the DPA and for such other duties as may be assigned to him/her;
- ii. The Executive Director shall attend all meetings of the DPA;
- iii. The staff of the DPA shall be appointed/employed by the Executive Director acting on behalf of the Board of Management and in accordance with rules approved by the DPA;
- iv. The Executive Director shall be accountable and responsible to the Board of Management and through it to the DPA at all times and shall carry out its directive;
- v. Be responsible for all staff of the DPA;
- vi. Transact all business of the DPA as directed by the Board of Management
- vii. Attend to and conduct any correspondence on behalf of the DPA;
- viii. Report to the Board of Management any infringement of the Rules and by-laws;
- ix. Prepare or cause to be prepared the Annual Report for submission to the Annual General Meeting.

14. **GENERAL MEETING**

The supreme authority of the DPA shall be vested in a General Meeting of members. In between General Meetings of Members, the DPA shall be administered by the Board of Management.

15. **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

- (a) The Annual General Meeting of the DPA shall be held not later than either 30<sup>th</sup> June each year or not later than 15 months from the date of the last Annual General Meeting. The exact time, date and place shall be determined by the Board of Management.
- (b)
  - i. At least four weeks notice in writing specifying the place, date and time of the Annual General Meeting shall be given.

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- ii. The notice shall specify that motions to be put before the Meeting shall be submitted to the Honorary Secretary at least fourteen days before the date for the Meetings. The Agenda for the Meeting, the Board's Annual Report and the Accounts (duly audited) for the preceding financial year, shall be forwarded to the members at least seven days before the date of the meeting.
- (c) The business to be transacted at the General Meeting shall be;
    - i. To receive and approve the Annual Reports and Accounts of the DPA of the preceding financial year;
    - ii. To elect or appoint members of the Board of Management and Auditors for the next term (once in three years); and
    - iv. To transact any other business of which fourteen days notice in writing shall be given to the Honorary Secretary.
  - (d) In the event of any disputes arising amongst members, they shall table the matter for resolution before an Extra-ordinary General Meeting to be held in accordance with the Constitution. If members fail to resolve the matter at the Extra-ordinary General Meeting, they may bring the matter before a court of law for resolution.

16. **EXTRA-ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING**

- (a) An Extra-ordinary General Meeting may be convened by the Board of Management at its discretion or on receipt of a signed written requisition by one-fifth of the total number of paid up members or fifteen paid up members or whichever is the lesser, stating their objectives and reasons for requisitioning such a meeting.
- (b) Upon receipt of the requisition, the Board of Management shall call for an Extra-ordinary General meeting to be held within twenty-one days from the date of receipt of such requisition.

17. **REPRESENTATION AT GENERAL MEETING AND VOTING**

- (a)
  - i. All Ordinary Members who are not in arrears of subscriptions or otherwise in default shall be eligible to vote at any General Meeting of the DPA;
  - ii. Ordinary Members shall each have one vote;
  - iii. Associate Members who are also known as 'Friends of Disabled People' may attend the Annual General Meeting and shall not be entitled to vote.
- (b) Organisations which are Associate Members and known as 'Friends of Disabled People' shall notify the Secretary in writing of the names of their representatives who are authorised to attend meetings on their behalf. These nominators shall be recorded in the books of the DPA and shall hold

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good until revoked.

- (c) At the General Meeting, the President, and in his absence, the Vice-President shall chair the meeting. In the case of any equality of votes, the Chairman shall have a second or casting vote, subject to the provision herein contained on the election of members of the Board.

18. **QUORUM**

At least 25% of the total number of paid up members or 30 paid up members whichever is the lesser, shall constitute a quorum for a General Meeting. If at the hour fixed, a quorum is not forthcoming, the meeting shall be adjourned for half an hour and should the number then present be insufficient to form a quorum the members present may proceed with the meeting but they shall have no power to alter, amend or make additions to any of the existing rules.

19. **FINANCIAL YEAR**

The financial year of the DPA shall close on 31 March each year.

20. **AUDITORS**

- (a) The DPA shall at each Annual General Meeting appoint one or more auditors approved by the Commissioner of Charities to hold office until the next Annual General Meeting and shall determine the remuneration (if any) to be paid for his/her or their services or may delegate to the Board of Management the power to determine such remuneration.
- (b) The auditors shall audit the yearly accounts and submit a report thereon to the General Meeting.

21. **PROHIBITIONS**

- (a) Gambling of any kind, whether for stakes or not, is forbidden on the DPA's premises. The introduction of materials for gambling or drug taking and of bad characters into the premises is prohibited.
- (b) The funds of the DPA shall not be used to pay the fines of members who have been convicted in Court.
- (c) The DPA shall not attempt to restrict or in any other manner interfere with trade or prices or engage in any Trade Union activity as defined in any written law relating to trade unions for the time being in force in Singapore.
- (d) The DPA shall not indulge in any political activity or allow its funds and/or premises to be used for political purposes.
- (e) The DPA shall not hold any lottery, whether confined to its members or not, in the name of the DPA or its office bearers, Board or members, without having obtained prior approval from the relevant approving authorities.

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22. **AMENDMENT OF RULES**

No alterations, amendments or additions to the Rules shall be made except at a General Meeting by a resolution which shall be carried by a two-third majority of the total number members present. Such alterations, amendments or additions shall only take effect after approval from the Registrar of Societies and the Commissioner of Charities has been received.

23. **INTERPRETATIONS OF RULES**

The Board of Management is the sole authority for the interpretation of these Rules and the decisions of the Board upon any question of interpretation or upon any matter affecting the DPA and not provided for by these Rules shall be final and binding on all members. In all cases not provided for by these Rules, the Board shall act according to their discretion.

24. **CESSATION OF CHARITY**

In the event that the DPA ceases to be a registered charity under the Charities Act, all debts and liabilities incurred on behalf of the DPA shall be fully discharged, and the remaining funds will be donated to an Institution or Institutions of Public Character with similar objectives which is or are registered under the Charities Act as the members of the DPA may determine at the General Meeting, unless otherwise allowed by the Commissioner of Charities

25. **DISSOLUTION**

- (a) The DPA shall not be dissolved except with the consent of three-fifths of all the Ordinary Members of the DPA voting on the resolution for dissolution at a General Meeting convened for the purpose.
- (b) In the event of the DPA being dissolved as provided above, all debts and liabilities incurred on behalf of the DPA shall be fully discharged, and the remaining funds will be donated to an Institution or Institutions of Public Character with similar objectives which is or are registered under the Charities Act as the members of the DPA may determine at the General Meeting.
- (c) The Registrar of Societies and the Commissioner of Charities shall be informed within seven days of the dissolution of the DPA.